



ABERDEEN FC  
COMMUNITY  
TRUST

# IMPACT REPORT 2022-23







## CHLOE

**Alternative Academy pupil  
& Youth Ambassador**

Welcome to the AFCCT 2022/23 Impact Report.

My name is Chloe, and I am an S4 pupil at St Machar Academy. I started the AFCCT Alternative Academy programme in my school in S2. When I started AFCCT, I was quiet, and I didn't go to my classes.

Over the last two years, I have joined AFCCT Youth Ambassadors and received the Young Achievers Award last year. I started volunteering with AFCCT outside of school and in the holidays when I started S3. I have now spent over 50 hours volunteering for AFCCT. I am more confident since I started helping at community programme sessions and primary school holiday programmes. It's my goal to work in the sport and fitness industry when I leave school or maybe working for AFCCT running an Alternative Academy programme.

## LIZ BOWIE

**AFCCT Chief Executive**

Showcasing another busy year of activity for Aberdeen FC Community Trust, this report gives us an opportunity to demonstrate the difference we have made to communities across the northeast of Scotland. Our staff and volunteers work with **all age groups** to provide **support and opportunity to change lives for the better**.

Supporting **over 9000 participants** this year, we have developed our programming within two themes: **Education and positive destinations; Football, health and wellbeing**. We have played a significant role towards closing the poverty attainment gap; improving physical and mental wellbeing and supporting people through the cost-of-living crisis.

This year saw the appointment of Player Ambassador, Jonny Hayes, who demonstrates the same commitment that he displays on the pitch at Pittodrie to the work of the Trust. We are grateful to him, the Manager, the First Team, and the Women's Team who regularly make special memories for our participants. We are also grateful to the AFC Board and its Chair, Dave Cormack, for their ongoing support.

During the year four new trustees were appointed to the Board of Trustees bringing additional skill sets that help guide the Trust and provide strategic direction. We are grateful to retired Chair, James Knowles, for his commitment to the Trust since 2014.

The Trust benefits from the tremendous support of an army of enthusiastic volunteers. We are grateful for their time and energy which enables the work of the Trust to reach so many in the community.

Finally, I would like to thank our dedicated staff for whom their work is a passion. The strong and trusted relationships they form with our participants enables us to **help our communities maximise their potential**.

## DAVE CORMACK

**Aberdeen FC Chairman**

Aberdeen will always be my home and AFC is **in my heart and soul**. I care deeply about the people of this city and its surrounding areas. It gives me great pride to know that AFC, through its Community Trust, is playing **an important role in supporting our community**.

As many face challenges, be they physical, mental, or financial, the Club and the Trust play a pivotal role in levelling the playing field.

I firmly believe in giving people a "hand up, not a handout" – equipping people with the skills and resources they need to help themselves and others.

The Trust does **a remarkable job** with people of all ages to break down barriers; create self-belief and to encourage people to help each other. I was delighted to see this **work recognised by the Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce Northern Star Business Award** in the Inspiring Futures category earlier this year.

We are indebted to all who support the Trust, both financially and through their volunteering work.

**Thank you - we simply could not do it without you.**

Stand Free!



# CONTENTS

**OUR MISSION ..... 06**

**WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO ..... 08**

**A YEAR IN NUMBERS ..... 10**

**THANK YOU ..... 12**

**EDUCATION & POSITIVE DESTINATIONS ..... 14**

    PRIMARY ..... 16

    CASE STUDY: MANOR PARK PRIMARY ..... 20

    SECONDARY..... 24

    SCHOOL OF FOOTBALL ..... 27

    CASE STUDY: CITY ACADEMY PUPIL ..... 29

    MINDSET ..... 30

    YOUTH AMBASSADORS ..... 32

**FOOTBALL, HEALTH AND WELLBEING ..... 34**

    PRIMARY SCHOOL FOOTBALL ..... 36

    GIRLS FOOTBALL ..... 37

    HOLIDAY AND TERM TIME COACHING ..... 38

    FOOTBALL ON LOCATION ..... 39

    HEALTH AND WELLBEING ..... 40

    CASE STUDY: PITTODRIE COMMUNITY HUB ..... 44

    MENTAL WELLBEING ..... 46

**Q&A WITH JONNY HAYES ..... 47**

**VOLUNTEERS ..... 48**

**FUNDRAISING ..... 49**

**TRUST DAY 2023 ..... 50**

**LOOKING AHEAD ..... 52**



## MISSION:

To provide **support** and **opportunity** to **change lives for the better**.

## VISION:

We work to **maximise** the potential of our communities and to **improve** their **physical** and **mental health** and **wellbeing**.

## VALUES:

Together we are **Dynamic**, **Empowering**, **Collaborative**, **Nurturing**, **Trustworthy**.

## THEMES:

- > Education & Positive Destinations
- > Football, Health & Wellbeing





# WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Local, national, and international strategies, alongside reacting to local community needs, drives our community interventions.



Key themes from the **WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION** and **UNITED NATIONS** highlight the importance of increasing physical activity, and tackling issues such as poverty, inequalities, and wellbeing. **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION SCOTLAND**, and the **SCOTTISH FA** strategies have shaped our work in recent years. **THE LOCAL OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT PLANS** of Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City councils, further help us to refine our work to meet the needs of the local communities we serve through two key themes. Beyond strategic frameworks, the lived experiences of our community, **ALLOW US TO SHAPE WHAT WE DO.**

## INTERNATIONAL

**UNITED NATIONS**  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**  
THE GLOBAL ACTION PLAN ON  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 2018 – 2030

## NATIONAL

**NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**  
GIVING OPPORTUNITIES  
AND INCREASING WELLBEING

**GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD (GIRFEC)**  
THE RIGHT SUPPORT AT THE RIGHT TIME

**ACTIVE SCOTLAND FRAMEWORK**  
A MORE ACTIVE SCOTLAND

**FOOTBALL FOR ALL 2022-2023  
SCOTTISH FA GRASSROOTS STRATEGY**  
HELP IMPROVE THE WELLBEING OF OUR NATION

## LOCAL

**ABERDEEN CITY LOIP 2016 - 2026**  
A PLACE WHERE ALL PEOPLE CAN PROSPER

**ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL LOIP 2018 - 2028**  
REDUCING POVERTY ACTION PLAN

## THE COMMUNITY

**A PERSON-CENTRED  
APPROACH FOCUSING ON  
THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS**

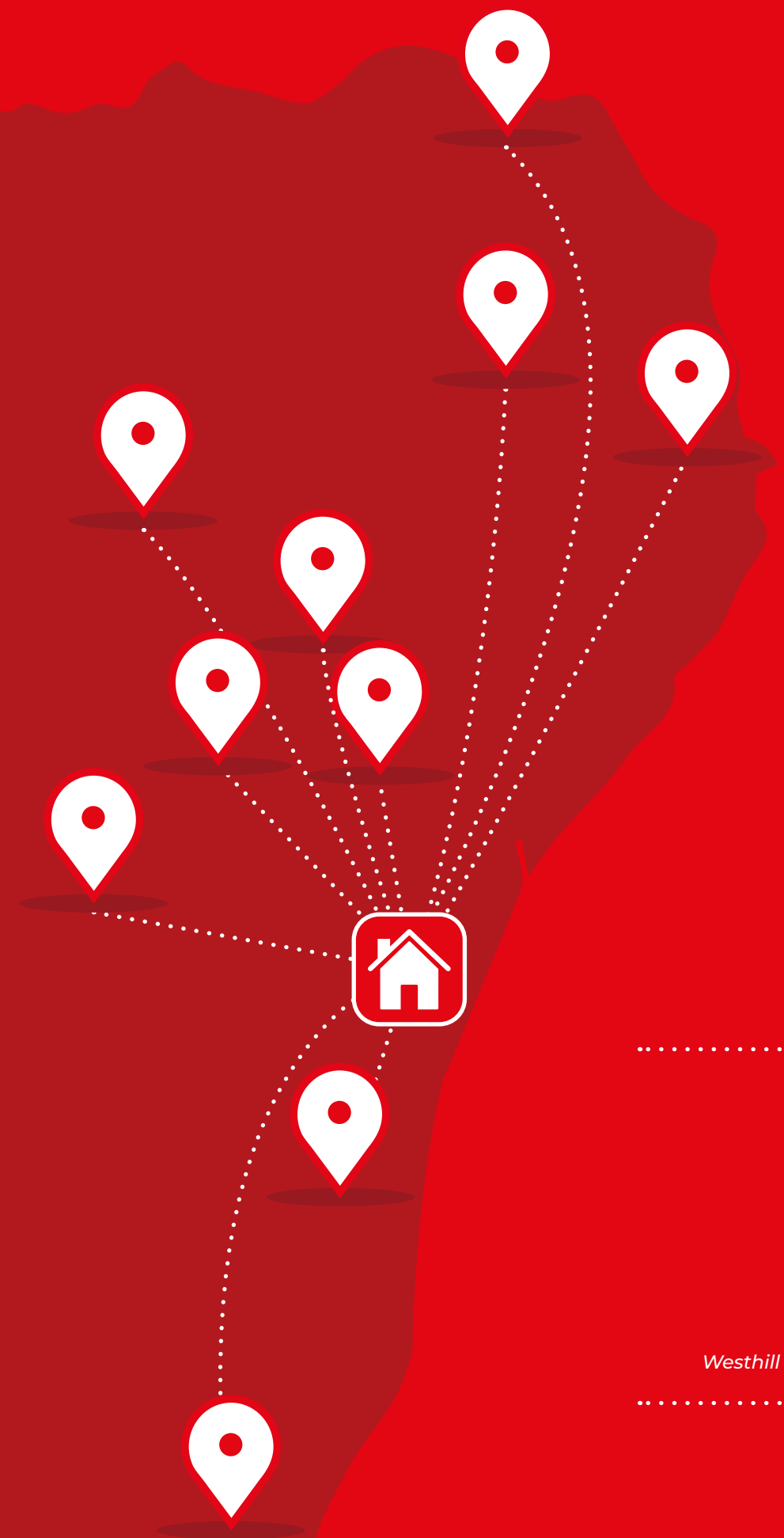
**LISTENING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS**

## AFCCT

**EDUCATION & POSITIVE DESTINATIONS**

**FOOTBALL, HEALTH & WELLBEING**

# A YEAR IN NUMBERS



# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Trust this year. We are indebted to our sponsors, donors, volunteers, board members, AFC manager, AFC First team, AFC Women's team, AFC and AFCCT staff who enable us to support communities across the Northeast.



EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERS



EDUCATION PARTNERS



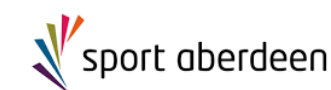
HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERS



TROJAN CRATES  
LIMITED



FOOTBALL PARTNERS



ABERDEEN IN RECOVERY | ACTIV PAYROLL | BAXTER STOREY | CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU  
COSTCO | FIDELITY | FORREST TRAINING | HEALTH SHIELD | KERR'S DAIRY  
MILTON ON THE CORNER | NESCOL | NHS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH | SCARF | SOTIC | VSA





Working in primary and secondary schools across the North-east of Scotland, we use the power of football and the passion for Aberdeen FC to encourage pupil engagement in the classroom and beyond.

## EDUCATION & POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

Complementing the Curriculum for Excellence, we work to **support physical wellbeing, numeracy, literacy, STEM** and through our **innovative MINDSET programme**, we look to crucially **support mental wellbeing**. In the years ahead we will continue to work towards closing the poverty related attainment gap, and to support young people with mental health challenges. Working in youth based and employability projects, we provide a pathway beyond school to develop life skills in support of future destinations.

AFCCT staff are key role models, **promoting positive behaviours** and supporting **all areas of wellbeing: physical, social, and emotional**. By developing positive relationships, the Trust encourages young people to **engage in education**, supporting a variety of subject areas.

### Our work is proven to:

- > Increase pupil attendance
- > Improve pupil engagement in education
- > Improve pupil wellbeing and prepare young people for positive destinations after school.

**The Youth Ambassador** programme, supported by **The Brighter Futures** fund, gives young people the chance to **gain essential life experiences, skills, and qualifications**. We prepare young people for life after school **through goal setting, skills development, work experience and volunteering**.







**The AFCCT programmes allow children with all levels of ability to take part and ensure they all feel included and valued.**

**The skills and confidence learnt are transferable and utilised both at home and at school.**

PARENT/GUARDIAN  
FEEDBACK



## PRIMARY

AFCCT focus on **improving health and wellbeing, raising attainment, and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.** Integrated into the school community, our **Education and Community Officers build a bridge of trust** with young people and **empower** them, **developing skills for life**, learning and work. Our **Partner Primary** initiative is well positioned to **support schools across the region**, providing a **positive impact** on individual pupils linking in with the Curriculum for Excellence and the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy to take an early intervention and preventative approach in both age and stage. **The programmes are diverse, adaptable, and engage children and young people in a unique way.**

Whether in traditional class sizes, small groups or one to one work **connecting with the young people is key to success.** We are seeing an **increased need for one-to-one support and small group work in our schools** in the aftermath of the pandemic and with the cost-of-living crisis **impacting many families across the region.**



### OUR PROGRAMMES ADDRESS:

*Food poverty*

*Mental wellbeing*

*Physical wellbeing*

*STEM*

### OUR OUTCOMES:

*Increase attendance*

*Reduce lateness and exclusions*

*Increase participation and engagement*

*Improve health and wellbeing*

*Increase confidence and self esteem*



**SCHOOLS**



**PARTICIPANTS**



**SESSIONS**



**MEALS PROVIDED**





## STEM SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS

AFCCT sponsor Fugro has provided funding for STEM workshops to widen access to STEM learning. Over the six-week programme, pupils enhance their knowledge of STEM subjects through varied activities and develop an understanding of new technologies. The project uses Sphero robots to introduce young people to basic coding and programming.



EDUCATION PARTNERS



Aberdeenshire  
COUNCIL



GRASSROOTSOCCER

FUGRO

1495  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ABERDEEN





## CASE STUDY: MANOR PARK PRIMARY

Manor Park School has been one of our Partner Primary Schools for 5 years. During the 2022-23 school year, we delivered:

- > MINDSET
- > Better Playground Play
- > 1-to-1 support
- > Active Girls
- > Sports Leaders
- > Redstart (Early Years)
- > Redstart
- > Afterschool Clubs

Across the year, we supported **over 180 pupils**, across all **primary** and **nursery year groups**, totalling **over 500 hours of delivery**. Manor Park Primary School also benefitted from several external opportunities including: **matchday tickets**, **matchday flag bearing opportunities** and an ASN pupil and his family attending our relaxed matchday experience.



## IMPACT → MINDSET

Primary 5 and 6 pupils completed the **12-week MINDSET** programme. Using this innovative programme, AFCCT and Manor Park are working together to **erase the stigma surrounding mental health**, helping our young people speak out about their feelings and experiences.

Each session focusses conversations and activities around one "**winning word**" including "Control", "Leadership", "Empathy". Throughout the 12 weeks, pupils are encouraged to embrace the '**Three T's**' when they feel themselves getting frustrated:

**TAKE** a few deep breaths

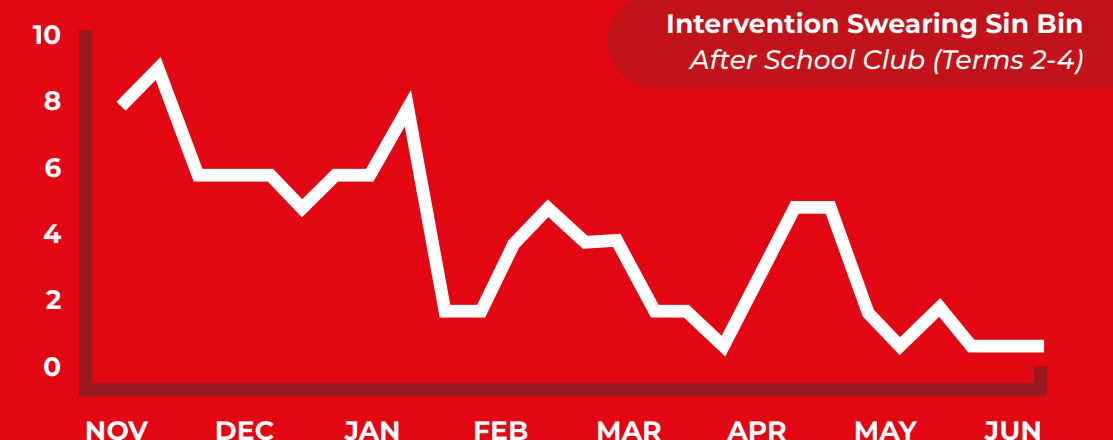
**THINK** about the consequences of acting in anger

**TALK** to someone about your frustration when they feel themselves getting frustrated.

Young people continue to use this technique outwith the AFCCT sessions aiding improved behaviour throughout the day.

## → AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

Providing support after school, young people are supported through physical activity integrated with behavioural health and wellbeing messaging and food provision.



### ACTIVE GIRLS

**100% of girls** either retained or increased their **engagement in whole class physical activity**.

### ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

The AFCCT coach and Manor Park staff identified individuals who could benefit from one-to-one support to develop engagement, resilience, and social confidence. Sessions are tailored to the specific needs of the individuals, from football activities to artistic tasks, to get the best engagement and response from the young person.

### BETTER PLAYGROUND PLAY

**100% of pupils** retained, or improved, in **their classroom engagement**.



# GO FITBA

Supporting Primary School pupils during holiday periods, **GoFitba** is a free to access **football-based health and wellbeing project** for P5-7 pupils developed by The Scottish Football Partnership Trust. Across the 2022/23 holiday periods, **240 young people took part** at school and community venues.

The project offers children **fun physical activities and education activities** supporting a **balanced and healthy lifestyle through diet and nutrition**, as well as a healthy lunch. In addition, the project aims to increase the young people's motivation, improve their self-confidence, further **develop their social and interpersonal skills**, and improve their general self-esteem.

Many participants are pupils from our partner primary schools. The ongoing contact offered during the holidays helps to maintain the strong relationships they have built with our staff year-round.



## FAIR PLAY FOR ALL

### ENERGISING THE COMMUNITY!

Hosted at Cormack Park, AFC Women's Team partners, Boskalis, Tendeke and GAC came together for a second year to provide **an inclusive, energising, and educational event for young people**.

Volunteers from all three companies, AFCCT and Forrest Training supported the delivery of a hugely **impactful day**. **80 children** from 4 of our partner primary schools benefitted from a **unique day of engaging education** with a football focus. The event was extended to include a second relaxed day that catered for **16 children** with additional support needs.

The event aligns with our Primary Education strategy by providing extra-curricular experiences for young people engaging them through physical and mental wellbeing activities.







**IMPACT:**  
Key indicators from the National Performance Framework demonstrate the impact of AFCCT interventions on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

## SECONDARY

The Alternative Academies programme provides a flexible, alternative curriculum for targeted young people. The programme aims to **improve outcomes for young people** by promoting ownership of learning. AFCCT work in partnership with each school to deliver the desired programmes and initiatives throughout the academic year. Our Education and Community Officers adopt a person-centred approach, placing each learner **at the heart of our plans, focusing on health, wellbeing, and nurture**. A positive, open relationship is built with the young people to support their learning in a **dynamic, energetic, and creative way**.

### OUR WORK IS PROVEN TO:

- > Increase **pupil attendance**
- > Improve **pupil engagement** in education
- > Improve **pupil wellbeing** and prepare young people for positive destinations after school.



## ACHIEVEMENTS

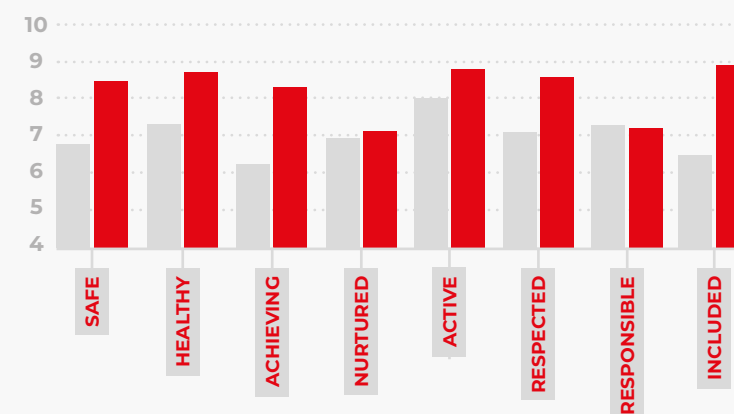
**177 academy pupils** successfully completed SQA qualifications across the 2022/23 academic year, up by **49%** from 119 in 21/22.

## WELLBEING

Data shows a self-reported **17.25% increase** in the overall wellbeing of AFCCT participants across Northfield, St Machar, and Lochside Academies for the academic term 2022/23. This was measured using SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

Average SHANARRI Indicators  
AFCCT Participants

● Baseline ● AFCCT



  
**10**  
SCHOOLS

 +30% ON 2021/22  
**1,258**  
PARTICIPANTS

  
**1,789**  
SESSIONS

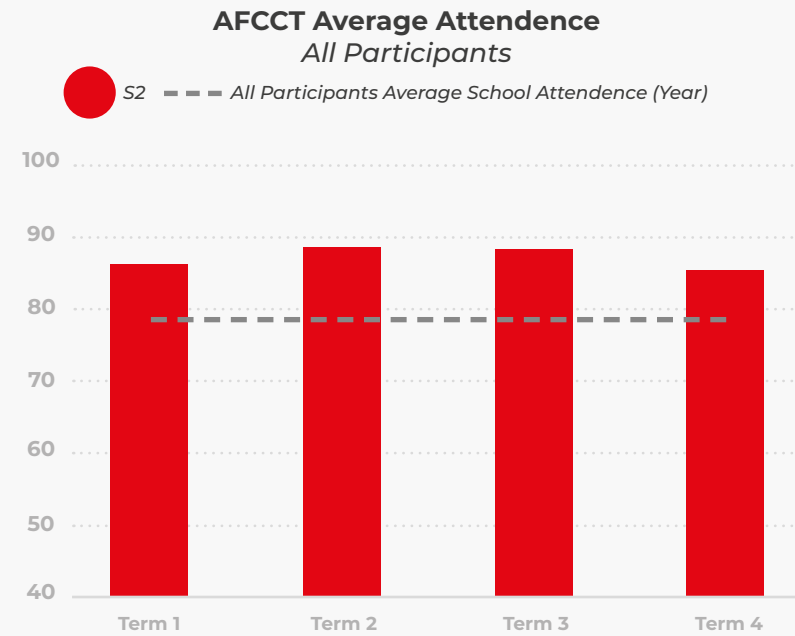
  
**2,578**  
HOURS





## ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT

AFCCT groups maintained attendance and engagement at AFCCT interventions when compared with the wider school average attendance.



## POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS

Across the Academy programmes, a **48% reduction** in referrals and demerits showed the **improved behaviour** and **engagement** through participation in AFCCT projects.



## SCHOOL OF FOOTBALL AT LOCHSIDE & ST MACHAR ACADEMY

The programme aims to create an environment in which the **young people can develop key life skills**, learning through football to support the transition from primary to secondary school. The programme has seen an **increase in attendance** and a **reduction in referrals and exclusions** from the participants of the programme. **The additional activity promotes improved physical and mental wellbeing** and **supports improved focus** and concentration in mainstream subjects. Young people are encouraged to take **responsibility** and **ownership** as programme participants.

The programme works on **4 outcomes**:

- > *Young people build their capacity and confidence*
- > *Young people develop their personal and/or physical skills*
- > *Young people's behaviours and aspirations change positively*
- > *Young people's wellbeing improves*

**175**  
PARTICIPANTS

**828**  
SESSIONS

**1,056**  
HOURS







# CASE STUDY: CITY ACADEMY PARTICIPANT

## BACKGROUND

A pupil has been part of the AFCCT Northfield programme since S2. Teachers were reporting aggressive behaviour towards peers and staff as well as refusal to do schoolwork and follow instructions when outside of the AFCCT Northfield programme. AFCCT coaches adopted a one-to-one approach to working with this individual.

## ACTION

The pupil has one period a week where they work with an AFCCT staff member. The **sessions revolve around creating a safe environment**, enabling the pupil to have discussions around the causes of issues affecting them and developing strategies to improve this.

The sessions take place at the end of each week which allows AFCCT staff and the pupil an opportunity to debrief about the week and reflect on what occurred.

## OUTCOME

There has been a decline in the individuals' demerits and referrals since starting their one-to-one sessions. In the first of half S2 the pupil had 81 demerits and 80 referrals. In the second half of S2 school year the demerits **dropped to 52** and referrals are **down to 15**.

The programme has **created a safe place to talk about challenges** the individual is facing in school; an opportunity to review the week and **develop coping strategies**, and has opened communication channels between the pupil and Northfield Academy teaching staff. AFCCT staff members were able to implement behaviour strategies and **help the pupil put them into practice**, specifically around ways to cope with frustration and anger. The result has been a demonstrable improvement in their behaviour.

Throughout the year guidance staff used AFCCT staff members to talk to the pupil about having restorative conversations with staff. The pupil explained to guidance staff that he trusts AFCCT staff members and can **talk to them comfortably**.







The consequences of failing to address adolescent mental health conditions extend to adulthood, impairing both physical and mental health and limiting opportunities to lead fulfilling lives as adults.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



## MINDSET BACKGROUND TO MINDSET

Adolescents in Scotland face a growing burden of mental health challenges. Data from the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) shows that, by age 16, **3 children in every classroom will have experienced a mental health problem**. Furthermore, the proportions of 15 and 16-year-olds reporting **frequent feelings of anxiety or depression** has doubled in the last 30 years.

It is understood that **half of mental health problems in adulthood begin before the age of 14**. With this background, and working in partnership with Grassroot Soccer, AFCCT have developed and delivered **MINDSET – an adolescent focused, sport-based mental wellbeing promotion programme** that aims to break down the stigma associated with mental health.

## MENTAL HEALTH NOT MENTAL ILLNESS



**1,029**  
PUPILS  
COMPLETED  
MINDET



**713**  
PRIMARY  
SCHOOL PUPILS



**316**  
ACADEMY  
PUPILS



**10**  
SCHOOLS IN  
THE REGION

Delivered to pupils **aged 10 to 14**, MINDSET is a **preventative, proactive approach to mental health**. MINDSET places less emphasis on mental health disorders and more on **life skills that promote mental wellbeing**. MINDSET was developed with input from schools, the NHS, researchers, and young people. The result is a programme that enhances outcomes in the national school curriculum and responds to priorities for the NHS and aligns with the Scottish Government “Mental health and wellbeing strategy” key aims.

In 2022/23, **all S1 pupils** from Lochside, Northfield and St Machar Academies – **a total of 568** – took part in the programme as part of their Personal & Social Education classes. On completion

of the MINDSET programme, **54% of participants** reported increased knowledge of empathy. By completing pre and post programme questionnaires, we measure the impact on young people.

Can you give an example of giving or receiving empathy?

### PRE

“No.”

“I don’t know.”

“I am not sure.”

“It’s like sympathy.”

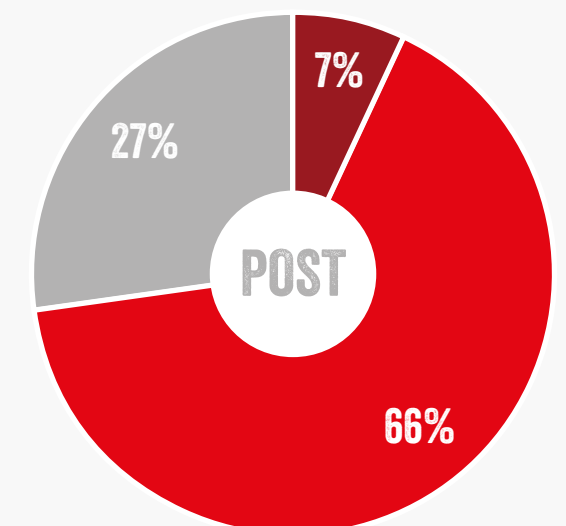
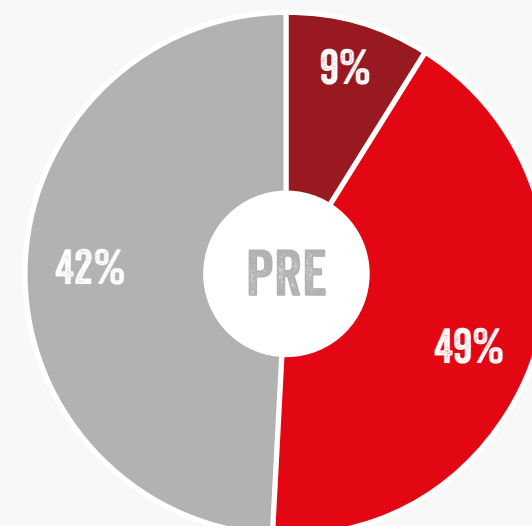
### POST

“Being able to show an understanding of how other people feel.”

“Empathy is when you think about how another feels by putting yourself in that situation and letting them know that you understand.”

“Putting yourself in someone else’s shoes.”

“When someone is having a hard time and you’re there for them.”



I know what mental wellbeing is

No Unsure Yes

Changes were also observed in participants’ self-reported mental health behaviours - notably the frequency of asking for help and emotional support, controlling emotions and being able to bounce back from difficult situations.

## NEXT STEPS FOR MINDSET

Having seen the outcomes of MINDSET and the growing need for focus on mental wellbeing of all young people, we are developing MINDSET Level 2 and looking at opportunities to roll the programme out further.





# YOUTH AMBASSADORS

The Youth Ambassador programme, supported by The Brighter Futures fund, gives young people **aged 14-18** the chance to gain essential life experiences, skills, and qualifications whilst supporting their local community. **We aim to prepare young people for life after school** through **goal setting, skills development, training courses, work experience and volunteering**. During the year-long project, AFCCT helps young people to **develop their confidence and communication skills**.

In August 2022, we were thrilled to restart the Youth Ambassadors programme in full post-pandemic. Many participants come from our existing partner academies enabling us to build upon their work in our Alternative Academy programmes. They are joined by others from secondary schools across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire who are **keen to develop new skills and give back to their local communities**.

Each monthly session is focused on a different topic. Over the year, we have covered many topics:

*Social media*

*Safeguarding*

*Equality and inclusion*

*Youth work*

*Fundraising*

*Health and wellbeing*

*Introduction to football coaching*

*Dementia Friends*



**To be involved in the Youth Ambassador programme has been a fantastic opportunity. The experience has inspired me to become a coach and I hope that I can do that one day soon with AFCCT, I loved it.**

YOUTH AMBASSADOR



During the Easter holidays, **Youth Ambassadors assisted in coaching** at our Easter holiday camps; **supported pupils attending GoFitba and helped at our Health & Wellbeing programmes including the Pittodrie Community Hub, Health Walks, Technogym, and Football Memories**. Their hard work over Easter gained them an impressive **380 volunteering hours, increasing their total volunteer hours for the year to 1840**.

At AFCCT we are enthusiastic about supporting young people, helping them learn, develop, and grow. Giving up their school holidays to support us and give back to their local communities **shows their dedication and investment** in the programme. Each young person's volunteer hours contribute towards attaining **Saltire Volunteer Awards**.

This year, one of our Youth Ambassadors, who we first met as a Primary School participant, then an Alternative Academy pupil has now become a **sessional staff member at AFCCT**. Testament to her hard work and personal development.

**13 Youth Ambassadors and 5 Lochside Academy pupils** gained their **SFA 1.1 Early Touches coaching badge**

## NORTHERN STAR BUSINESS AWARD

We were delighted to **win the Inspiring Futures category** at the **2023 Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce Northern Star Business awards**. The Inspiring Futures award is presented to an organisation which is working in partnership with schools to **ensure young people are inspired and supported to find fulfilling careers**.

The award is a celebration of the young people we support, their development and achievements as well as our amazing staff and their commitment, enthusiasm, and care.



PARTICIPANTS



SCHOOLS REPRESENTED



SESSIONS



VOLUNTEER HOURS



# FOOTBALL, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## Promoting Health and Wellbeing through football and other activities.

Partnership working is the cornerstone of our Football, Health and Wellbeing programming. Linking with the Scottish Football Association, local authorities, Sport Aberdeen, and grassroots clubs, we support the growth of football participation across the North-east. We provide a range of football opportunities to promote enjoyment and development for young people and coaches.

As a Community Trust, we adapt to the ever-changing needs of our community. As well as established health and wellbeing programmes such as health walks and active ageing activities, new initiatives include addressing menopause and men's mental health to support key community needs. SPFL Trust, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health), Alzheimer Scotland and community groups enable us to deliver in our community.

## FOOTBALL

The Scottish FA Football for All 2022-2025 strategic plan has a vision to harness the power of football to improve the wellbeing of Scotland's communities through lifelong participation. We share the Scottish FA vision providing opportunities across the City and Shire to get involved. The hook of Scotland's most popular sport and the AFC brand further support the vision of "a more active Scotland" (Active Scotland Framework) and WHO goal to reduce physical inactivity.







## PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOOTBALL

### GROWING PARTICIPATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Open to all primary schools in the North-east, teams take part in fixtures and festivals on a Saturday morning throughout the school year at Harlaw Playing Fields, Cormack Park, and school venues. Working in partnership with the Scottish FA, Sport Aberdeen and Live Life Aberdeenshire the programme focusses on participation, inclusion and fun, providing games that are played within a safe, enjoyable, trophy free environment.

A report by Sport Aberdeen looked at which areas of the city had primary schools participating. This highlighted that the majority of schools taking part were from more affluent areas of the city. As well as increasing overall participation, a key aim is to continue to support schools from all areas setting up teams and taking part.



## GIRLS FOOTBALL

### INCREASING DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

Women's and girls' football is the **fastest growing sport in the world** and Aberdeen FC Community Trust are playing a **key role in developing the game** regionally. In partnership with Tendeka, the Scottish FA, and Scottish Women's Football, AFCCT launched the Girls League football development pathway for girls aged 5-12 across the North-East of Scotland in September 2022.

Beyond the weekend festivals and fixtures, we have introduced girls football camps, participation and development centres and have seen an increase in girls playing in their primary school teams and attending our mixed football camps.

Aligning with the Scottish FA's 'Accelerate our Game: Strategy for Girls & Women's Football', we are making inroads to grow the game, increase participation numbers and foster a robust pathway into the top tier of women's football in Scotland. Thanks to the continued support of the main sponsor Tendeka, and with the Trust's continued investment in equality within the sport, the game continues to thrive locally.





## HOLIDAY COACHING & TERM TIME

### GROWING PARTICIPATION

During the Easter, Summer, and October breaks, AFCCT Holiday Coaching works with boys and girls aged 5-12 years. Taking place at venues across Aberdeen City and Shire, our holiday coaching programmes are delivered by AFCCT coaches in a fun and safe environment, focusing on teamwork and developing football skills.

With the support of KR Group, all participants received a t-shirt for taking part. As the partner charity of AFC, it is always brilliant to welcome AFC men's and women's players to camps to meet the children, take part in a Q&A and have their t-shirts signed by the players. An experience the children will never forget!

During term time, football sessions cater for all levels of participation, development, and performance across the region.

Our pay-to-play football generates income to re-invest in funded football opportunities as well as support the continuation and growth of other Trust activity in Education, Health and Wellbeing.



The success and impact of this tri-partnership continues to progress and evolve. This is clear to see when evaluating the level of participation, activity and its development in the area using the power of football as the foundation.

**KEVIN BONARIUS**  
GARIOCH SPORTS CENTRE  
CHIEF OPERATING  
OFFICER



## FOOTBALL ON LOCATION GARIOCH PARTNERSHIP

An innovative partnership between AFCCT, Garioch Sports Centre and Inverurie Loco Works started in March 2016. A full-time Football Development Officer in Inverurie works closely with our local communities, developing the footballing pathway, level of activity and development of coaches and volunteers in the area. The tri-partnership continues to have a big impact as we continue to work with harder to reach groups within the area, also connecting and working with local schools and clubs to open opportunities for all to access a wide range of recreational and educational sessions. All of this spans across male, female, para, and walking football groups.



**Particular successes include the excellent work creating both the PARA and girl's football provision alongside some fantastic work developing and educating harder to reach young volunteers with curriculum based and after school's activities.**

**We look forward to sharing further positive news from this initiative over the coming year and beyond.**

**GRAEME SUTHERLAND**  
SCOTTISH FA  
REGIONAL MANAGER, NORTH



## FRASERBURGH

AFCCT works in partnership with the Scottish FA to deliver a range of football programmes across Aberdeen City and Shire. A 'Club Grow Officer' has been deployed in North Aberdeenshire (Buchan) with a specific focus on Fraserburgh and the surrounding communities in July 2022 to increase participation and to support club growth and development.

The aim is to increase participation opportunities across all age groups across local clubs and community projects. This is done through developing a volunteer workforce and raising the profile of football in the area. Input from the Scottish FA, Aberdeen FC Community Trust, SportScotland and Aberdeenshire Council has allowed direct investment and resource to be targeted to key priorities in and around Fraserburgh.







## HEALTH & WELLBEING

As a Community Trust, we adapt to the ever-changing needs of our community, providing programming that addresses the lived experiences of those in challenging situations in the region. Mindful of both council's local outcome improvement plans, we work in partnership with others across the region to ensure our programmes add to the collective work of the third sector in the area. Communities face a range of challenges **including the cost-of-living crisis** which impacts on individuals and families in many ways, not least mental wellbeing. Our partnership approach enables us to **provide, directly or indirectly, much needed help to the people we work with**. Trust programmes aim to be **inclusive** and **to provide safe spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds**.

## ACTIVE AGEING & DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY PROGRAMMES

2023 census highlights Scotland's ageing population, with **over one million people aged 65 and over** (National Records of Scotland). **An increase of 22.5% since 2011.**

Our active ageing and dementia-friendly programmes, delivered by fully trained staff, are inclusive and aim to break down barriers and improve physical and mental wellbeing.



As a carer I don't get much time to myself, but during the walks I don't need to worry about my "cared for". I get an hour to myself where I can speak to my friends. The staff know my "cared for" and can offer the support needed to give me some well needed respite.

HEALTH WALK PARTICIPANT  
& CARER FOR SOMEONE  
LIVING WITH DEMENTIA



### HEALTH WALKS

Weekly walks that take place around **Aberdeen City**. Walking outdoors encourages positive mental health and tackles social isolation whilst also giving an opportunity to get active and connect with others.

### TECHNOGYM

Involves gym equipment designed for active ageing participants **using hydraulic resistance machines which can aid and assist physical activity**. AFCCT currently run three sessions a week, with each session lasting an hour.





## MEMORIES GROUPS

### FOOTBALL MEMORIES

An inclusive project which runs in partnership with Memories Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland. The project allows individuals living with dementia and memory impairments a safe space to be themselves. By looking at old football memorabilia and past games, participants are encouraged and empowered to have a voice and join in with conversations around a common interest. We are privileged to be supported by former players who regularly join our sessions.

### MUSIC MEMORIES

A dementia friendly programme based around reminiscence and making 'new memories' and helping people living with dementia to feel and live better. In 2022/23, we launched the brand-new programme, Music Memories, sponsored by Walker's Shortbread. The focus of the programme is to empower people living with dementia to engage through participation and enjoyment of specially tailored music. Music evokes strong emotions which both forms memories and also brings back memories. Listening to music from throughout the years, helps people to reconnect with their most powerful memories.

**WALKER'S**  
SPEYSIDE - EST. 1898

*"I have dementia, but it's still me. Football's still my game, and it always will be."*

FOOTBALL  
MEMORIES  
PARTICIPANT



### MAIN STAND BOX

In partnership with local charity, We Too! and Wellbeing Coordinators at Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, we provide a 'relaxed' matchday experience at Pittodrie. The AFCCT Main Stand Box, sponsored by Trojan Crates, focuses on creating a dementia and neurodivergent friendly environment providing a calm area for those who may have sensory or mental health challenges.



### FESTIVE FRIENDS

For the first time in 2022, all **42 community trusts** and **SPFL clubs** were involved in **Festive Friends**, supporting **over 4,000 people** across Scotland. AFCCT staff and volunteers visited participants with hampers as well as welcoming participants to Pittodrie to **enjoy a festive Christmas lunch, fun and games**.

**Festive Friends** brings **Christmas cheer** and **companionship** to **elderly people** who are **socially isolated** and **at risk of being alone** during the festive season. It also gives many of our Health and Wellbeing participants the chance to come together. Winter can be a particularly tough time for the elderly, but last Christmas was further compounded with the impact of both the energy and cost-of-living crisis. We are very grateful that the funding from SPFL Trust allowed us to bring some festive cheer and a great time was had by all!

*"...Trojan Crates were more than delighted to support the relaxed matchday experience at Pittodrie. The idea of a box specifically designed for individuals with additional support needs, resonated with our company values of inclusivity."*

ALANA PATERSON  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
TROJAN CRATES

### FOOTBALL FANS IN TRAINING

Football Fans in Training (FFIT) is a **free 12-week programme**, funded by the SPFL Trust. Delivered at Pittodrie, the programme encourages men and women to get fit and live a healthier, more active life. The weekly sessions provide a **behind-the-scenes look at Pittodrie along with a programme of exercise and advice on healthy eating and mental health**.

Recognised by the NHS, taking part in FFIT can **cut type 2 diabetes and other obesity related health conditions like heart disease, high blood pressure and high cholesterol**.

In 2023/24, we are taking FFIT on the road, with the programme running in Inverurie and Fraserburgh as well as Pittodrie.







## CASE STUDY: PITTODRIE COMMUNITY HUB

We teamed up with the SPFL Trust to provide **support to the local community through their Winter Response Fund**. Launched in February 2023, the Pittodrie Community Hub initially **provided support to the local community** during the winter months. **AFCCT provide a safe, warm environment, hot food, activities, food parcels and access to local organisations who provide free advice and support** on a variety of topics. Having seen the ongoing need for the Community Hub, what began as a 12-week winter programme has now been established as a **year-round project**.



WATCH HERE



*It has been inspiring to see the **success of the Pittodrie Community Hub**, not just over the winter, but in the weeks and months since. We knew that **communities would need help** during the economic crisis, and we are **delighted** that AFCCT were able to use SPFL Trust funding in a way that delivered for **their community, at a local level**, in a way that is **most needed**. The real success has been for the **individuals, families, and communities supported via the Hub**.*

NICKY REID  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
SPFL TRUST



## IMPACT

Working in partnership has been fundamental to the impact of the Community Hub. Bringing other organisations into Pittodrie has removed barriers to accessing services and, in some cases, provided support participants did not know was available to them. The organisations were specially chosen to support people with current issues negatively impacting the health and wellbeing of participants such as food poverty, employment, housing, energy bills, benefits, healthcare, and mental health.

> **Over the winter months, SCARF** provided energy efficiency advice and products. **32 participants were given tailored energy advice** and **5 home visits** were undertaken as a **direct result of attending the hub**.

> **Aberdeen City Council Housing provided support** on rent queries, repairs to council housing and more. **18 participants** have become direct clients and **6 successful housing applications have been completed**.

> **Citizens Advice Bureau engaged with over 150 participants** with 4 becoming direct regular clients.

> **NHS Occupational Therapy** have directly **supported 25 people**, providing **support with mobility, health and house adaptations** and signposting to other health services.

> **Aberdeen in Recovery** have been **providing support to participants living with drug or alcohol addiction**, either ongoing or in recovery. **2 young participants** have gone on to be part of the Aberdeen in Recovery volunteer team.

> **Aberdeen City Council Health and Social Care Partnership, Department for Work and Pensions and CFine Safe Team** have also **supported the Hub** with invaluable advice.

*Without the dedicated support of **our volunteers** and **Youth Ambassadors**, we would not have been able to deliver this essential project.*

***11 volunteers** and **4 Youth Ambassadors** regularly help the programme, ensuring a **welcoming and comfortable environment** is created for **all** our participants.*





WATCH HERE



**AFCCT continues to work hard to tackle the barriers people face around their mental health. From delivering the SAMH Changing Room programme, empowering men to talk openly about mental health and build stronger social connections, to focussing and embedding mental wellbeing across its other programmes.**

ROBERT NESBITT  
SAMH  
HEAD OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
AND SPORT

## MENTAL WELLBEING THE CHANGING ROOM

A Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) project working in partnership with the SPFL Trust, and football club charities across Scotland, while being funded by the global men's health charity, Movember.

The 12-week programme targets **men aged 30-64**, but the applications are open to all ages and works to **help participants self-manage their own mental health** whilst also giving them access to a strong support network. The course uses football, along with a variety of other activities such as walking football and 'walk n talks', to explore areas that may challenge them, such as how they view themselves, think and feel.

I am so glad I conquered my fear and went along as it has **changed everything for me**, and I am in a far better place.

It just completely **changed everything for me**, I developed **much better relationships** at work and with family.

The Changing Room is the reason **my daughter still has her father...** and now a damn good one!

When the **environment is right**, and when **men feel supported**, they're not just good at talking, **they're actually great at it.**

## Q&A WITH JONNY HAYES



This year, we were delighted to welcome Jonny Hayes to AFCCT as our Player Ambassador. Some thoughts from Jonny on the work of the Trust:

### 1. Why did you want to get involved with AFCCT?

I am very aware of the impact the Club and AFCCT has in our local area and as a senior member of the First Team squad I really wanted to lead from the front and play my part in helping the Trust to raise awareness and continue their fantastic work in the local community.

### 2. What has been your biggest "eye opener" since you became an Ambassador for the Trust?

The Trust are involved in so many areas across the region. If I am completely honest, I had no idea as to the breadth of work they carry out, supporting all age groups. I have been particularly impressed by their work around mental wellbeing and have been out to schools to see and hear about their programme MINDSET, which supports adolescents.

### 3. What did you learn when you visited the Football Memories project?

It was really moving to join the group and to hear people reminisce about old games, players, and other football memories. Many of these guys are living with dementia and it's great to see a project like this using football as a catalyst to bring fun and laughter whilst tackling social isolation.

### 4. What has been your favourite moment so far?

I think stand out moments would include my visits to the Football Memories projects and of course, getting out in the community visiting kids in schools. I did enjoy being a part of the "This is your life, Craig Brown" lunch and am so glad the Trust were able to honour the impact Craig had on everyone. I know he loved it.

### 5. What role do you play in encouraging others in the First Team to get involved in the work of the Trust?

We have a lot of young players in the dressing room and a lot of new arrivals this season. I try to encourage them all to get involved in the Trust projects and explain why it's so important to spread that AFCCT magic in the local area. We shouldn't take for granted our roles as members of the First Team squad and we have the power to help create some lasting memories that will stay with people forever. As players we should all do our bit to help and make a real difference to the great work the Trust are carrying out.

### 6. What would you like the fans to do in support of the Trust?

I would encourage everyone to get involved and support the work of the Trust. If you can give something, however small, then please do so. A simple donation of time is also welcome by the Trust who rely on loyal volunteers to help them deliver their programmes across the region. We often say that we are a family club, well families all need to pull together and that's what we need to do as so many face difficult times just now.



# VOLUNTEERS

We are proudly **supported by 30 volunteers** who provide invaluable support for our programming. **Volunteers are at the heart of the Trust, working with people of all ages across the community.** Many of our volunteers have worked with the Trust for years and are truly part of the AFCCT family. Along with our staff, they help to mentor and support young volunteers who join from our Youth Ambassador programme, providing them with crucial guidance. The Trust ensures that it **provides a variety of training** to ensure a positive and valuable experience for everyone. We are so grateful for the **incredible passion and commitment** shown by all our volunteers.



*...a fantastic bunch that we are lucky to have supporting us. Giving their time and dedication to all the programmes that they help us deliver, we couldn't do it without them!*

CLAIRE ROBERTSON  
HEALTH & WELLBEING OFFICER



## COMMUNITY SUPPORTER AWARD

At the annual AFC Player of the Year awards, the Trust **recognises the outstanding contribution made by an individual, group or organisation** in support of AFCCT. This year, the Aberdeen FC Community Trust Supporter of the Year Award was presented to **Phil and Ann McKenzie**.

We were delighted to give the award to Phil and Ann, quite the double act! Through **Fowler McKenzie**, Phil has supported the Trust with the sponsorship of fundraising events and more recently funding a year long education programme at Old Machar Academy. Ann is a valued Trust volunteer, giving up so much of her time to support Health Walks, Memories Goups, the Community Hub and more.

An enormous thank you Phil and Ann!



# FUNDRAISING

The Trust host a number of fundraising events during the year, including the Business Lunch and Golf Day. Our work in the community relies heavily upon the generosity and enthusiasm of so many individuals and organisations. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who gives their time and energy to fundraising for us.

## AFCCT "THIS IS YOUR LIFE, CRAIG BROWN" LUNCH

It is poignant that the Trust held the **"This is your life, Craig Brown"** lunch at the Chester Hotel in February 2023. A packed room enjoyed an afternoon of laughter and fun as friends and colleagues joined the late Scotland and Aberdeen Manager, Craig Brown, to reminisce about his remarkable life and career. We are grateful to our sponsors: Katoni Engineering, Cable Solutions, Gary Walker Wealth Management and AV One Solutions who enabled the event, at which **£35,000 was raised**.

Craig was a great supporter of the work of AFCCT. All at AFCCT will miss him.

## THIRD PARTY FUNDRAISING

Our supporters are widespread and provide much needed donations through a variety of events, activities, and challenges. A team of AFCCT volunteers have set themselves a fundraising target of £15,000 and are making great progress through a range of activities including taking part in this year's Kiltwalk. Several of our staff and volunteers also took part in Celebrate Aberdeen which shines a light on some of the best people and organisations that Aberdeen has to offer.

We have seen support from Dons fans across the globe including Tenerife and Dubai. One American Dons fan repeated a journey by bike, from Lands End to John O'Groats, that he had undertaken 50 years earlier making a donation to the Trust to mark this amazing achievement!

A number of organisations provide us with ongoing fundraising support. A special thank you to:

Aberdeen Supporters Club  
ABZ Football Podcast  
Ma Cameron's  
Northern Elite Golf Day Dubai  
Tenerife Dons





## TRUST DAY 2023

The annual Aberdeen FC Community Trust Day took place on 4th February 2023 during our home tie against Motherwell. Everyone enjoyed a fun filled day of celebration and fundraising. This year's theme was **"Get involved"** with activities taking place before and during the game, enabling us to involve the community in a variety of ways. Amongst others, school children took part in a **competition to design the front cover of the match day programme**; a **school parade up Pittodrie Street prior to the match**; a **food drop for our local foodbank, CFine** and our volunteers pitch side receiving a round of applause from the stadium. **The Red Army stepped up as always, donating 700kg of food to CFine.**

We were delighted to have the First Team wear a **unique AFCCT strip for the match**. Not only did this lucky shirt secure a win for the team, but it has **subsequently raised thousands of pounds for the Trust through various auctions.**

Thank you to everyone who got involved and contributed to a successful day!



# LOOKING AHEAD

During 2022/23, the Trust has had a wide-ranging impact on the community across the northeast of Scotland. We are proud of our achievements, however, we are never complacent and are always pushing to do more. During 2023/24, we aim to expand our existing Aberdeen city programming to other areas within Aberdeenshire - extending the reach of our work in education and positive destinations; football, health and wellbeing.



## AREAS OF FOCUS

### CHILD POVERTY

Analysis of child poverty in Aberdeen City was undertaken as the Children's Services Plan was developed in March 2023. This research showed that around 22% of children are experiencing child poverty, with 50% of households experiencing poverty having dependent children. We will continue to champion change through person-centred interventions within schools and community settings.

### SOCIAL ISOLATION

Recovering our Connections 2023-2026 is the Scottish Government plan to deliver A Connected Scotland. The strategy aims to tackle social isolation, loneliness and build stronger social connections. Our active ageing activities, reminiscence groups and community projects such as the Pittodrie Community Hub, work to address this need. The expansion of these programmes both in frequency and geographically will work towards this.

### MENTAL WELLBEING

Improving mental wellbeing underpins what we do across all our activities, whether directly through programmes such as The Changing Room and MINDSET or indirectly by increasing physical activity, engagement, practical support and bringing people together.

### 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF AFCCT

The Trust will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2024. As with any milestone, it is an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved during the last decade and set out our plans for the next 10 years. We look forward to a series of events during 2024 where we will tell our story and encourage others to get involved in support of the community.







# GET INVOLVED

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2022/23 Impact Report. If you, your organisation, or company are interested in getting involved with AFCCT, we would love to hear from you.

## FUNDRAISING

Through fundraising for AFCCT, you can help make a life changing impact to people of all ages and backgrounds across Aberdeen City and Shire.

## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers are at the heart of Aberdeen FC Community Trust, helping support our programmes and events. You can get involved in a range of activities, from working with young people to our active ageing programmes.

## CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Working together, through the power of partnership, the business community can make a huge positive difference to our local communities. We ensure that we align your corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals with our programming.

## DONATIONS

We rely on donations to support our community. Whether you decide to make a one-off donation or pledge a monthly gift, your donation will enable us to provide support and opportunity to change lives for the better.

## GET IN TOUCH

Email: [info@afcct.org](mailto:info@afcct.org)



DONATE





#### CONTACT US

[info@afccommunitytrust.org](mailto:info@afccommunitytrust.org)  
[www.afccommunitytrust.org](http://www.afccommunitytrust.org)

Aberdeen FC Community Trust  
Pittodrie Stadium  
Pittodrie Street  
Aberdeen  
AB24 5QH  
Telephone: 01224 009200

 @AFCCT  Aberdeen FC Community Trust