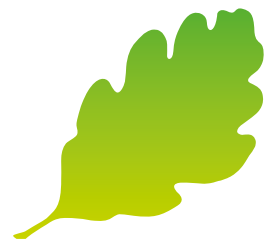


Making Change Happen...  
Aim High



**Communities,  
Lifelong Learning  
and Employability**

Annual Report April 2024 – March 2025



Midlothian

## Introduction

As we reflect on the last 12 months from April 2024 to March 2025, the Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE) Service in Midlothian Council is proud to highlight the significant contribution our staff, volunteers and partners have made in working alongside local people to help them improve their lives and communities.

Through strong community engagement, offering a flexible curriculum based on learning needs within inclusive learning environments, we have seen measurable improvements for participants. environments, we have seen measurable improvements for participants.

Our focus on practical learning, qualifications, industry partnerships and enhancing employability skills has resonated strongly with our learners and our local communities in Midlothian. However, over the last year there has been a decrease in the number of people supported across a significant number of our service areas and this is a direct result of the reduction in budget and staffing over the last few years. Moving into 2025 there was a further reduction of £75,000, or a total of £325,000 reduction over the last three years.

In 2025, given the financial pressures faced by the Council this led to budget reductions across the CYPP division. Within CLLE this will mean the volume of youth work and adult learning activities and community development opportunities which can be offered will be reduced. It will therefore be difficult to meet the recommendations of the [National Review of CLD](#).

Supporting learners and community activists of all ages to increase their confidence and influence change at both a personal and community level is what motivates us to make Midlothian a great place to grow, live, work and make memories in.

This report includes data and stories from participants that show the impact of our work across youth work, adult learning, family learning, employability and community capacity building.

### Our key achievements include:

- New 3 year CLD Partnership Improvement Plan approved in 2024, co-written by CLLE.
- 18% increase in CLLE Duke of Edinburgh participation rates.
- 12% increase in the number of day and evening classes offered, 184 in total.
- 19% increase in the number of people who live in an area of multiple deprivation accessing CLLE services.
- 11.5% increase in the number of people receiving CLLE one to one support to build skills for learning, life and work.
- 38% increase in the number of community development activities provided to support community groups in Midlothian.
- A positive Employability Partnership Self-Evaluation in early 2025.

Looking ahead we are excited to build on our momentum and continue to provide the highest standard with the resources we have for youth work, adult, family learning, employability and community development for those who choose to connect with our CLLE service in Midlothian.



Finally, I would like to thank our staff team, volunteers and partners who are driven to help local people build skills for learning, life and work.

Annette Lang  
Group Service Manager (CPP & CLLE)



## Key Facts About CLLE

- CLLE has a statutory duty to provide youth work, adult learning and community development. The statutory basis for Community Learning and Development (CLD) is set out under section 1 and 2 of the **Education (Scotland) Act 1980** (referred to as the 1980 Act):
- **Section 1 of the Act** places duties on education authorities to secure adequate and efficient provision of Community Learning and Development and is not age limited.
- We support individuals, families and communities to make change happen through building skills for learning, life and work. We do this by providing youth work, adult learning, employability opportunities and by using a community development approach when working with communities.
- We support people of all ages to access learning and improve their qualifications.
- We support people of all ages to get, or change, their job or volunteer.
- We support communities to work together to improve local areas and services.
- We secure and give out funding to local groups and charities to improve people's and communities' circumstances, again making change happen.
- We are part of the Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate of Midlothian Council.
- We have staff with a range of qualifications and experiences working in our service. These include Post Graduate qualifications in Leadership and Public Sector Management. As well as Degrees in Community Education. Many staff also have qualifications as SQA Assessor and Verifiers, Outdoor Learning or are specialist Subject or Trade based teachers/tutors.
- We operate a dedicated SQA Centre for our CLLE learning opportunities which includes all levels from national 4 to highers. Subject areas covered are: maths, English, wellbeing, core skills and trade based.

- All of our work is based on the values and principles of the Community Learning and Development Standards Council. These are:

### Self-determination

Respecting the individual and valuing the right of people to make their own choices.

### Inclusion

Valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome, and challenging discriminatory practice.

### Empowerment

Increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities through individual and/ or collective action.

### Working collaboratively

Maximising collaborative working relationships in partnerships between the many agencies which contribute to CLD, including collaborative work with participants, learners and communities.

### Promotion of learning as a lifelong activity

Ensuring that individuals are aware of a range of learning opportunities and are able to access relevant options at any stage of their life.



Ocean Youth Trust - Skill Building through Youth Work.

# Improving Skills for Learning, Life, Work & Wellbeing for All Ages

(Based on a Matter of Focus Template) - Matter of Focus home of OutNav

<b>What we do</b>	<p>We have good conversations with people and communities about what they want to change and improve and create a sense of belonging.</p> <p>We offer a programme of opportunities, including funding, to help people learn, gain new skills, qualifications and secure jobs.</p> <p>We co-design learning programmes for all ages to help people feel connected and improve wellbeing.</p> <p>We offer youth work opportunities, adult and family learning groups and classes. We also work with people from communities to help them take positive action to improve communities.</p> <p>We aim to reduce poverty and inequality through our work.</p>
<b>Who with</b>	<p>Local people of all ages who are looking for support to get involved in their community, take their next steps, volunteer, learn a new skill in a group, gain a qualification, secure employment or a new job or career.</p> <p>Partners who apply for grants to improve Midlothian.</p> <p>Young people and adults who want to take part voluntarily in youth work or adult learning</p>
<b>How they feel</b>	<p>Increased sense of belonging. Increased pride. Increased confidence. Increased sense of self belief.</p> <p>More able to handle challenges, including financial ones.</p> <p>They feel proud of themselves and their achievements including securing qualifications, making new friends and having new experiences.</p> <p>More informed about their community.</p> <p>Partners feel they are part of a shared endeavour.</p>
<b>What they learn and gain</b>	<p>People know what matters to them.</p> <p>People have the confidence, skills and qualifications to make decisions and influence services that improve the community they live, learn and work in.</p> <p>People have access to programmes and opportunities which match their needs.</p>
<b>What they do differently</b>	<p>People manage their choices and wellbeing for themselves, their families and communities.</p> <p>People consult with others and include their views and opinions to influence decision making.</p> <p>They use their voice, learning and experiences to make things better for themselves and others.</p>
<b>The difference this makes?</b>	<p>People have improved wellbeing, new skills, qualifications, better finances, and for some, a new or higher paid job or career.</p> <p>People have increased support networks and contacts in their community. People give back to their community.</p>

## Financial Resources

**Most of our services are offered free to the public, apart from let charges and charges for some adult learning classes.**

We have an income target of \*£490,076 which we have met through contracts, external funding, providing chargeable services for other council departments and charging the public for some adult learning classes.

The annual adult learning income target is £25,000 but income generation for this theme has been approximately £15,000.

We do ensure a scale of charges to support those on low incomes. We also manage the grants the Council awards to community groups and third sector organisations.

Third sector grants have remained at the same overall financial level and have not received any inflationary increases, therefore the number of projects which can be supported is decreasing.

<b>Our Funding</b>	<b>Amount 23/24</b>	<b>Amount 24/25</b>
Core Staffing CLLE	£2,205,282	£2,049,206
Large Grants every 3 years (annual amount), Grants to Community Council (CC)	£520,000 £10,000 (CC)	£520,000 £10,000 (CC)
Employability Funding from Scottish Government for parents and an all-age service including young people	£1,277,000	£1,302,706
<b>INCOME TARGET (from fees, charges and external funding)</b>	<b>*£490,076</b>	<b>*£490,076</b>



# Our Key Achievements.



## High levels of satisfaction

- 99.3% of people were satisfied with our services



## We need to try to sustain youth work, adult learning and community development going forward, although with reduced resources for 25/26

- 510 projects provided in 12 towns and villages (509 in 12 towns 23/24, 535 in 14 towns 22/23, 501 in 21/22)
- 5,779 people have engaged with the full range of CLLE services in 2024/25, this figures includes drop ins where we do not record names and ages.



## Learner Achievements

- Demand for CLLE barrier free Duke of Edinburgh Increasing

- 98.3% of people reported improved key skills
- 2,506 qualifications achieved (2,531 in 23/24, 2,163 in 22/23, 1,355 in 21/22, 477 in 20/21) – a decrease of 1%
- 378 young people started Duke of Edinburgh awards with 225 awards gained (18% increase) (350/190 in 23/24, 354/171 in 22/23, 194/48 in 21/22)
- 184 day and evening courses were offered, including 30 accredited courses. (164 (33 accredited) in 23/24, 174 (23 accredited) in 22/23, 157 (24 accredited) 21/22, 143 (2 accredited) in 20/21).
- 375 adults attended our paid Adult Learning courses. (477 in 23/24 388 in 22/23, 398 in 21/22, 93 in 20/21)
- 4,561 young people attended positive destinations projects, including youth clubs (4,751 in 23/24, 5,238 in 22/23, 5,136 in 21/22, 1,010 in 20/21). e.g. 1187 home visits
- 500 adults and children attended Family Learning (514 in 23/24, 355 in 22/23, 299 in 21/22, 6 in 20/21)
- 629 young people took part in School Work Experience placements through a new targeted approach (972 23/24 104 in 22/23, 65 21/22, 0 in 20/21, 770 in 19/20).
- 215 young people attended the vocational learning centre weekly e.g. construction & other employability skills (298 23/24 414 in 22/23, 344 21/22 85 in 20/21, 148 in 19/20)
- 475 people engaged with Parental Employability Support Project (411 23/24 ,254 in 22/23 177 in 21/22)
- 118 people were supported with their CLLE Modern Apprenticeship (109 23/24 128 in 22/23, 110 21/22, 110 in 20/21, 146 in 19/20).
- 71 young people were supported at our Croft Street Hub with learning, qualifications, work experience and employability support. (78 23/24, 86 in 22/23, 81 in 21/22, 92 in 20/21, 56 in 19/20)



Youth Work Approaches



## Supporting a wide range of people

- 725 participants were from a minority ethnic group (754 in 23/24, 664 in 22/23, 428 in 21/22, 219 in 20/21).
- 451 participants were from areas of deprivation (377 in 23/24, 302 in 22/23, 275 21/22, 154 in 20/21)
- 182 people were supported with ESOL, Literacy or Numeracy (174 in 23/24, 227 in 22/23, 182 21/22, 169 in 20/21).
- 892 people received 1:1 support (799 in 23/24, 776 in 22/23, 861 in 21/22, 473 in 20/21). This included 49 people with a disability / barriers to work (43 in 23/24, 48 in 22/23, 62 in 20/21).

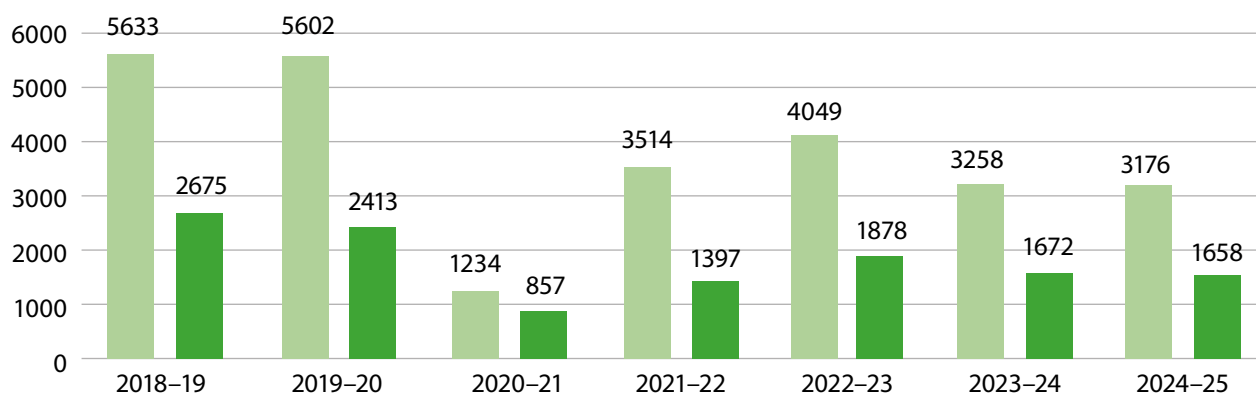


## Supporting communities

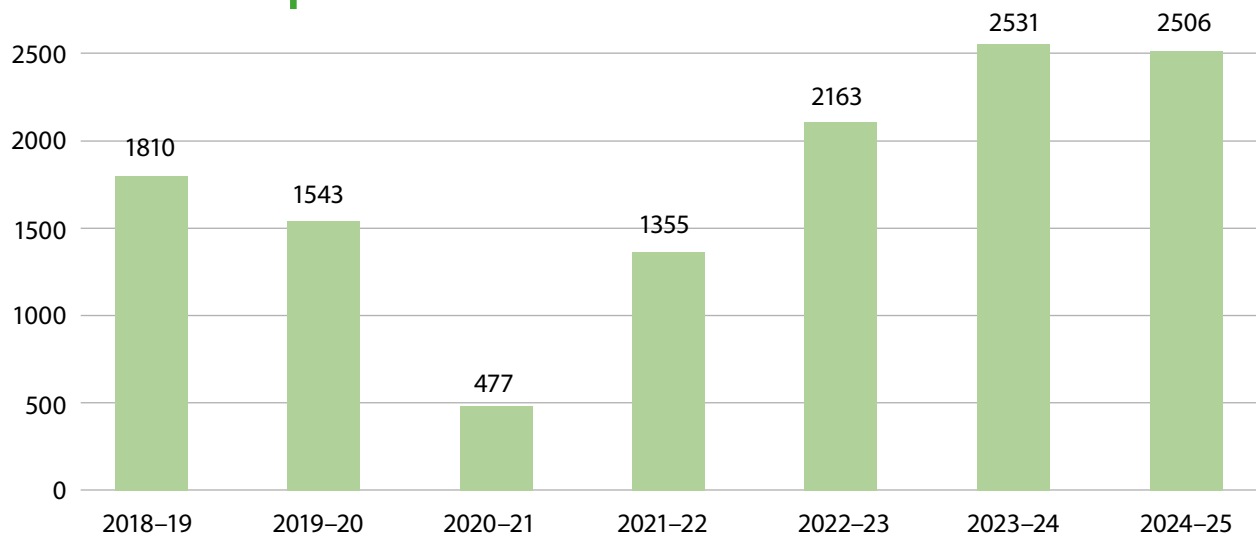
- 254 activities supported 48 community groups (183 act /58 groups in 23/24 260 act/73 groups in 22/23, 253 act/83 groups in 21/22)
- 1,203 adults and families attended free community projects (1115 in 23/24, 1,739 in 22/23, 1,318 in 21/22, 813 in 20/21)

## Number of registered participants

- Under 18 years old
- Over 18 years old



## Number of qualifications achieved



Croft Street Hub and Community Garden, Dalkeith.

# Learning journeys which improve wellbeing, confidence and friendships

## Connecting Voices 6-week programme (DRUM RDA)

*"On days of attending the course, I felt calmer, more relaxed and at ease. My anxiety reduced and I felt safe and comfortable. The closeness to the horses and the dogs was very calming, comforting and left me with a feeling of achievement and increased my confidence and self-esteem each week. The tutors understood my limitations of chronic fatigue which helped me to progress further with my illness management which has given me the confidence to join other courses."*

### Improving your Wellbeing CLLE Course

*"Thank you so much for all your help and time and understanding. I was in the ocean and now with your help I am feeling close to the shore. I am starting to have faith in people."*

### Volunteering with Child Poverty Research Project (Partnership Surestart/CLLE).

*I joined the project last year as I wanted to learn something new and connect with people more as I felt a bit isolated as a mum and I work from home.*

*I believed the simple tasks will be easy and it will be just a project I would forget about once it's finished.*

*But that is not the case....*

*We are at the final stages of the project and the whole journey is like being on a train which travels through hills, mountains and valleys. As we entered enchanted territory, I discovered that this is actually something I like and I would like to explore it more.*

*I learnt new skills and gained so much new knowledge. I am now a trained community researcher and I understood my ideal job would be not in the office anymore but working with people, connecting and helping them. Thanks to the project I was able to talk to people I meet on the streets every day (for example, when I pass other parents during the school run) and I believe I made a few positive changes in a few people's lives.*

*Because I connected to more people locally, I feel mentally much better and I do not feel isolated anymore. I feel stronger connection with my little town. I hope our project will be a starting point for something bigger, something that will help others.*

*As a person coming from abroad, with no family around, it was (and still is) difficult to build a life I would like for my children to have. Even after 21 years it does not feel like 100% home but being able to participate in the project allowed me to leave my fingerprint in the local history. I hope I will make my kids proud once they grow up.*

*Professionally, I discovered my listening skills and I would like to explore it further. I was also helped by the person I met through the project; to create learning plan for me and I will apply for a counselling course.*

### Adult Achievement Award CLLE Gaining Qualifications

*The course was run in Penicuik, an accessible place for me as I would not be willing to travel to another town (transport links within Midlothian are not convenient and buses are unreliable). Very often, interesting courses for me are run in Dalkeith but due to the travel times and childcare I am not able to join.*

*I appreciated that the group was very small as we all could receive as much attention from the tutor as we needed. The group was friendly and I could always ask for help if some tasks were unclear.*

*As my first language is not English, I struggled sometimes but the fantastic tutor guided me in the right direction.*

*I always felt supported and the amount of time was enough for me to finish the course. Because of relaxed atmosphere and approachable colleagues, we also managed to explore and discuss other topics we wanted (of course, after we finished working on the tasks we had planned).*

*Overall, I would recommend the AAA course to everybody and I am happy that I joined.*

*Thank you for organising it in Penicuik!*



## CLLE Mental Health Coping Strategies and Building Resilience

*I work in a Day Centre for older adults, many of whom have physical health problems as well as mental health conditions.*

*When I saw the course advertised, I felt that by taking part, it would be beneficial to me in helping our service users deal with these conditions and that they would know that they could discuss these issues with me and that I would help them as much as I can.*

*I really enjoyed doing this course and feel that it has taught me so much and that it will help, not only my own mental health, but the service users who attend the Centre. Our CLLE tutor is very informative, helpful, friendly and made everyone feel at ease and able to discuss things in the group.*



Creative Learning in Action.

## CLLE Understanding Mental Health Issues

*I loved this course. I have disabilities along with poor health and don't often leave home, so I felt very isolated. It made me feel good to be able to mix with other adults learning online. It's the perfect way for me to learn from home and it helps with my loneliness. This course has brought my confidence up by making me realise that I am capable of contributing to discussions and passing assessments. It made me understand mental health much more and I have been able to improve my own wellbeing and my family's. I can't wait to learn more about it.*



City and Guilds Level 2 Cabling Communications.

## CLLE literacy, numeracy and ESOL Making Change Happen

The participants have told us that they...

*"enjoy working with the CLLE facilitator as it's nice to have someone who believes in me outside of my family, friends etc... and I like knowing that I have the chance to try Higher English as it wasn't something that I got a chance to try in school. I like working 1 - 1 with CLLE too as it's nice being able to chat each week about my writing."*

*"really enjoy being part of the class on Monday morning. Every week my reading and writing is getting better and we have a good laugh, especially when we play word games at the end. I like it because we are all working together and helping each other. I also like the other people in the group. The CLLE staff member also takes the time to listen to me and he is helping me with getting a job."*

## ESOL Impact Statement 2025

*"I can say that I have become more confident when I participate in job interviews. I am currently taking a door supervisor course to obtain a license. In this course there is also time for learning how to pass an interview and I see that I already have the basis to study successfully."*



# Making Change Happen for Young People

**We were finalists June 2024 in the Youthlink Awards. In the category of Environment and Outdoor Learning**

This group were part of a Midlothian Council CLLE Open Duke of Edinburgh Group, the young people had the complex needs ranging from ADHD, asthma, Tourette's and severe anxiety. This group started at Bronze Level, went through Silver then on to complete their Gold level as a group.



Duke of Edinburgh Silver Walk.

The Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award required them to complete a 5 day residential course working with other young people from Midlothian they did not know which was a challenge in itself. The CLLE Open Duke of Edinburgh project ensured that it was accessible, fully inclusive and achievable for everyone. All young people have the opportunity to receive their award either at Holyrood or Buckingham Palaces.

Lasswade Seniors CLLE Youth Club is a small youth club run in partnership with Bonnyrigg Rose Football Club. The group is made up of young people, aged 12 – 16, who are neurodivergent.

The CLLE youth club gives them time to socialise in a safe and consistent environment. The young people play board games, do arts and crafts and cook. This term we have been tie-dyeing t-shirts, cooking quesadillas, and making friendship bracelets. When the young people are doing

their activities we chat about friendships, current affairs, keeping safe (both online and in person) and many other issue-based topics.

The feedback from the young people is that they have grown in confidence, made new friends and found a space where they can be themselves.

## CLLE Youth Work in Penicuik

### Parental Feedback

*"My son thoroughly enjoys the activities and most of his friends attended these too. It's actually a great incentive for them not to be wandering the streets bored."*

### Young people's feedback

*"I come to the youth club to get out of the house and get a break from my parents, I like the youth club as it is close to my house, it's free and I like*



*the snacks, I meet new friends before I go to high school; I hang out it's fun and I like mixing with different age groups and different high schools."*

### 12+ Early Intervention Project

*"I enjoy Dance. It's giving me all the opportunities I haven't had access to before."*



# Making Change Happen for Young People

## Youth Work Approaches and Bikes

Learning to cycle, fixing bikes, taking part in group activities and receiving your own bike free of charge can be life changing for young people. Using a youth work bike approach is a great vehicle for helping young people build skills for learning, life or work.

### A day in the life of a CLLE bike programme worker...



CLLE - Practical Skills and Qualifications.

Today I have supported 3 young carers to help to learn to ride a bike, later I'm working with a group of young people helping them learn how to fix their bike and ride them safely through an organised group bike excursion. We also have groups gaining bike maintenance qualifications, so I need to go over their learning materials for accreditation. I'll also be looking over the work of a young person that has been submitted for their Dynamic Youth Award.

Young people and other partners have told CLLE that we are making change happen...

*"A young person I support has attended the bike workshop for some time now. They have learnt how to fix and maintain bikes which has helped build their fine motor skills and develop problem solving skills. It has also helped develop their social skills by growing in confidence and being able to interact with new people and new situations. Overall, this experience has had a positive impact on their mental health and they have attended every week."*

A local secondary school leader told us that the bike workshop course had: "Increased engagement for those struggling to take part, improved attendance for late comers, benefited students who prefer practical careers, increased knowledge of bike maintenance, developed skills of working with others and gained recognised qualifications.

## CLLE Croft Street Hub

### Youth Work Approaches in Action

#### Celebrating Success

Seventy one young people have been supported by CLLE staff through Croft Street Hub to gain qualifications and take their next steps towards a positive destination. Their hard work and determination were recognised at the June 2024, Celebration of Success held in the Croft Street Gardens, which over the years have been transformed by young people and staff to be a nice, healthy outdoor space.

Staff said that young people had been *"remarkable, resilient, determined and their personal growth was outstanding through completing training, gaining award and taking part in volunteering and work placements". "They said it was very special to see young people believing that their dreams and goals are achievable."*

Skills Development Scotland said, *"it was lovely to see how well the young people have progressed with CLLE staff constant support and always going the extra mile for them. It was fantastic to see past service users at the event and how they want to give back to the Croft Street Hub experience."*



# Making Change Happen for Communities

**Community Capacity Building - Community Development support including managing and securing new funding streams.**

## Midlothian Council Large Grants

CLLE distributed £520k of Midlothian Council large grants funding in 2024/25 to projects across the themes of Health, Learning, Economic Circumstances and Carbon Emissions in line with the Single Midlothian Plan.

Projects vary from support for grandparents kinship carers, food poverty, employability, support for veterans, work with children and young people, community gardens and income maximisation support for older people.

An example of impact from the Homelink Outreach Family Support worker funded through this programme: "84% parents felt their wellbeing was improving due to having regular support"



The Lothians Veterans Centre is another organisation funded through the large grants programme. In July 2024 they organised an unprecedented female Veterans' Networking event for female veterans from all three services at The Scots Guards Club in Edinburgh. 55 women attended including the Scottish Veterans Commissioner.

The Changeworks in Dalkeith project aims to give expert advice and help households to begin their household decarbonisation journey. This can involve supporting local people to reduce their bills some over £1000 per month, by securing funding to support for example new energy efficient boilers, heating insulation, new heating controls and flat roof insulation.

## Shared Prosperity Funding UK (UKSPF)

UKSPF supports the UK Government Investment Priorities: Communities and Place, People and Skills, Support to Local Business and Multiply (adult numeracy). Midlothian has awarded funding for a variety of projects to address identified local needs which have been delivered by the public, private and third sector.

Several capital projects have been completed in 2024/25 which has resulted in considerable improvements in community facilities across Midlothian. They have included the addition of solar panels to the community café at Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust and a significant upgrade to changing room facilities at Ladywood Leisure Centre - a charitable community facility in Penicuik, managed by the Penicuik Community Sports and Leisure Foundation.

The Green Skills programme recruited and upskilled local plumbers, heating engineers and electricians in the installation of Heat Pumps and Solar Panels/Battery Storage. The programme included a Managed Learning Programme in partnership with the Energy Training Academy, enabling an individual with no experience of the trade to become a fully qualified gas and heat pump installer. 22 candidates successfully completed the Solar panel and PV battery storage course and are now fully qualified. 12 candidates completed the ASHP course at level 3 and are certified in air source heat pumps.

The Prescribe Nature course at Newbattle Abbey has had a significant impact on participant's lives and as a result several have progressed into volunteering roles, higher education and employment.

*"Absolutely amazing!... It has made me think and research into different opportunities. It has had a huge impact on my mental wellbeing and helping with isolation."*

*"I've found a new volunteering placement starting a small activity session with pre-schoolers at a community garden and possibly with veterans."*

*"I've enjoyed every minute of the course, thank you!"*

*"I have found a new job!"*

*"I have an interview for a job!"*

# Making Change Happen for Young and Lifelong Learners

## CLLE Shared Prosperity Funding UK

### Participation All Levels Midlothian (PALM)

17 courses offered (including 13 accredited) including:

- Emergency First Aid at work
- Paediatric First Aid
- Elementary Food Hygiene
- Mental Health First Aid
- Autism Awareness
- SQA Barista Skills
- CSCS Green Labourer Card
- Case study (PALM)

The learner stated they had worked in a Barista previously 9 years ago and wanted to re-learn the skills and knowledge they had acquired during that time. As the course went on staff noticed how well they had started to remember all those skills and knowledge and the way they used these to support other learners with the practical activities which worked towards the qualification.

The interpersonal skills and natural ability shown by the learner encouraged CLLE staff to offer an opportunity to join the service as a volunteer which the learner agreed to. They are currently in the process of joining and taking up an opportunity to shadow an upcoming local cooking class and also to further support a future planned Barista course.

# Making Change Happen with Communities

## Danderhall Community Council impact statement

“CLLE has been incredibly supportive of our efforts to build back our Community Council after several years when we struggled to attract new members. We recognised that our constitution was outdated and no longer met our needs, and CLLE provided valuable input to bring it into line with current best practice.

Advice and guidance from CLLE together with some ‘one off’ funding has enabled us to considerably raise our profile and increase community engagement, in the form of regular newsletters, posters, flyers, better use of social media, a redesigned logo, new noticeboards, branded publicity materials etc.

We also value the supporting role that CLLE takes in the operation of the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils, it is very informative to hear what issues other Midlothian Community Councils are facing and how they are being addressed”.

# Making Change Happen to Reduce Poverty

CLLE provides a variety of supports to the:

- Child Poverty Group
- Cost of Living Task Force
- Community Planning Reducing Poverty thematic group.

This involves managing the funding and support for the 22 Cash First Trusted Partners including key schools in Midlothian who provide direct cash first support to local people on low incomes. From April 2024 to March 2025, there have been 1,178 instances of cash first support provide, with an additional 198 offered through schools.

We have supported the setup of the [Midlothian Food Pantry Network](#) in partnership with the Cost of Living Task Force and Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust.

In addition, CLLE have helped 6 local community organisations to receive grants directly to purchase period products that suit the needs of their service users.

We also co-produced the [Local Child Poverty Year 6 Action Report](#)

This focuses on reducing child poverty.

Further information on cost of living supports can be found at: [Cost of living | Midlothian Council](#)