



Making Change Happen...
Aim High



**Communities,
Lifelong Learning
and Employability**

Annual Report April 2025 – March 2026



Introduction

As we reflect on the period April 2025 to March 2026, this report sets out the work of Midlothian Council's Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE) Service over the past year. Our focus remains on supporting individuals, families and communities to build skills for learning, life and work, while contributing to wider priorities around reducing inequalities and strengthening local communities.

CLLE is a statutory service, with duties set out under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. This requires local authorities to secure adequate and efficient provision of Community Learning and Development for people of all ages. This statutory role shapes both the range of services we deliver and our responsibility to ensure they are accessible, inclusive and aligned to identified need across Midlothian.

Over the last year, we have continued to deliver across youth work, adult and family learning, employability and community development, with a clear emphasis on targeted support and early intervention. We have maintained a strong partnership approach, working with community planning partners, third sector organisations and local groups to design and deliver services that respond to local priorities. Demand for our services continues to increase, reflecting ongoing population growth in Midlothian and increasing need, particularly within youth work, employability and support for older people.

While operating within a context of ongoing financial pressures, we have seen continued positive outcomes in terms of participation, learner progression and community engagement. This includes a sustained reach into areas of deprivation, levels of one-to-one support, and a reaching a broader, more representative group of learners. We know we need to review our adult learning offer and increase the number of local people participating.

These achievements are underpinned by the commitment and professionalism of our staff, volunteers and partners. I would like to acknowledge and thank them for their continued work over the past year. Their ability to adapt, prioritise and maintain quality in a constrained environment has been central to what we have achieved.

This report provides an overview of activity and impact across the service, combining performance data with examples of individual and community outcomes. It reflects both the progress made and the challenges ahead as we continue to deliver our statutory responsibilities and respond to growing demand within available resources.

Positive Achievements by CLLE:

- **12.7 % increase in CLLE projects delivered across 12 towns and villages, 65 more projects than the year before.**
- **11.8% increase in the number of people engaging with CLLE, 685 more than last year.**
- **18.5% increase in the number of people accessing all age employability NOLB, 65 more than last year.**
- **13.7% more young people took part in CLLE services which is an increase of 625 on the year before**
- **4% increase in the number of Duke of Edinburgh Awards Achieved**
- **7.1% increase in local people of all ages receiving one to one support from CLLE.**
- **27% increase in the number of community groups supported, 13 more groups supported than last year.**

Derek Oliver
Executive Director

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 sections 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 changes 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. Below are 8 key facts about CLLE:

1. We support people of all ages to access learning and improve their qualifications.
2. We support people of all ages to find or change jobs, or volunteer.
3. We support communities to work together to improve local areas and services.
4. We secure and give out funding to local groups and charities to improve people's and communities' circumstances, again making change happen.
5. We are part of the Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate of Midlothian Council.
6. We have staff with a range of qualifications and experience 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.
7. We operate a dedicated SQA Centre for our CLLE learning opportunities which includes all levels from national 4 to higher. Subject areas covered are: maths, English, wellbeing, core skills and trade based.
8. 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.



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

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

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

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.

Our Funding	Amount 24/25	Amount 25/26
Core Staffing CLLE	£2,049,206	£2,273,663
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	£1,302,706	£1,368,706
INCOME TARGET (from fees, charges and external funding)	*£490,076	*£490,076

Our Key Achievements.



High levels of satisfaction

- 99.1% of people were satisfied with our services



We need to try to sustain youth work, adult learning and community development going forward, with increased demands rather than reduced resources for 26/27

- 575 projects provided in 12 towns and villages (510 in 12 towns 24/25, 509 in 12 towns 23/24)
- 6,464 people have engaged with the full range of CLLE services in 2025/26 an 11.8 % increase, this figure includes drop ins where we do not record names and ages.



Learner Achievements and Participation in CLLE services.

- 97.3% of people reported improved key skills
- 2,247 qualifications achieved (2506 in 24/25, 2,531 in 23/24) (reflects Foundation Apprenticeships moving from CLLE to Schools)
- 345 young people started Duke of Edinburgh awards with 235 awards gained (4% increase) (378/225 in 24/25 350/190 in 23/24)
- 150 day and evening courses were offered, including 20 accredited courses. (184 (30 accredited) in 24/25, 164 (33 accredited) in 23/24).
- 312 adults attended our paid Adult Learning courses. (375 in 24/25. 477 in 23/24)
- 5,186 young people attended positive destinations projects, including youth clubs (4,561 in 24/25, 4,751 in 23/24) e.g. 736 home visits
- 466 adults and children attended Family Learning (500 in 24/25, 514 in 23/24).
- 643 young people took part in School Work Experience placements through a new targeted approach (629 in 24/25, 972 in 23/24).
- 163 young people attended the vocational learning centre weekly e.g. construction & other employability skills (215 in 24/25, 298 in 23/24) This reflects the reduction in Foundation Apprenticeships through CLLE.
- 457 people engaged with Parental Employability Support Project (NOLB) (475 in 24/25, 411 in 23/24) funded by Scottish Government.
- 416 people engaged with All Age Employability Support (NOLB) (351 in 24/25) funded by Scottish Government.
- 90 people were supported with their CLLE Modern Apprenticeship (118 in 24/25, 109 in 23/24).
- 58 young people were supported at our Croft Street Hub with learning, qualifications, work experience and employability support. (71 in 24/25, 78 23/24)



Supporting a wide range of people

737 participants were from a minority ethnic group (725 in 24/25, 754 in 23/24).

- 450 participants were from areas of deprivation (451 in 24/25, 377 in 23/24)
- 106 people were supported with ESOL, Literacy or Numeracy (182 in 24/25, 174 in 23/24).
- 956 people received 1:1 support (892 in 24/25, 799 in 23/24). This included 55 people with a disability / barriers to work (49 in 24/25, 43 in 23/24).

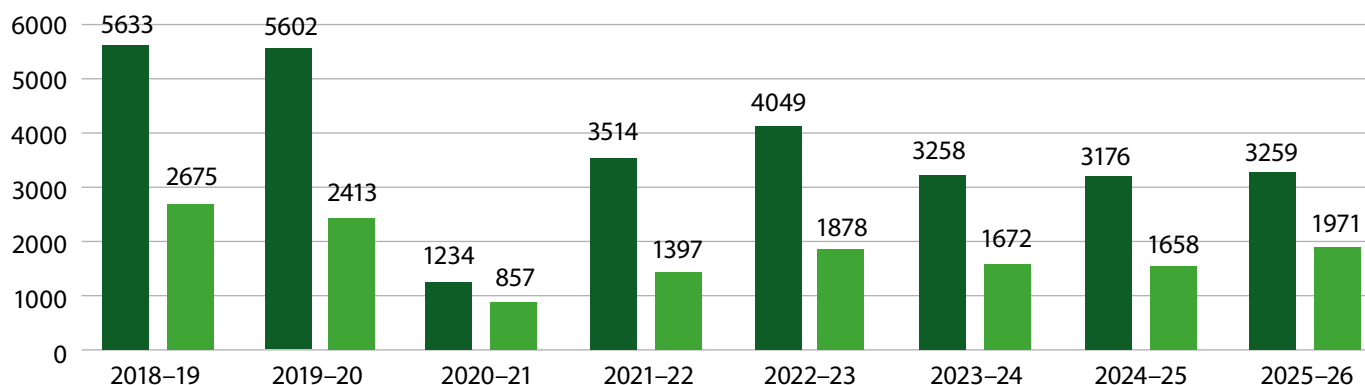


Supporting communities

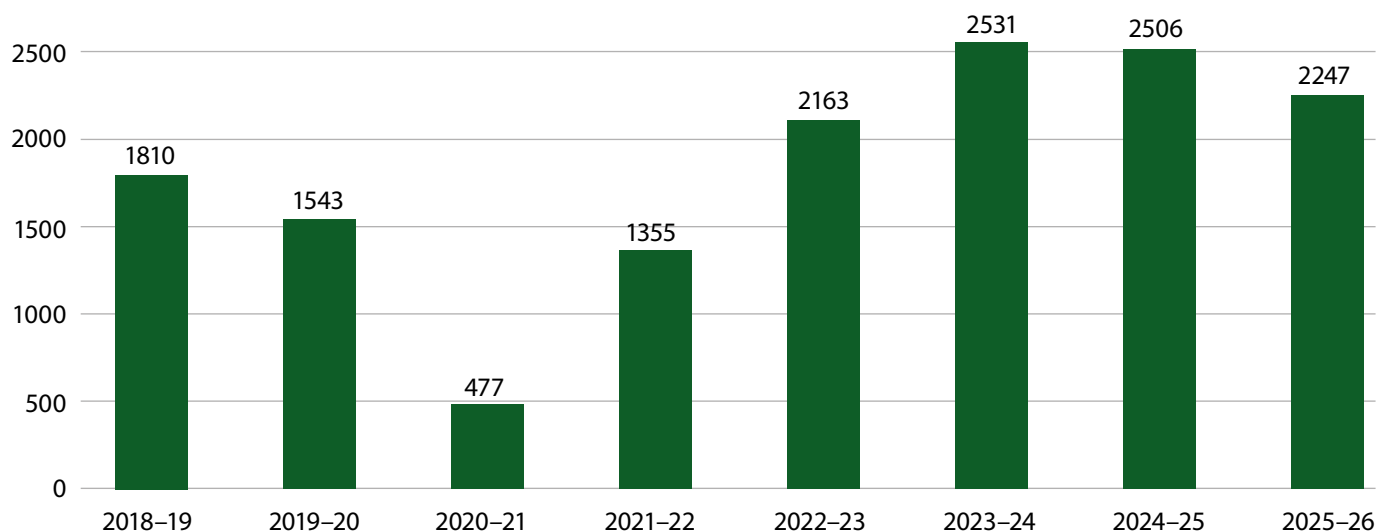
- 235 activities supported 61 community groups (254 act / 48 groups in 24/25, 183 act / 58 groups in 23/24)
- 1,143 adults and families attended free community projects (1,203 in 24/25, 1115 in 23/24)

Number of registered participants (excluding drop ins)

- Under 18 years old
- Over 18 years old

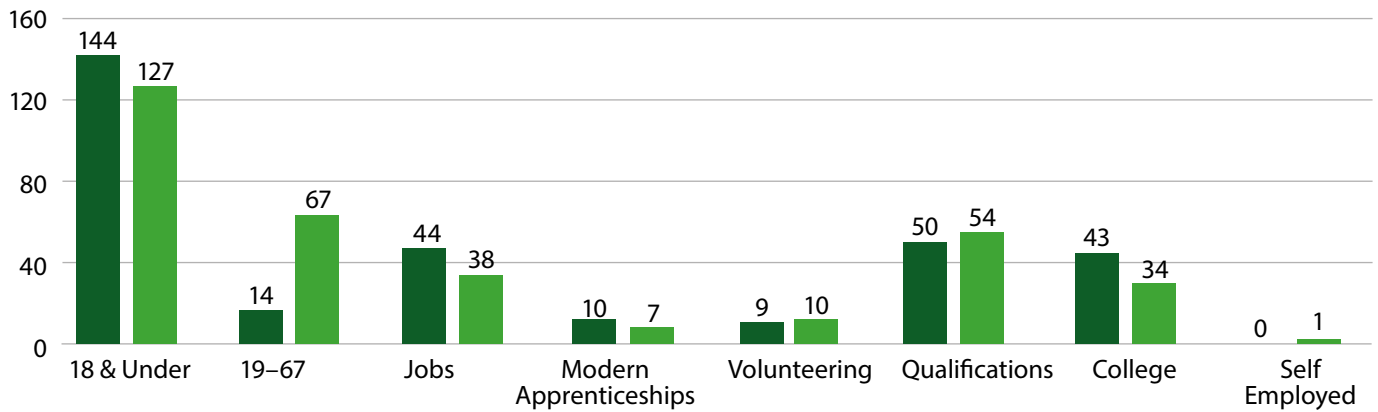


Number of qualifications achieved through CLLE



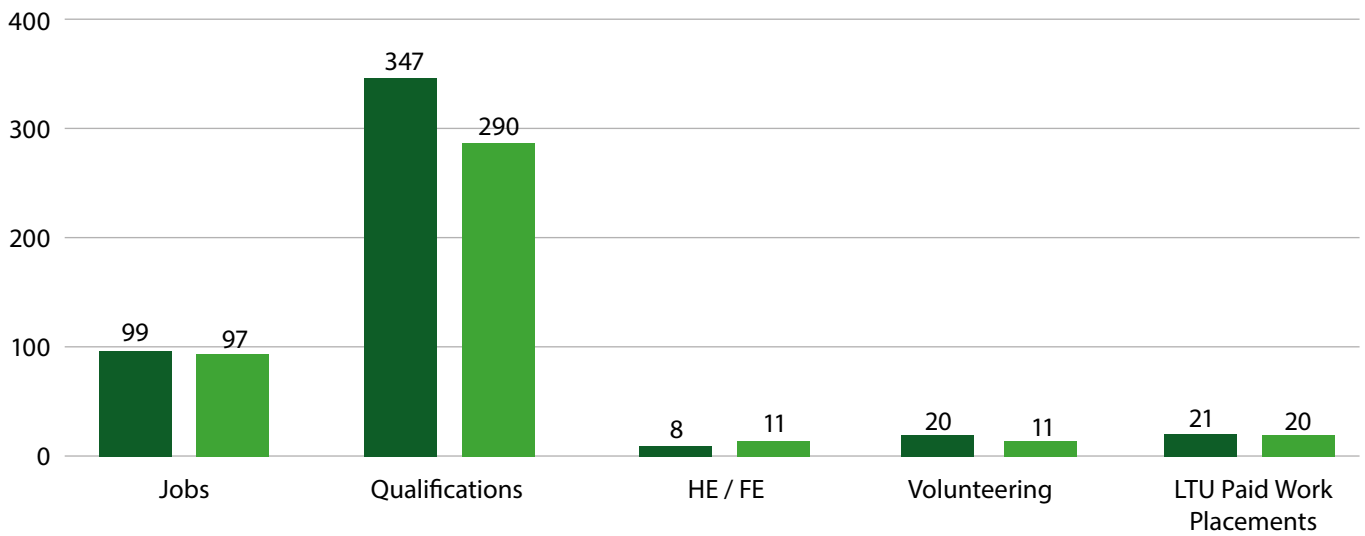
All Age Employability Age Profile and Outcomes 25/26

■ 2024-2025
■ 2025-2026



Parental Employability Outcomes 25/26

■ 2024-2025
■ 2025-2026



Impact Stories – CLLE Supporting Change

Making a Change for Learners through CLLE adult and family learning

Adult learners achieving accreditation through CLLE (Nat 5 Maths, Barista Skills and others) report positive changes including:

"This helped improve my confidence and training for work."

"Helped me get over my fear of putting myself out there and trying new things"

"The tutor was very knowledgeable, and the course was well paced. Tutor supported your learning and made sure everyone felt confident ahead of the assessment"

Family Learning: Making Change Happen

Family Easter Programme 2025

Families reported the benefits of taking part in sessions :

- Eight families told us that it gave them a special family experience with ideas of things to do at home.
- Seven families told us it made them feel more confident to try new things
- Six families were encouraged to take part in more family learning sessions.

"Really fun, relaxed session, the kids enjoyed themselves and encouraged me to get the arts and crafts out at home"

"The facilitator was so great with the children especially given they were all of different ages. We all enjoyed it and will definitely come again."

Family Learning

"I attended the Family Craft sessions in the school with my two children. We were made to feel very welcome and it was nice to be able to create fun things with my kids and not worry about the mess they made. It was a nice way to help them relax and unwind from a busy school day. Each week we made something different, which went on the wall at home and it gave us ideas of cheap, creative things that we can do together. I feel it has encouraged us all to be more crafty and try making new things."

Village Voices Reminiscence Group Newtongrange

"We believe that everyone should have a voice and that everyone has a worthwhile story or memory to tell."

"As well as discussing local history, Village Voices is a social group where the older members of the community feel valued and supported by one another"

"Our meetings reduce any feelings of social isolation amongst our members. Ours is a friendship group as well as a local history and reminiscence group and all members are cared for and supported."

Confidently Me! Course

"I am delighted to have joined this course, it has given me more confidence, I feel happy and finally believe in myself. I have seen what is holding me back in life and how I can change it. My friends have noticed a big difference in my confidence. I have been accepted on a course at Newbattle Abbey College and I am excited about the future. This course is brilliant!"



Community Engagement and Support

Volunteering with Making a Difference in Midlothian Group

"I feel thankful to have been part of this process. This group is helping me to understand my self-worth and how I can help make a difference. I get anxious and nervous about speaking out within a group setting for fear of saying the wrong thing or getting laughed at. This group is helping me to gain confidence in asking questions and giving out ideas and is giving me structure to my week. I feel we have been included in discussions and forward planning. I have become more proactive within the group and learned it's ok to have different opinions from others. I am now volunteering at a local community cafe and have signed up for another CLLE course."

Raising Teens with Confidence

"This was an enjoyable course and I gained a great deal of knowledge from each of the sessions. It was very informative, informal and relaxed. I particularly enjoyed the sessions on the teenage brain and ideas on how to try different approaches for dealing with problems with my teen. It was particularly helpful to be given time to talk to other parents there and realise that I am not alone. Every parent should do this course."

"I feel like I was being heard and this boosted my confidence. I feel proud that I was able to contribute to a worthwhile project and feel keen to be part of the next phase of the learning process. I have learned how to prepare for meetings, be more confident in speaking out in public, and how to work as part of a team. I have used the confidence I have gained in a meeting about my child at school and in the work environment to speak up and make my case effectively. It has helped me have a focus other than myself and has motivated me."



CLLE literacy, numeracy and ESOL Making Change Happen

What the participants told us...

"I really enjoy my creative writing class. I have discovered that I love writing and using my imagination. The class has made me more confident to try new things. I am going to start a new course in September and get new qualifications. Coming to the class has made me feel more confident to do that"

"I want to work in IT but my school qualifications weren't good enough. This has helped me to focus on what I need to improve and get the qualification and confidence that I need to make the next steps."

"I have struggled with my confidence and mental health recently. Coming to classes has really helped me. I look forward to working on new tasks and improving my skills."

"I really enjoy our class. Everyone is really friendly and we have a good laugh. I enjoy the stories that we read and it doesn't feel like school. My reading and writing are definitely getting better."

ESOL Impact Statements 2026

"I have no community here, this class is my community. I love the recipe sharing and just talking about interesting things that we like. It is making me more confident to speak in English."

"With your guidance, my English has continued to improve, and I have successfully passed my GCSE English and B1 English Test. Thank you again for all your support, encouragement, and the arrangements you have made for me. I have really appreciated the opportunity to learn and improve my English."

"I am also pleased to share that I have found a new job in a nursery. Thank you for all the English support. It has helped me to secure a part-time job in a nursery in August which might lead to a permanent position."

"This is my community. I have small children, so I like the Zoom class it makes it easier, it's been very good for me."

"We always talk about new and interesting topics. The group is always relaxed and the teachers are very good. It has made me more confident to speak more."

"Before, my English wasn't so good. I didn't know much vocabulary. The class has helped me to get better in English and I feel more confident speaking to people now."

Quality Qualifications for All

Community Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE) in Midlothian delivers a range of SQA accredited qualifications that support learners to gain recognised skills, improve confidence, and progress into employment or further learning. Courses such as Work based Skills (Construction, Hospitality and Automotive), Barista Skills, Health and Safety in a Construction Environment, and PC Passport provide practical, industry relevant opportunities, particularly for those who may not engage in traditional education. All provision is underpinned by a robust quality framework, requiring CLLE to evidence compliance across national standards relating to resources, candidate support, assessment, and internal verification.

In 2025–26, CLLE underwent external quality assurance by Qualifications Scotland across six subject areas and achieved a rating of "High Confidence" across all criteria. This confirms that CLLE delivers learning to the same high standard as schools and colleges, ensuring qualifications are credible and valued by local people, further/higher education and employers. The result highlights the strength of CLLE's provision in Midlothian, reinforcing its role in widening access, supporting inclusive pathways, and contributing to a skilled and work ready local workforce.

CLLE Quality Scorecard 2025-26

- ✓ High confidence rating achieved
- ✓ 6 subject areas externally verified
- ✓ Meets all national QA criteria
- ✓ Industry-relevant qualifications delivered
- ✓ Strong learner support and assessment
- ✓ Qualifications valued by employers

Making Change Happen for Young People

Every young person's journey is different. Some come to 12Up feeling disconnected from learning, lacking confidence, or facing barriers that make school and future planning difficult. Through Community Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE), 12Up provides a safe, supportive environment where young people can rebuild confidence, develop skills and rediscover a sense of purpose.

This year, 12Up supported 35 young people through a holistic, person-centred programme focused on wellbeing, learning and achievement. The programme combines accredited learning, practical skills, one-to-one support and positive experiences that help young people take meaningful steps towards brighter futures. A Curriculum for Excellence tracking system enables staff to identify starting points, measure progress and celebrate growth in confidence, resilience, communication and achievement.

Young people accessed qualifications in English, Maths, Communication, Construction, Automotive Studies, Hospitality and Bike Maintenance, alongside youth awards, wellbeing activities, dancing and woodcarving. Learning was tailored to individual needs, helping young people experience success at their own pace and build confidence in their abilities.

One young person aged 13 joined 12Up who was not attending school. Through patient relationship-building and personalised support, they gradually began attending four sessions each week. Over time they became more confident, more willing to express their feelings and more able to engage positively with others.

A significant breakthrough came when they shared a creative story they had written. This led to a conversation about reading, during which they revealed they had never owned a book or visited a bookshop. Owning books for the first time brought immense pride and opened up new opportunities for learning and personal growth.

At the heart of 12Up's success are the trusting relationships built with young people, families, schools and community partners. This network of support reinforces progress at home and in learning environments, helping young people sustain positive change.

Parents and carers consistently report improvements in confidence, wellbeing and family relationships.

One parent reflected:

"There has been such a change in him over the past year. He talks to me more and is much happier in himself. 12Up gave him opportunities and hope."

Young people themselves describe the difference 12Up has made:

"It helped me gain a lot of confidence and given me opportunities I wouldn't have had the chance to do. They're helping me decide what I want to do with my future."

"I felt a little lost before I started 12Up. After all this time I feel a little bit better, less messy than I was before, a little more organised. At least now I have something to wake up for."

12Up demonstrates the transformative impact of CLLE for young people. By focusing on strengths, building trusted relationships and creating flexible pathways to achievement, the programme helps young people gain qualifications, improve wellbeing, strengthen family connections and develop confidence in their future. This is positive learning in action: helping young people realise their potential and create lasting change in their lives.



Making Change Happen for Young People

Loanhead Vocational Learning Centre CLLE

More Than a Bike: How Midlothian Vocational Learning Centre CLLE is Helping Young People Build Confidence, Connection and Belonging

For many young people, owning a bike is something that is easily taken for granted. But for some, not having one can mean feeling excluded from friends, missing opportunities to get outdoors and struggling with confidence and wellbeing.

Through the work of Midlothian Vocational Learning Centre CLLE, young people are being given more than just access to bikes, they are being offered inclusion, skills, independence and a renewed sense of self-belief.

One young person recently took part in a Dynamic Youth Award bike course delivered through the Young Carers Team. Throughout the programme, he attended workshop sessions where he learned practical bike maintenance skills and gained confidence working alongside others in a supportive environment.

He particularly enjoyed the final group bike ride, where participants were able to put their new skills into practice. However, during the course he shared that he did not own a bike at home and often felt left out because all of his friends had one.

Recognising the importance this could have for him socially and emotionally, staff were able to source a bike for him through the CLLE Bike recycle centre. When the bike was presented to him, his reaction said it all.

He was “delighted”, explaining that he could not wait to get it home, show his friends and finally join them on bike rides.

When asked what difference having a bike would make to him, he simply said it would make him “happy” and that he would “feel like one of the lads” now that he could cycle alongside his friends.

For professionals working with young people, these moments highlight the powerful impact of youth work and community learning. Something

as simple as a bike can become a gateway to friendship, confidence, belonging and improved mental wellbeing.



The young person is a young carer, who spoke emotionally about the difference this support would make. They explained that having a bike would significantly improve his wellbeing, allowing them to spend more time outdoors and socialising with other children in the area.

This story is just one example of the ongoing impact being made through the Midlothian Vocational Learning Centre CLLE. In 2025/26, eight bikes have been rehomed to young people, alongside nine balance bikes and seven scooters distributed to children across Paradykes Nursery and Mauricewood Nursery.

These numbers represent far more than equipment. Each bike and scooter helps remove barriers for children and young people, encouraging active play, social inclusion and healthier lifestyles while supporting families who may otherwise struggle to access these opportunities.

At its heart, this work demonstrates the value of community-based youth support — meeting young people where they are, listening to their experiences and helping them build confidence through meaningful opportunities.

By combining vocational learning with practical support and genuine care, Midlothian Vocational Learning Centre CLLE continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of young people across the community — one bike at a time.

NOLB Construction Work Experience Case Study

Supporting Young People to Build Skills, Confidence and Futures

Community Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE) is committed to helping young people overcome barriers, discover their strengths and develop the confidence, skills and aspirations they need for the future. Through tailored support, vocational learning and trusted relationships, CLLE helps young people take positive steps towards employment, training and personal wellbeing.

One example comes from the No One Left Behind (NOLB) programme, which secured places for young people on an eight-week Construction Work Experience course at Lowland Vocational Learning Centre (LVLC). The course provided hands-on experience across a range of construction skills, with a particular focus on brickwork. Recognising that travel can often be a barrier, the team also arranged transport to ensure every participant could attend.

Young people enrolled on the programme, all sharing an interest in construction but each bringing different experiences and challenges. Attendance has been excellent, with the young people fully engaging in practical learning opportunities and enjoying the chance to develop new skills in a real workshop environment.

For one young person, the course marked an important milestone. Having left school, they had struggled with confidence and motivation despite a long-standing interest in construction. Supported by CLLE over several years and now transitioning through the NOLB programme, they have been building greater independence.

Staff recognised that a structured routine, practical learning and a supportive environment could provide the right opportunity at the right time. The construction course has helped the young person engage positively, develop confidence and gain valuable vocational skills while exploring a potential future career path. What might appear to be a simple work experience placement has become a meaningful step towards greater independence and self-belief.

Another participant joined the programme with previous experience in painting and decorating but was keen to explore brickwork as a possible career option. The opportunity allowed them to broaden their skills and gain practical experience in an area they were passionate about. To support their next steps, NOLB has committed to funding their Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card on completion of the course, creating a direct pathway into employment opportunities within the construction industry.



COOKING TRANSITION



GAME TIME

DALKEITH CLUSTER



WOODBURN JUNIORS

Making Change Happen for Young People

During 2025–2026, the Dalkeith Cluster Youth Work Team continued to provide a wide range of opportunities shaped directly by the voices of local children and young people through ongoing consultation and engagement. In response to identified needs, we delivered a targeted transition cooking programme, alongside enhanced summer activities, to support young people in building confidence, developing new skills, and feeling more comfortable as they prepared for the move to high school.

Our sports provision remained popular, including partnership work with Active Schools to provide football coaching sessions supported by youth workers, promoting physical wellbeing, teamwork, and positive relationships. We also continued to deliver Woodburn Juniors, a well-attended primary-aged drop-in programme offering a safe, welcoming space for children to socialise, learn, and have fun.

Across all our provision, we embedded the principles of children's rights by creating opportunities for children and young people to play, learn, be creative, and express their views. Young people were encouraged to explore issue-based topics such as bullying, develop their understanding of risk, exercise autonomy and decision-making, build friendships, and contribute positively to their community.

Through these experiences, participants developed confidence, resilience, and a stronger sense of belonging while enjoying meaningful and engaging opportunities within their local area.

Building Confidence, Skills and Independence Through Space for Men

For many young people, taking part in a new group can feel daunting. For one young man who joined Space for Men, even leaving the house and meeting new people presented a significant challenge.

Referred to the programme by a support worker, he was looking for opportunities to build confidence, develop new skills and connect with others his own age. Having spent a long period away from education and finding unfamiliar situations overwhelming, taking the first step through the door was a major achievement in itself.

Space for Men provided a welcoming and supportive environment where relationships could develop at his own pace. Practical support, including transport to and from the group, helped remove

barriers to participation. These journeys also became valuable opportunities for informal conversations with youth workers, helping to build trust, reduce anxiety and create a sense of belonging.

Initially quiet and hesitant, the young man gradually became more comfortable within the group. As his confidence grew, he began contributing ideas and helping to shape future projects. His enthusiasm for woodwork quickly emerged, leading him and fellow participants to take on an ambitious project: designing and constructing a wellbeing bench and planters for the outdoor workshop space.

Over five months, the group transformed their ideas into reality. Along the way, he developed a range of practical and transferable skills, including planning and organising tasks, working as part of a team, applying numeracy skills, understanding health and safety requirements, and caring for plants. Most importantly, he discovered a real passion for working with hand tools and creating something that would benefit others.

The impact extended well beyond the workshop. With encouragement and support from the youth work team, he developed the confidence to travel independently to and from the programme – an important milestone that demonstrated how far he had come.

Today, he has successfully moved on from Space for Men and into new opportunities, including a volunteering role and engagement with employability support services. His journey highlights how the right support, delivered in a welcoming and strengths-based environment, can help young people overcome barriers, build confidence and take positive steps towards greater independence.



Space for Men continues to provide young men across Midlothian with opportunities to connect, learn new skills and realise their potential, creating lasting benefits for both individuals and the wider community.

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

Community Diners

A partnership effort between the Council, NHS and Third Sector partners and funded by Fairer Futures, has enabled 10 community diners to be piloted across Midlothian. The diners have focused on families, providing a welcoming, accessible space where they can enjoy a low cost/free meal together whilst receiving support from a range of services if required. The feedback from the pilot supported a successful application to the third round of the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund, enabling community diners to continue for a further two years.



Midlothian Pantry Network

The Midlothian Pantry Network, funded by the Cost of Living Taskforce (COLT) and supported by CLLE, has supported Danderhall Pantry to transition to a “points” model of operation. This has resulted in them doubling the number of customers they can support through a dignified model that provides choice.

Support to community groups

A successful bid to the PBIP funding allowed Penicuik Town Hall to fully upgrade their kitchen. This has resulted in a much brighter, cleaner and accessible space for users. Funding was also secured to replace the front reception desk and the flooring in the lower ground floor and meeting room, improving the look of the building and providing easier to maintain spaces.

Woodburn Hub also benefitted from a PBIP application to replace all flooring and improve the space for all users.

Support to Midlothian Traffic Roads and Paths (MTrap)

CLLE has supported this group since 2018, enabling them to work effectively with a range of Midlothian and national organisations seeking to improve active travel, transport and core path provision. It also works with local communities to inform Midlothian Council capital works and residential street programmes. 19 participants representing 8 Community Councils came together in February to discuss and influence service provision and the development of safe active travel, transport links, public transport and improve communication channels between Council officers and local communities. A steering group comprising Community Councillors, community groups and council officers is being formed to take proposed actions forward.

UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) in Midlothian

UKSPF supported the UK Government Investment Priorities: Communities and Place, People and Skills and Support to Local Business. Midlothian awarded funding for a variety of projects across the county that addressed local needs and were delivered through public, private and third sector.

Capital spend was allocated to the Midlothian Pavilions Project improvements and structural works to upgrade Birkenhead and Pathhead (Callendar Park) pavilions. A centre co-ordinator was recruited to the Woodburn Hub to secure a number of physical improvements including new toilet and sink, flooring and decoration as well as outside storage for mobility scooters. The co-ordinator also set up systems for the operation of the building as it develops further.