

ABERDEEN FC COMMUNITY TRUST

2021-22 IMPACT REPORT



ABERDEEN FC
COMMUNITY
TRUST



REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER SC044720.



LIZ BOWIE AFCCT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Preparing an impact report provides a healthy opportunity for all involved to reflect upon the work of AFC Community Trust and what this has achieved within our community. All too often in our busy lives we neglect taking time to consider how our work in the community is literally changing the lives of those we engage with. Like all organisations, the past two years have seen the Trust grapple with various lockdowns and ever-changing regulations. We have embraced these challenges and sought to adapt our working practices to ensure that the safety and welfare of all of our participants, staff and volunteers has been central to all of our activities.

As we emerge from the restrictions imposed on society through the pandemic, the Trust finds itself well positioned for the future. Our work in education in the region has gained prominence with both local authorities viewing us as a key partner in the delivery of sustainable programming within schools across the Northeast of Scotland. Delivering in primary and secondary schools, we have continued to inspire the next generation through the power of football and the passion for AFC and in so doing, have played our part in closing the poverty attainment gap.

Surprisingly for some, the reality of our work means we frequently deliver without ever touching a football! From our work in schools delivering numeracy, literacy, and STEM subjects through to our health and wellbeing programmes, we focus on maximising the potential of our communities to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. Increasingly we have seen ourselves working to support improvement in mental wellbeing - from our innovative schools-based MINDSET programme through to men's mental health with the Changing Room project and our dementia friendly initiatives.

The opening up of society has enabled us to restart our football programming across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Cormack Park has hosted mass participation activities such as the primary school leagues and girls' festivals, as well as holiday camps and development programming. This excellent facility has also allowed us to create bespoke events tailored to the needs of particular

schools. The opportunity for young people to play football at the training ground of the AFC first team is a dream come true for many. We are very grateful to the Manager and first team players who often support our activities, creating lifelong memories.

Again, we have happily seen our work in the community return and expand. From health interventions for active ageing through to the establishment of the Meno and Pause café, the Trust aims to be inclusive to all of those in our community. We believe in the power of partnership and many of these community programmes are collaborations with local and national charities and organisations. We rely upon the support of a significant number of volunteers without whom much of our work would not be possible. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our volunteers, partners and generous supporters who have helped us this year. I would also like to thank the AFCCT team whose passion for the job and those we support, often sees them going above and beyond in order to make the difference.

I hope you will enjoy reading about the achievements of the Trust over the last period where we have all adapted to the challenges of Covid and are emerging stronger and more enthusiastic to support our community than ever.



DAVE CORMACK ABERDEEN FC CHAIRMAN

Since the Club was formed in 1903, AFC has played a central role in its community. Our commitment to that was the founding of our partner charity, AFC Community Trust, in 2014. This enabled a strong and focussed approach to supporting our community to be established. We have watched with pride as it has grown over the last 8 years and has achieved so much in the Northeast of Scotland. Beyond its rightly deserved awards, it has always moved and adapted to the challenges it faces, never more so than during the pandemic. The Still Standing Free campaign harnessed the energy of staff across the whole AFC Family to address the immediate needs of food poverty and social isolation. As restrictions halted all football and community activity, the Trust quickly adapted its education programming to enable online learning and to continue vital engagement with some of our most vulnerable young people. This creativity and passion for "doing the right thing" typifies the attitude of the Trust and all who work there.

As life returns to normal, it has been so pleasing to see the restart of football, health, and wellbeing programming across the region. I would like to thank all the staff, volunteers and generous supporters of the Trust, whose commitment enables this ongoing support of our community.

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> **OUR VISION:**

To maximise the potential of our communities by improving physical & mental wellbeing.

> **OUR MISSION:**

To provide support & opportunity to change lives for the better.

> **OUR VALUES:**

*At the heart of our activities, we are committed to the safeguarding of the health & wellbeing of all our staff, volunteers & participants. We aim to be **inclusive of all** regardless of background, ethnicity or belief.*

TOGETHER WE ARE:

***Dynamic, Collaborative,
Nurturing, Empowering,
Trustworthy.***





OUR THEMES

What **started in 2014 as a team of 8** with a main focus on football participation, has **evolved into a team of 35 staff, 25 sessionals and 25 dedicated volunteers** supporting activities from the physical activity programme Redstart for primary ones through to Football Memories for those living with dementia. As of today, we focus on **two main themes** with support and opportunity at their heart for participants from across the Northeast.

EDUCATION & POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

Working with schools, **both primary and secondary**, across the region, **we help reduce the poverty related attainment gap through educational, health and wellbeing interventions**. Our presence in schools **increases pupil attendance and improves engagement in education**.

We offer high impact support delivered one-to-one through to broader programmes working with whole year groups. With a focus on physical and mental wellbeing and alternative curriculums, our staff develop strong relationships with young people, acting as mentors and role models for many. Working to develop life skills equips participants beyond school, preparing them for their next steps and onwards to **positive destinations**.

Our **youth ambassador programme, Brighter Futures**, further supports the transition from school through goal setting, skills development, work experience and volunteering.

Placements with AFCCT and employability programmes, have extended our offering to young people and enabled a pathway of continued support.

FOOTBALL, HEALTH & WELLBEING

Across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, we provide a **wide range of grass roots and mass participation football opportunities** including coaching, holiday camps, leagues and festivals. Focusing on **inclusion, opportunity and of course fun**, we are prioritising girls football growth as well as adding new venues and locations to continue participation growth for all. With a team of highly qualified coaches, development and performance programmes and coach education further enhance our football offering.

Beyond football, we provide **opportunities for participants of all ages** to increase their physical activity and enjoy the benefits. A range of **dementia-friendly active ageing activities** which take place throughout the year, not only **promote physical health but support mental wellbeing and tackle social isolation**.

Other health and wellbeing programmes address **public health initiatives**, most recently men's mental health support and menopause awareness. We continually **look at areas of community need** where we can support directly, partner with others or signpost to assistance.

EDUCATION & POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

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

Our unique link to Aberdeen FC enables us to offer special opportunities for our young people to enhance their learning experience.

Complimenting the **Curriculum for Excellence**, we work to support numeracy, literacy, STEM subjects 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.

Our work is proven to:

- ➔ **Increase** pupil attendance
- ➔ **Improve** pupil engagement in education
- ➔ Prepare young people for **positive destinations** after school

AFCCT staff are key role models, promoting positive behaviours and supporting all areas of wellbeing: **physical, social, and emotional.**

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE



4208
PARTICIPANTS



165,523
PARTICIPATIONS



17
PRIMARY SCHOOLS



7
ACADEMIES

PRIMARY EDUCATION

We work with our partner primary schools across the region to help reduce the poverty related attainment gap through a range of health and wellbeing interventions.

In addition to physical activity, we work in classrooms supporting numeracy, literacy and STEM subjects as well as addressing adolescent mental wellbeing through the MINDSET programme.

STEM

Through the European Football Development Network (EFDN) funded STEM Project, Aberdeen FC Community Trust delivered the curriculum to **617 pupils across 9 of our partner schools**. The six-week programme gives pupils the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of STEM subjects through varied activities and to develop an understanding of new technologies.

STEM:



617
PARTICIPANTS



'ONE OF OUR OWN'
WATCH HERE:

PRIMARY SCHOOLS:



3151
PARTICIPANTS



57,284
PARTICIPATIONS



2091
MEALS PROVIDED



CASE STUDY: NEIL & LORA FACHIE EVENT

This term AFCCT Ambassadors and Paralympians, Neil Fachie OBE, and Lora Fachie OBE, visited Heathryburn School. They spoke to the children about their journey to success and discussed how the Trust continues to inspire young people through their work in the local community.



WATCH
MORE HERE:



“

The response from the children brought a tear to my eye, truly was a worthwhile event.

VOLUNTEER

”



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Aberdeen FC Community Trust delivered the Community Champions League (CCL), from January to July 2022, funded by the European Football for Development Network (EFDN). The programme is a social street football competition which was delivered to five of our partner schools.

The schools competed against each other through social action workshops which raised awareness of various topics such as nutrition, equality, anti-bullying, and mental health alongside delivering positive community actions e.g., volunteering. The schools also played football matches where fair play and positive play were encouraged.

Schools were awarded points through community actions, social actions, and football fixtures to help them progress in the League.

“ *The Community Champions League highlighted the good actions that schools were already doing. It was great to be part of the season and watch how the pupils grew in confidence learning how football can develop so many life skills to help with social anxiety, self-esteem, and resilience.* ”

DAVID CLARK
AFCCT PARTNER SCHOOL COACH

FAIR PLAY FOR ALL

‘Fair Play for All - energising the community’ was born from the AFC Women’s Team partners, Boskalis, Tendeka and GAC, and their desire to make a meaningful difference to Aberdeen communities. Staff volunteers from all three companies plus Forrest Training supported AFCCT in the delivery of a hugely impactful day.

Leveraging the power of football to engage youngsters in a bespoke and fun filled day, the programme was designed with opportunities to be active, enjoy whilst learning life skills.

The children from four primary schools in Aberdeen City got the chance to move around different zones experiencing: football coaching, mindset mental health empowerment, first aid, accident prevention and STEM activities.

We were delighted to be joined by members of the AFC Women’s team who also took part in the fun!

4
SCHOOLS

80
CHILDREN

18
VOLUNTEERS

4
ZONES

COUNTLESS MEMORIES

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Our work within academies provides young people with an alternative curriculum focussing on developing life skills, increasing engagement within their local community, and improving health and wellbeing.

AFCCT and each partner academy provide a flexible alternative timetable for young people who struggle in a classroom environment. Our work aims to support each young person we work with in their education and shape a curriculum which meets their needs.

ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE PARTNER ACADEMIES:



1,057
PARTICIPANTS



108,239
PARTICIPATIONS

ACADEMY HIGHLIGHTS:



IMPROVED ATTENDANCE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR BY 50%



119 PUPILS ACHIEVED SQA QUALIFICATIONS THROUGH AFCCT INTERVENTIONS



EVERY S1 PUPIL IN OUR 3 ABERDEEN CITY ACADEMIES COMPLETED MINDSET



8,010 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HOURS



MINDSET

Mindset is a 12-week play-based programme focusing on a positive approach to mental wellbeing, enhancing strengths and skills to help cope with the stresses of life.

In partnership with **Grassroot Soccer** (US based not-for-profit), the initiative **improves mental wellbeing** amongst pupils **aged 10-14**, helping break down the stigma around mental health by making it normal for adolescents to **talk about mental health**.

The Mindset programme has proven to:

- ✓ Improve Knowledge of Mental Health
- ✓ Improve Knowledge and Use of Coping Skills
- ✓ Improve Emotional Regulation
- ✓ Improve Empathy and Compassion
- ✓ Improve Resilience
- ✓ Reduce Stigma Around Mental Health




Brighter Futures

Duncan Skinner Legacy Fund

The 'Brighter Futures' legacy fund was established in 2021 in memory of Aberdeen FC Community Trust's former chairman, Duncan Skinner. The fund will support the Trust's work with young people, including a year-long Youth Ambassador programme to transform the lives of those aged between **14-18**, to go beyond into education and employment.

Delivered by AFCCT, **The Youth Ambassador programme** gives young people the chance to gain essential **life experiences, skills, and qualifications**, which may not be available to them. The programme will **improve their chances of securing employment** and reaching their **full potential**.

Each young person on the programme is supported in setting goals, and developing the skills and qualifications required to achieve them. AFCCT provide work experience and volunteering opportunities to help develop individuals throughout the programme.

After reaching a legacy fund of **over £100,000** from the generosity of our partners and supporters, this will allow the Brighter Futures programme to run for **five years**.

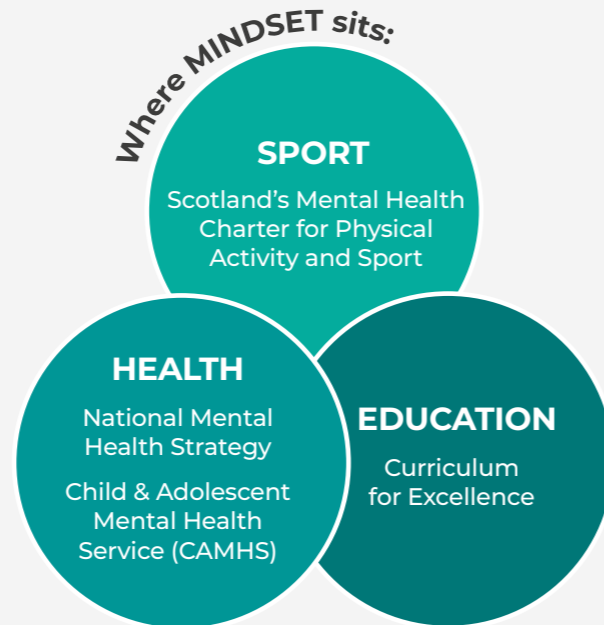
KICK OFF YOUR CAREER



Kick Off Your Career is a 6-week employability SQA accredited course delivered in partnership with the SPFL Trust and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The course is aimed at 18-24 year olds who are at risk of long-term unemployment, aiming to increase their skillset and positive destination opportunities.

Nicky Reid, SPFL Trust CEO said:

"Clubs are at the heart of their communities, and for many young people a place they feel very much connected to. By taking part in Kick Off Your Career, not only do participants gain qualifications, but this innovative programme also helps young people to become more confident, with a focus on both their mental and physical wellbeing. It is a privilege to be a part of their journey, as they take their next positive step forward in their career or education."




1,588
PARTICIPANTS ACROSS
PRIMARY & ACADEMIES IN
ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE



15,900+
HOURS OF SESSIONS

“
THROUGH THE MINDSET PROGRAMME, ABERDEEN FC COMMUNITY TRUST, AND GRASSROOT SOCCER (GRS) ARE COMBINING THEIR UNIQUE STRENGTHS TO BREAK DOWN STIGMA AND EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE IN ABERDEEN TO PRIORITIZE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH DURING A COMPLEX POINT IN THEIR LIVES THAT CAN BRING LOTS OF STRESS AND ANXIETY.
”

TOMMY CLARK
GRASSROOT SOCCER FOUNDER & CEO



**40 HOURS IN
EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**



**EMERGENCY
FIRST AID**



**DEVELOPED
INTERVIEW
SKILLS**



**CREATED C.V
WITH
COVERING
LETTER**



**10 HOURS
IN CUSTOMER
SERVICE
SKILLS**

FOOTBALL, HEALTH & WELLBEING

Promoting health and wellbeing through football and other activities forms the mainstay of our second key theme. Partnership working is the cornerstone of our Football, Health, and Wellbeing work.

Linking with the Scottish Football Association, local authorities, Sport Aberdeen, and grassroots clubs, we support the growth of football participation across the Northeast. We provide a range of football opportunities to promote enjoyment and development for young people and coaches from primary school football and girls' leagues and festivals to holiday and term time coaching.

As a community trust, it is fundamental 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 addressing the menopause and men's mental health support key community needs. Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership, SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health), Alzheimer Scotland and community groups enable us to deliver in our community.



FOOTBALL

We provide a range of football opportunities to promote enjoyment and development for young people. A team of qualified professional staff deliver these sessions across Aberdeen City and Shire.

We work to align with the outcomes of the Scottish Football Association's strategic framework, focusing on developing, educating, and growing the game.

Our main objectives for the Football strategy 2022-2025 are to encourage participation, development, and performance. To enhance and develop football infrastructures by building strong relationships with local authorities, governing bodies, clubs, officials, volunteers, and parents.

The provision of high-quality programmes will allow us to maximise our income for re-investment and will create new opportunities.

“The resumption of the Aberdeen City & Shire Primary schools football programme has been a hugely important area of work. Stronger collaboration between the Scottish FA, AFCCT, Sport Aberdeen and Live Life Aberdeenshire will, I believe, provide a sound foundation from which to grow.”

GRAEME SUTHERLAND
SCOTTISH FA NORTH REGIONAL MANAGER



GIRLS LEAGUE

We are working in partnership with the Scottish FA, Scottish Women's Football and Tendeka to deliver football to girls aged 5-12 across the North-East.

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.

Girl's football is delivered at Aberdeen FC's training ground, Cormack Park. With the Trust's continued investment in equality within the sport, locally the game will continue to thrive.

<10

22 UNDER 10 AGE
GROUP TEAMS
PLAYING
7V7 FIXTURES



65 TEAMS
IN TOTAL

<8

23 UNDER 8 AGE
GROUP TEAMS
PLAYING
5V5 FESTIVALS



APPROX. 450
PARTICIPATING GIRLS

<7

22 UNDER 7 AGE
GROUP TEAMS
PLAYING
4V4 FESTIVALS



APPROX. 100
VOLUNTEER COACHES



ANNUAL
PARTICIPATING
NUMBERS HAVE
INCREASED
BY 50% SINCE
WE STARTED
SUPPORTING
GIRLS FIXTURES
& FESTIVAL
IN 2017

PRIMARY FOOTBALL

Aberdeen FC Community Trust Primary Schools Football was founded during the 2014-15 season as a platform to provide children with a safe and enjoyable environment to play football in Aberdeen.

AFCCT Primary Schools Football has expanded and is now the only primary school football league within the city.

During the pandemic primary school football was halted, restarting at the end of 2021. We aim to get back to pre-pandemic levels and continue to grow participation thereafter.

HOLIDAY COACHING

During the Easter, Summer, October, and Winter 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.



850
PARTICIPANTS





HEALTH & WELLBEING

Working to support all age groups in the community from youth work; public health initiatives; active ageing and dementia friendly activities.

Our work in the community is inclusive and provides opportunities to support the health and wellbeing of all age groups. This is exemplified in our dementia friendly initiatives which aim to provide a safe, welcoming environment for those living with dementia and their families.

Our work supports mental and physical wellbeing, whilst also combating social isolation and loneliness. It is important for us to engage with our communities and allow them to feel connected to the Club and the Trust.

.....
Annually across all Health and Wellbeing programmes we have 4,160 participations, and 42 participants living with dementia.

MEMORIES GROUPS

Football Memories is 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.

“.....
I love going to football memories at Pittodrie, I get to speak to people like me about football and I don't need to worry about what I say. It also means my wife gets a break for a wee while.
.....”
FOOTBALL MEMORIES PARTICIPANT

HEALTH WALKS

Health walks are weekly walks that take place around Aberdeen City. Delivered by fully trained staff, these inclusive, dementia friendly walks aim to break down barriers and improve physical and mental wellbeing. Walking outdoors encourages positive mental health and tackles social isolation whilst also giving an opportunity to get active and connect with others.

“.....
Living on my own I really look forward to the health walk on a Tuesday. Out in all weathers suitably dressed I make new friends; visit areas I have never been to before and we also have a cup of tea. I come home with such a feel-good factor, I'm looking forward to the next one!
.....”
HEALTH WALK PARTICIPANT



“

This project has been so rewarding and inspiring to be part of and it really is life changing. It's such a simple concept which has had a huge impact on all the participants. It has been a pleasure being part of their journey where trust, honesty and a shared experience has allowed the men to feel safe enough to share their experiences which in turn has helped the others.

..... ”
 BRIAN JOHNSTON,
 THE CHANGING ROOM PROGRAMME LEADER



2,160 MINUTES OF SESSIONS



252 HOURS OF PARTICIPATIONS



**2 GROUPS COMPLETING
 12-WEEK PROGRAMME**

MENTAL WELLBEING

The Changing Room promotes men's mental health and wellbeing through the power of football.

The programme brings together men aged 30-64 to help them self-manage their own mental health whilst giving them access to a strong support network.

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

“.....
I feel that the programme has been a great experience for me. It makes me think how to react better in certain situations, consider the impact of my actions and has helped to strengthen my relationships across family, friends, and professional networks.

..... ”
 PARTICIPANT,
 THE CHANGING ROOM



AFCCT DAY

This year we celebrated the work of the Trust at the Aberdeen FC match against Hibernian FC at Pittodrie on Saturday 19th March. The matchday was an opportunity to highlight to the Red Army, the **ongoing success of AFCCT** and our positive impact in the community.



30+ KIDS & PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS TOOK PART IN A PARADE AROUND THE STADIUM WITH PARTNER SCHOOL PUPILS RECEIVING THEIR PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

STORY OF FUNDRAISING FOR DNIPRO KIDS

Dnipro Kids was established in 2005 by visiting Hibs fans who started a charitable collection for a local orphanage in Dnipropetrovsk. In 2007, Dons supporters and Club staff visited the same orphanage ahead of a European tie.

At the outbreak of war in Ukraine, the charity helped to rescue the children from the orphanage and bring them to Scotland.

During the Aberdeen FC Community Trust Day, football fans came together to support Dnipro Kids Charity once again.



PARTNERING WITH CFINE: FOOD BANK

The Trust has a long-standing relationship with CFINE, which was highlighted in the Still Standing Free campaign during the pandemic.

On the matchday, supporters donated food which went directly to people in immediate need within our community, helping to tackle food poverty and giving families access to support and resources.



**762KG
 (OVER ¾ OF A TON)
 OF FOOD**



**PROVIDED APPROX.
 150 FOOD PARCELS
 / 1814 MEALS**

£
**5K DONATED
 TO DNIPRO KIDS
 APPEAL**

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are at the heart of Aberdeen FC Community Trust, helping support our programmes and events.

AFCCT strive to make our volunteers feel valued, trusted, and rewarded for their hard work and commitment to the Trust. Their ongoing support enables the Trust to deliver programming across the region.

- ✓ Have a **vital role** in supporting activities being delivered in our local community
- ✓ Part of a **vibrant team** that are making a difference to people's lives
- ✓ Have **access to a variety of training** which helps provide a **positive** and **valuable experience** for our participants
- ✓ Gain **experience and qualifications**
- ✓ **33 volunteers providing 2300 hours** of invaluable support



“Volunteering at AFCCT changed my life, I feel so good doing the Health Walks, Technogym and all the other programmes. Listening to people and helping where I can.”
MARION, AFCCT VOLUNTEER



WHY I VOLUNTEER FOR AFCCT

BY DAVE IRONSIDE

The main reason that I volunteer for AFCCT is that I want to give something back to an organisation that helped me when I needed it most. I attended the Football Fans in Training programme in 2016. It made me better about myself and inspired me to do the first of four Kilt walks to raise money for AFCCT.

After the course I was asked if I wanted to help at the Primary School Football run by AFCCT, this led to me becoming a fully-fledged volunteer.

Volunteering with AFCCT has absolutely enriched my life, I have learnt so much and have had so many opportunities. I have met so many fantastic people, it really is like one big family here. It's the best feeling helping others and making a difference, it's given my life a new perspective and sparked a passion where I look forward to volunteering and spreading the word about this great organisation.

I have started a monthly radio show dedicated to AFCCT at shmuFM, it lets staff, volunteers and participants spread the word about AFCCT.

To anyone who is considering volunteering, do it you will not regret it!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



ACTIVE SCHOOLS ABERDEENSHIRE | FIDELITY | FOWLER MCKENZIE
IYSF (INVERURIE YOUTH SPORTS FOUNDATION) | INVERURIE LOCOS | KR GROUP
LORD PROVOST'S CHARITABLE TRUST | POLICE SCOTLAND | SAMH
SPORTABERDEEN | THE ROBERTSON TRUST | TRADE WIDOWS' FUND CHARITY

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.



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