



Annual Report 2025/26



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Introduction and Background

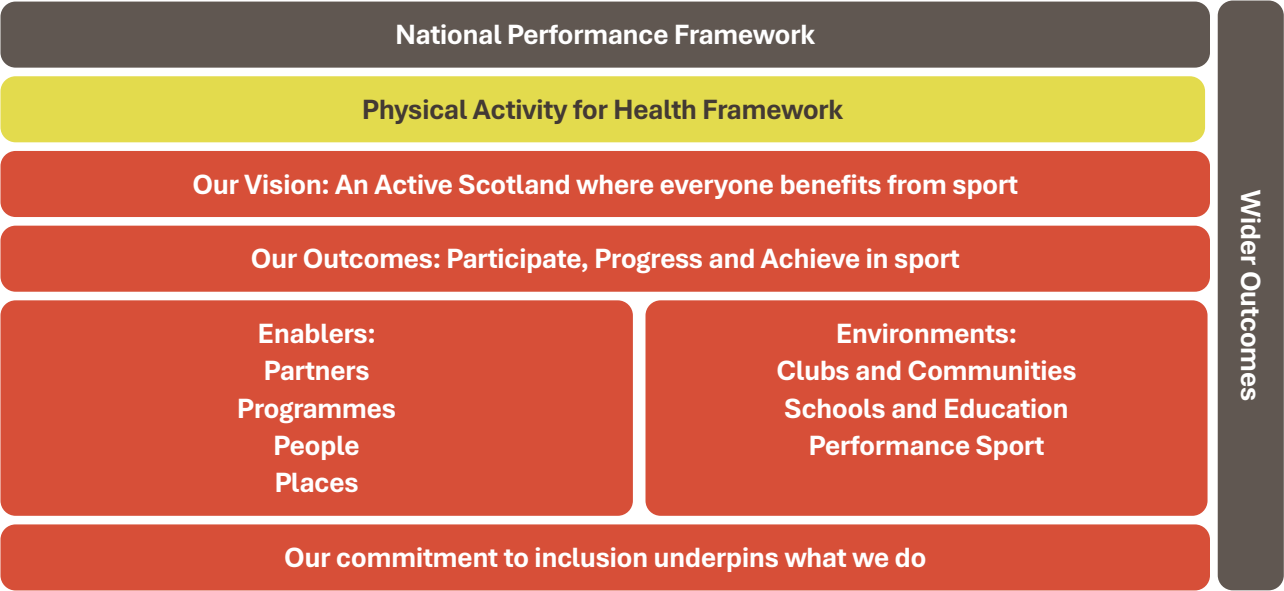
This annual report celebrates the achievements of the Moray Active Schools and Community Sport team during the 2025/26 academic year. The team includes nine Active Schools Coordinators, a Community Sports Hub Officer, a Club Development Officer and Sports Coaches.

The current team is:

Danny Simpson, Principal Active Schools and Community Sport Officer	
Craig Rowley, Elgin Academy ASG	Lucie Rose, Lossiemouth ASG
Paul Rogan and Rosalyn Carruthers, Forres ASG	Colin McRae, Buckie ASG
Fiona Preston, Elgin High ASG Primaries	Lorna Young, Milnes ASG
Paul Rogan, Elgin High School	Karra Laing, Speyside ASG
	Amanda Walker, Keith ASG
	Robin Paterson, Community Sports Hub Officer
	Fraser Lyall Club Development Officer

Moray Active Schools

Active Schools is a long-standing partnership between **sportscotland** and local authorities, established in 2004 to make sport and physical activity more accessible for children and young people. The current funding agreement between **sportscotland** and **Moray Council** runs until 2027. The programme provides free, high-quality extra-curricular sport and physical activity, while strengthening pathways between schools and community clubs. The team’s work is guided by **sportscotland**’s Sport for Life strategy, with a focus on participation, people and profile. **sportscotland** is currently evaluating the Active Schools programme, with outcomes expected to shape delivery from 2027/28, including a stronger focus on meeting community needs.



Inclusion underpins the work of **sportscotland** and the Moray team. This report highlights both universal and targeted projects that aim to ensure sport and physical activity are accessible to all young people across Moray.

The Moray team plan is structured around five national Active Schools priorities, aligned with local priorities including the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Children's Services Plan and Corporate Plan. A summary of the team plan can be found here:

Priorities identified from the Sportscotland 'Sport For Life' corporate plan:

Priority 1: Provides high quality opportunities for young people to take part in sport and physical activity before school, at lunchtime and after school

Priority 2: Develops, leads and supports effective pathways to connect schools, clubs and communities.

Priority 3: Provides inclusive opportunities by using targeted approaches to remove barriers to participation.

Priority 4: Develops a network of volunteers to deliver activity sessions.

Priority 5: Develops and supports leadership opportunities for young people.

Strategic outcomes identified in Moray through the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), Corporate Plan (CP) and Children Services Plan (CSP):

- Improving Wellbeing of Our Population – **LOIP1**
- Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray – **LOIP2**
- Our young people grow up safe, well-educated and reach their full potential: Tackle poverty & inequality – **CP1**
- Our businesses and communities prosper: Build thriving, resilient, empowered communities – **CP2**
- Overcoming challenges experienced by children with a disability or neurodiversity – **CSP 1**
- Tackling child poverty – **CSP 2**
- Improving the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and their families – **CSP 3**
- Improving outcomes for our looked after and care experienced children and young people – **CSP 4**

Specific action for team identified in Education Resources and Communities Service Plan:

Priority 6: Embed the Changing Lives approach across relevant sport & culture work streams

Outcome measures figures
taken from 2025-26 ASMO
reporting

Team Outcome Measures:

From Sportscotland:

- **OM1** 5,812 distinct participants taking part in Active Schools activities (49% school roll, 63% primary, 32% secondary)
- **OM2** 140,711 session visits
- **OM3** 5,666 sessions delivered
- **OM4** 29 Clubs with links to schools
- **OM5** 534 deliverers
- **OM6** 161 Young Leaders
- **OM7** 512 deliverers are volunteers
- **OM13** 1,782 ASN participants
- **OM14** 218 assessed disabled participants
- **OM15** 3,443 free school meals participants
- **OM16** 114 SIMD 1 & 2 participants
- **OM17** 78 care experienced participants
- **OM19** 23 schools with School Sport Awards, 7 gold and 8 gold qualified (July 2026)
- **OM20** 3,289 male participants and 2,523 female participants (57%–43%)

From Moray Council:

- **OM9** 276 participants attending coach education courses
- **OM10** 53 work streams developed to 'Meet Community Needs'
- **OM11** £30,400 brought in through successful funding applications to support projects (combined figure CSH)
- **OM12** 73 clubs joining club accreditation scheme (July 2026)
- **OM18** 19 coach education courses delivered



Participation – Universal Initiatives

Moray Active Schools	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	National stats comparison 2025/26
Distinct Participants (school pupils)	4,750	5,680	5,812	n/a
Percentage of Moray school roll participating	39%	47%	49%	42%
Distinct participants by sex	2,782 males [59%] 1,968 females [41%]	3,280 males [58%] 2,400 females [42%]	3,289 male participants [57%] 2,523 female participants [43%]	53% male – 47% female
Number of activity sessions delivered	4,624	5,388	5,666	n/a

The Active Schools team records all extra-curricular activity on **sportscotland's** MySport monitoring platform at the end of each term. This provides valuable data to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

The team aimed to maintain the previous year's universal performance levels, but term-by-term progress resulted in further growth. Distinct participants increased to 5,812, while the proportion of the Moray school roll participating rose to 49%, above the national comparison figure of 42%. The number of free activity sessions also increased to 5,666.

Key developments contributing to this progress included:

- Regular data reviews at team meetings, helping identify schools, stages and groups requiring additional support.
- A stronger focus on inactive children and young people, including the introduction of Secondary Supervised Gym Sessions in the Milne's ASG, with plans to expand across Moray.
- New approaches to engaging young people, including the Gamer2Mover partnership with Youth Work to connect gaming interests with physical activity.
- Continued partnership work with clubs and organisations, supporting school-to-club pathways and helping more than 70 clubs achieve Moray Council Club Accreditation.
- Ongoing development of the Young Leaders programme, including the West Summer Coach Academy in August 2025, where 39 young leaders gained practical experience and confidence in leading activity sessions.

Across the year, 35 different extra-curricular activities were offered. The top ten activities by number of sessions delivered were:



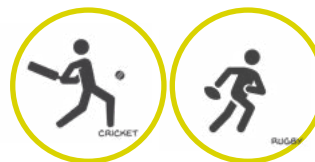
Football



Multisport Netball



Basketball Badminton Volleyball



Cricket Rugby Union



Dance and Movement Cross Country

The team coordinated an Events and Festivals programme to provide competitive opportunities across a range of sports. Some key universal events and games programmes included:

- Primary Schools Cross Country Event in partnership with Gordon Castle.
- Primary Schools Football Games Programmes delivered in partnership with Scottish FA.
- Primary School Cricket Festivals delivered in partnership with Moray Cricket Association, via funding support from Cricket Scotland.
- Golf competitions delivered in partnership with Scottish Golf and local clubs in the Buckie, Lossiemouth, Forres and Elgin areas.



The **sportscotland** School Sport award is continued to be utilised by our Active Schools team throughout the 20225-26 academic year. The award encourages schools to place young people at the centre of decision-making, planning and delivery of school sport. Across this academic year, a total of 23 schools had either achieved an award or were working towards achieving their gold award. School such as **St Sylvesters Primary, West End Primary, Rothes Primary, Lhanbryde Primary, Knockando Primary, Milne's Primary** and **Mosstodloch Primary** have achieved their gold sport award.



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – Targeted Initiatives

Moray Active Schools Academic Year	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26
Participants with additional support need	1,559	1,667	1,782
Participants that are assessed disabled	144	165	218
Participants with access to free school meals including all primary 1-5s	2,500	2,995	3,443
Participants from SIMD 1 or 2	103	114	114
Care experienced participants	67	78	78
Participants from ethnic minorities	168	139	281

A key priority for the team is the continued commitment to reducing barriers to participation and ensuring that opportunities are inclusive for all. Across the last few years, the team have had 3 members complete the **sportscotland** Changing Lives initiative, with internal team workshops completed to share knowledge across the team and across Moray. Using this knowledge, the team have created a variety of projects that can support changing lives through sport:

Milnes High Gamer2Mover Project:

A partnership between the Active Schools Coordinator and Youth Work at the school created the opportunity after identifying a group of pupils who enjoyed participating in gaming. 10 young people participated in 6 sessions where the young people engaged in 30 minutes of activities engaged via VR Headsets, followed by 30 minutes of sporting activities which included:

- Pétanque
- Lacrosse
- New age Kurling
- Orienteering
- Volleyball
- Nerf Wars
- Golf
- Archery
- Dodgeball
- Fencing

89% of participants felt more motivated following the opportunity whilst 77% now enjoy more sport and have improved mood.

Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with young people highlighting increased confidence, social connection and enjoyment of physical activity. One participant stated the sessions were “better than p.e”, while others highlighted “meeting people”, “socialising” and having “something to look forward to”. Several participants also described the project as “fun”.

Girls Only Gym Sessions:

In partnership with our Sport and Leisure Colleagues, we were able to introduce Girls Only Gym sessions into one of our ASGs.

This opportunity was set up off the back of the target group of girls highlighting they weren’t confident in attending a gym environment, some highlighting that the barriers to being active as: “I felt intimidated by others” and “I didn’t feel confident going along”.

After completing their free gym induction, followed by a 6 week block of activity, the barriers that were initially there were reduced. One of the participants highlighted the difference the program has made to her; “I know how to work the equipment now, I feel more confident about going to the gym and I have arranged to go with friends.”

Due to the success of this pilot project, the team have been successful in securing funding to implement these opportunities across all 8 Secondary Schools in Moray.

Lunch Time Nurture Group @ Cluny Primary:

Our Active Schools team continue to support our local schools with Lunch time activities and the partnership with Cluny Primary to support the Lunch Time Nurture Group has been a great example of this.

After the school approached to highlight that there had been some behavioural concerns during lunch, we supported our Active Schools coach deliver a weekly opportunity for a nurtured group of pupils. The Boccia and Floor Curling delivery allowed participants from the group to attend sessions with their friends, experiencing inclusive opportunities and new activities to the school. Over 30 pupils attended across the two blocks, with the school highlighting the impact the activities had on the lunch concerns.

The opportunities were also supported by the Primary 6-7 Play Leaders, allowing the leaders to build confidence when leading in their school activities. 'The lunchtime activities provided by Active Schools have had a massively positive impact on our school community. They have given children a fantastic opportunity to trial a range of different sports that they might not otherwise have tried. Importantly, these sessions have been inclusive. For our pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN) who sometimes struggle with the unstructured environment of the

playground, these activities offer a structured, supportive, and a different experience. They have also provided support for those who find socialising difficult, giving them a meaningful way to participate, connect with peers, and feel included. It's been wonderful to see the boost in confidence and engagement across the board.'

Stella's Voice Bikes For All:

Over the recent year, we have continued to partner with Stella's Voice to offer Bikes for All across Moray.

Across the last year, over 60 refurbished bikes and helmets have been supplied to young people across Moray. This continues from the 88 young people that gain access to a bike in the previous academic year.

'Pupils now have the opportunity to cycle to school which is fantastic for their wellbeing. They also have the freedom to cycle out with school and experience the social benefits of having their own mode of transport. Our pupils have commented how they have learned a new life skill and enjoy cycling to school rather than walking or getting a lift. This project removed barriers for some of our disadvantaged pupils and had such a positive impact.'

Volunteers, Clubs and Funding

Moray Active Schools	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26
Number of deliverers	483	609	534
Number of volunteers	456	574	512
Number of young leaders	152	204	161
Young leaders with ASN	51	66	58
Care experienced young leaders	4	4	1
Coach Education courses delivered	30	30	19
Course Education course participant numbers	340	356	276
Sport clubs with links to schools	30	41	29
Funding sourced to support projects	£13,936	£44,832	£30,400

The initiatives in this report were made possible by a dedicated workforce of school staff, young leaders, parent volunteers, college students, club coaches and community volunteers. The young leaders programme continued to be a major contributor to volunteer capacity, while the partnership with UHI Moray supported student placements in schools.

In total, 512 volunteers supported delivery in 2025/26, representing 96% of the coaching workforce. The volunteer workforce included:

- Secondary Pupil Young Leaders – 161
- Family Member – 115
- Club Coach – 83
- Teacher – 65
- Community Member – 28
- FE/HE Students – 25
- Other School Staff – 20
- Other – 14
- Session Coach – 1

Across the year, the team organised 19 local coach education courses for 276 attendees, working with a wide range of partners and national governing bodies:

- Scottish FA
- Scottish Orienteering
- Pickleball Scotland
- Scottish Golf
- Cricket Scotland
- Scottish Disability Sport
- Scottish Curling
- Fair Play Foundation

A key number of our volunteer workforce is Young Leaders with our Young Leaders Programme continuing to go from strength to strength.

The first step on the leadership journey which our team continue to deliver is the Play Leader programme, aimed at Primary 6 and 7 pupils across Moray. This early introduction to leadership provides the pupils with the key skills to deliver lunchtime activities in their local primary schools. Across the 25-26 academic year, a total of 502 pupil completed the programme and went on to deliver extra-curricular activity in 24 schools across Moray.

Our Secondary Young Leader programme saw 161 young people support our programmes across the year, supporting events, activities as well as local clubs. Throughout their journey on our young leader's programme, around 50 young leaders have gained qualifications via the programme taking part in Young Leader First aid courses as well as our Summer Coach Academy which too place last summer. We continue to develop new opportunities through our young leaders programme, with the introduction of a mental health awareness hoodie in partnership with Mikeysline.

Clubs

In 2025/26, 29 community sport clubs created pathways with local schools through Active Schools. These links included taster sessions, regular extra-curricular activity and support for festivals, reaching 159 schools across Moray.

Clubs with the most recorded links included:

- Elgin City Football Club
- Moray Sports Centre
- Moray Rugby RFC
- Forres Tigers Basketball Club
- Elgin School of Taekwondo
- Forres St Lawrence Cricket Club
- Strathlene Golf Club
- Friendly Access – Swimable
- Grant Park Bowls Club
- Elgin Duellist Fencing Club
- Moravian Orienteering

The Active Schools team continues to support the Community Sport team with the Club Accreditation scheme, with more than 70 clubs now accredited. In 2026/27, the team aims to provide accredited clubs with further development opportunities, including governance, funding and disability inclusion training. The Club Development Officer will also support an Accredited Club Newsletter to share opportunities and strengthen partnership working.

Funding

Sourcing funding continues to be a high priority for the team, ensuring that cost doesn't become a barrier to participation or leadership. Across 2025/26 a total of £30,400 in funding was sourced between the Active Schools and Community Sport Team. This funding supported projects such as Neurodiverse and Physical Disability Trampolining sessions, Lunchtime Drop in Activities, Young Leaders Coach Education as well as supporting the Active Recovery Moray project. Funding is essential for these projects to be sustainable with the team continuing to work to apply for local windfarms, Tesco and parent councils to name a few.



Community Sport

For the first time, Active Schools and Community Sport have been brought together in one annual report. This combined approach will continue in future years. Key Community Sport projects include:

- Colour of Your Scarves – Moray Pride Inclusion Hub
- ASN Parent Focus Work – Moray Disability Sports Hub
- Active Recovery Moray – Mental Health Accreditation

Colours of Our Scarves: Equality Through Sport Moray Workshops

The Moray Pride Inclusion Sports Hub is a partnership between the Active Campus programme, Moray Council's Sports Hub Development Team, Highlands and Islands Student's Association (HISA) and LEAP Sport. The hub provides students and the LGBT+ community the opportunity to participate in free activities, whilst providing valuable training for local grassroots clubs.

Earlier this year, the Hub welcomed local coaches and sports facilitators to Equality Through Sport workshops, delivered by The Fair Play Foundation.

The workshop, 'Colours of our scarves' is a long-standing anti-discrimination and education programme funded by Scottish Government and is committed to promoting equality, inclusion, and respect within Scottish sport and wider society.

The free two-hour workshops were advertised to coaches, welfare officers, volunteers and participants from sports clubs across Moray.

Throughout the session, attendees were supported to develop a clearer awareness of what hate behaviours can look like within sport and in wider society. By exploring the potential consequences of hateful behaviour, participants were able to recognise the importance of creating safer, more inclusive sporting spaces.

The first session was attended by Moray community sports clubs and saw representation across Elgin City FC, Elgin Sports Community Trust, Moray Mavericks (Basketball), Limitless Moray Netball Club, Boccia, Scottish Fencing, and Moray Community Sports Hub.

The second and third workshops were attended by over 25 UHI Moray students. The first session was for Level 4 and 5 sports coaching students, and the second session was for HNC/D sports coaching and development students.

The workshops also made participants realise that their online presence is just as important as their in-person interaction, with a focus on the dangers of social media in spreading hate speech. This was particularly valuable to students; many of whom were unaware of the impact their social media presence can have on others and their own career.



Focus Group Research: Inclusive Activities and Sports Opportunities for Everyone in Moray

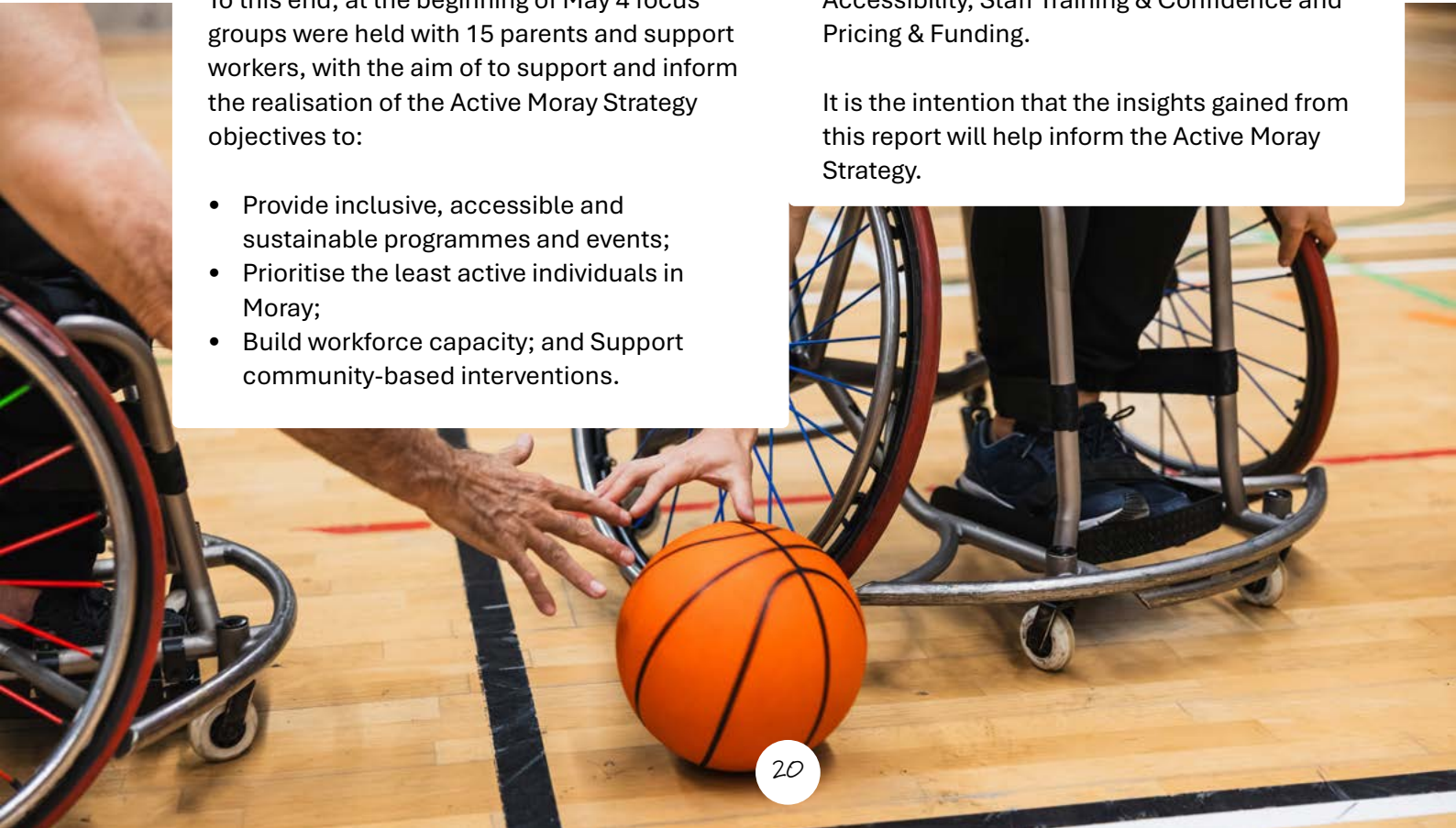
Moray Disability Sports Hub views inclusion as an indispensable component part of the current Active Moray Strategy vision of “creating a more active Moray through the places where we live, work, learn, care and play” and Hub members are encouraged that one of the strategic priorities of this document is “Active Sport and Recreation for all.”

To this end, at the beginning of May 4 focus groups were held with 15 parents and support workers, with the aim of to support and inform the realisation of the Active Moray Strategy objectives to:

- Provide inclusive, accessible and sustainable programmes and events;
- Prioritise the least active individuals in Moray;
- Build workforce capacity; and Support community-based interventions.

The recommendations outlined in the final research report aimed to translate the lived experience of parents who hold the conviction that their children should have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity in Moray and covered a broad range of themes. These themes include Communication and Support, Learn to Swim Programmes, Environment and Accessibility, Staff Training & Confidence and Pricing & Funding.

It is the intention that the insights gained from this report will help inform the Active Moray Strategy.





Active Recovery Moray and Mental Health Accreditation

The ARM is based at the Gleaner synthetic turf pitch and pavilion in Elgin. It is a Hub that involves a broad range of partners including Elgin Sports and Community Trust, Arrows (A Quarriers Service), The Salvation Army, Police Scotland, Boundless Trails CIC, Moray Alcohol & Drug Partnership and Moray Wellbeing Hub.

Over the last 2 years, through the delivery of Football and Mountain biking sessions, ARM has successfully created a welcoming and non-judgmental environment for anyone who is struggling to establish good mental health and wellbeing. Participants who attend these free sessions are supported to develop their life skills and to have conversations regarding mental health and wellbeing.

Building on this success, at the beginning of this year ARM was awarded £29,000 over 2 years from the Moray Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund to further develop and extend this initiative by tackling mental health inequalities through using the medium of sport and physical activity.

A key element that is being funded is to further develop the Moray Club Accreditation Scheme which is delivered in partnership with the Moray Wellbeing Hub. This offers Moray based sports clubs the opportunity to complete the Mental Health First Aid Training Course and thereby become Mental Health and Physical activity accredited clubs. This will mean that anyone joining one of these accredited clubs will know that coaches and volunteers will have been trained to provide appropriate support.

Next Steps for Moray Active Schools and Community Sport

The 2025/26 review highlights strong progress in several areas and steady progress in others. The team has identified the following priorities for further development:

- Maintain universal participation performance while continuing steady progress across equality, diversity and inclusion priority groups.
- Strengthen inclusive club pathways through Disability Inclusion Training, delivered in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport and supported by 2026 Summer of Sport funding.
- Expand Secondary Supervised Gym sessions across Moray, targeting secondary girls and inactive pupils to build confidence in gym environments.
- Establish a Women and Girls in Sport Thematic Hub to increase awareness, improve opportunities for female participation and support more women and girls into volunteering, coaching and committee roles.
- Strengthen links with at least one focus club from each ASG, supported by the Club Development Officer through governance, funding, volunteer recruitment, upskilling and school-to-club pathway development.
- The team will continue to support the development of the 'Moray Disability Sport Hub' led by the Community Sport Hub Officer, which aims to improve the accessibility of sporting opportunities in the area. This will support closing the gap on the census comparison for ASN participation in Moray.
- Develop a team training programme linked to the Team Building and Wellbeing Calendar, supporting staff development and reflective practice across the year.
- Streamline the team plan, particularly the targeted work priority, and continue using one-page plans with ASCs and school leads to maintain focus on agreed priorities.



