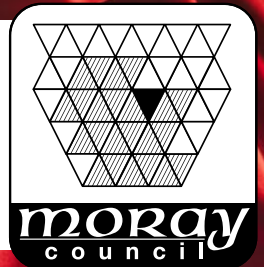




Annual Report

2024/25





Contents

Introduction and Background	3
Participation – Universal Initiatives	7
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – Targeted Initiatives	12
Volunteers, Clubs and Funding	18
Next Steps	24

Introduction and Background

This report will celebrate the achievements of the Moray Active Schools team across the 2024-25 academic year. The Active Schools Coordinators (ASC) are part of the wider ‘Active Schools and Community Sport Team’, which also includes a Community Sport Hub Officer and a team of sport coaches.

The current Active Schools team are:

Roy McPherson

Principal Active Schools and Community Sport Officer

Fraser Lyall

Lossiemouth ASG

Fiona Preston

Elgin High ASG Primaries

Lorna Young

Milnes ASG

Craig Rowley

Elgin Academy ASG

Paul Rogan

Elgin High School

Colin McRae

Speyside ASG

Paul Rogan | Rosalyn Carruthers

Forres ASG

Danny Simpson

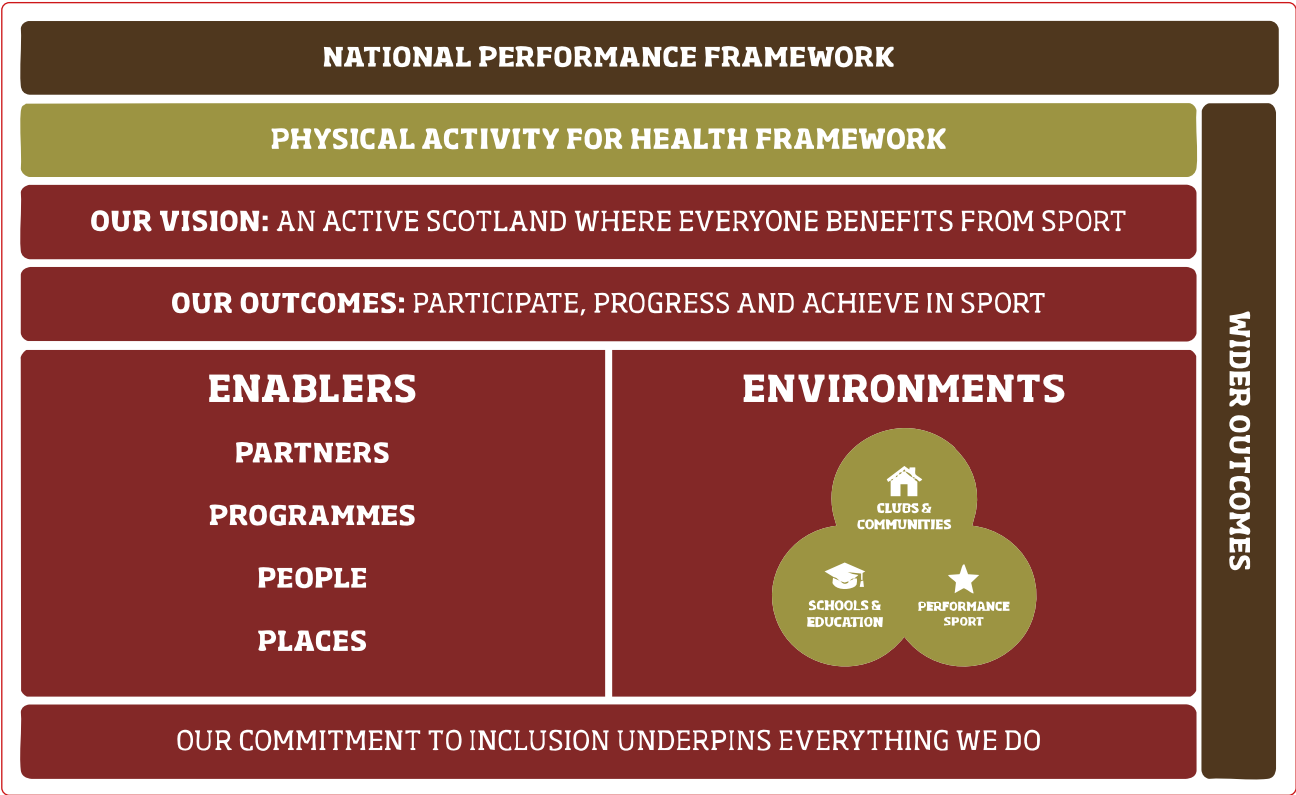
Buckie ASG

Amanda Walker

Keith ASG

Active Schools is a successful partnership between **sportscotland** and Local Authorities that has been in operation since 2004, recently celebrating twenty years in operation. The current funding agreement between **sportscotland** and **Moray Council** is in place until 2027. The aim of Active Schools is to provide free, high-quality opportunities to take part in extra-curricular sport and physical activity, while developing pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community. Developing a network of volunteers is a fundamental role of the team to ensure that activities are offered at no cost to the participant. The **sportscotland** ‘Sport for Life’ strategy guides the work and the infographic displayed below highlights the key areas of participation, people and profile.

The commitment from **sportscotland** to ensure that ‘inclusion underpins everything we do’ has resulted in a more focused approach to targeted programmes delivered via the Moray team. This report will highlight the blend of universal and targeted projects, striving to ensure that sport and physical activity is accessible to all young people in Moray.



The plan for the Moray team is split into the five priority areas identified for Active Schools nationally by **sportscotland**. The national priorities are intertwined with local priorities from the strategic plans in Moray which the team contribute towards, including the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Children’s Services Plan and Corporate Plan. A number of the teams projects were highlighted in the recent Children Services Report for Moray. The key priorities of the team plan are on page 5.

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 & Communities Service Plan:

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



Participation – Universal Initiatives

Moray Active Schools	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	National stats comparison 2024/25
Distinct Participants (school pupils)	4,040	4,750	5,680	n/a
Percentage of Moray school roll participating	33%	39%	47%	40%
Distinct participants male	2,270 [56%]	2,782 [59%]	3,280 [58%]	53% male
Distinct participants female	1,770 [44%]	1,968 [41%]	2,400 [42%]	47% female
Number of activity sessions delivered	3,879	4,624	5,388	n/a

The aim was to retain the universal performance statistics from the previous year, but progress across each term resulted in a significant increase in distinct participant figures. The percentage of the Moray school roll participating increased from 39% to 47%, which took the team above the national average for the first time. There was also a steady increase in the number of sessions, with 764 additional free sessions delivered compared with the previous year.

There were several developments that contributed towards the progress:

- The team recognised the importance of **reviewing data** regularly at team meetings which led to increased awareness on areas/schools/year groups that require targeting.
- An increased emphasis on delivering **lunchtime sessions** at secondary schools, and some primary schools, allowed new participants to be targeted. Funding sourced in the Forres and Lossiemouth areas provided additional resource for paid coaches to deliver the lunchtime provision. Data highlighted that 26% of the total sessions in Moray were delivered at lunchtime, compared with 22% in 23/24, and 17% in 22/23. Lunchtime sessions can be more accessible for rural pupils that travel home via bus straight after school.
- The progress of the **Playmakers** programme also resulted in an increase in lunchtime sessions, delivered by trained primary school leaders supervised by school staff. The ASC in the Elgin Academy ASG delivered an extended programme across some of the bigger primary schools, that led to an increase in primary 1 – 3 pupils participating.
- A partnership between the AS team and the Cooper Park **Junior Park Run** committee created a new monthly ‘schools participation league’ which rewarded runners with a point for their school each time they took part. Thirty-eight schools participated across the year with a total of 303 participants, providing a pathway into weekly activity.
- The partnership with the Scottish FA enabled the Moray **Primary Schools Football Festivals** to continue on Saturday mornings for Primary 2 – 7s. The regular coaching and games programme is the biggest contributor to our stats, with 72 volunteers leading 729 players from teams across 42 schools (including 7 out of area). Coaching sessions take place throughout the week in preparation for the games.
- Partnerships with Youth Work teams enabled some well attended **extra-curricular transition** programmes for primary 7s, the Buckie ASG was a strong example of this.

Across the year, 47 different types of activity were offered in the extra-curriculum, an increase from 43 in the previous year. The top ten activities, by number of sessions delivered are listed in order below:



1st Football



2nd Multisport 3rd Netball



4th Basketball 5th Volleyball 6th Badminton



7th Cricket 8th Dance and Movement 9th Cross Country / Running (combined) 10th Rugby Union

The team coordinate an 'Events and Festivals' programme to provide a competitive outlet for the different sports. Some of the key universal events and games programmes that were delivered included:

- Primary Schools Cross Country Event in partnership with Gordon Castle. Video can be viewed here:  <https://youtube.com/shorts/>
- 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.
- Netball Festivals delivered for primary school and secondary school teams.
- Primary School Basketball festival delivered in partnership with Moray Mavericks Basketball Club.
- Golf competitions delivered in partnership with local clubs in the Buckie, Lossiemouth, Forres and Elgin areas.

The **sportscotland** School Sport Award is a national initiative designed to encourage schools to put young people at the heart of decision-making, planning and implementation of school sport. It also encourages schools to self-reflect, continuously improve, recognise and celebrate successful school sport models. Schools across Moray submitted applications to the programme via the efforts of school staff, Active Schools Coordinators, and young ambassadors. At the end of the academic year, 24 local schools had qualified for awards, with nine confirmed gold awards.





Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – Targeted Initiatives

Moray Active Schools Academic Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Census Comparison Gap
Participants with additional support need	1,476	1,559	1,667	-11.1%
Participants that are assessed disabled	127	144	165	-2.1%
Participants with access to free school meals (including all primary 1-5s)	2,437	2,500	2,995	n/a
Participants from SIMD 1 or 2	78	103	114	-0.9%
Care experienced participants	50	67	78	n/a
Participants from ethnic minorities	168	168	139	0.0%

The team are committed to reducing barriers to participation for young people that experience the most challenges. The Lossiemouth Active Schools Coordinator and Community Sport Hub Officer completed the ‘Changing Lives through Sport’ champions training programme across the last academic year, increasing the knowledge and understanding in this theme.

The **sportscotland** platform recently added a new reporting area on census comparison, which allows teams to track the participation gap with specific target groups. For example, under additional support needs, the pupil census for Moray is recorded as 40.5% of pupils, with ASN participation rate in the Active Schools programme of 29.5%, highlighting a gap of -11.1%. The gap nationally is -8.4%, although the national pupil census is 34.9%, lower than Moray. The participation figures show that 1,667 ASN pupils took part in last year’s programme, increasing from 1,559, highlighting steady progress.

Supporting pupils with **ASN and disabilities** has become a focus of the Moray team in recent years, the impacts, outputs and outcomes of the key projects are detailed below:

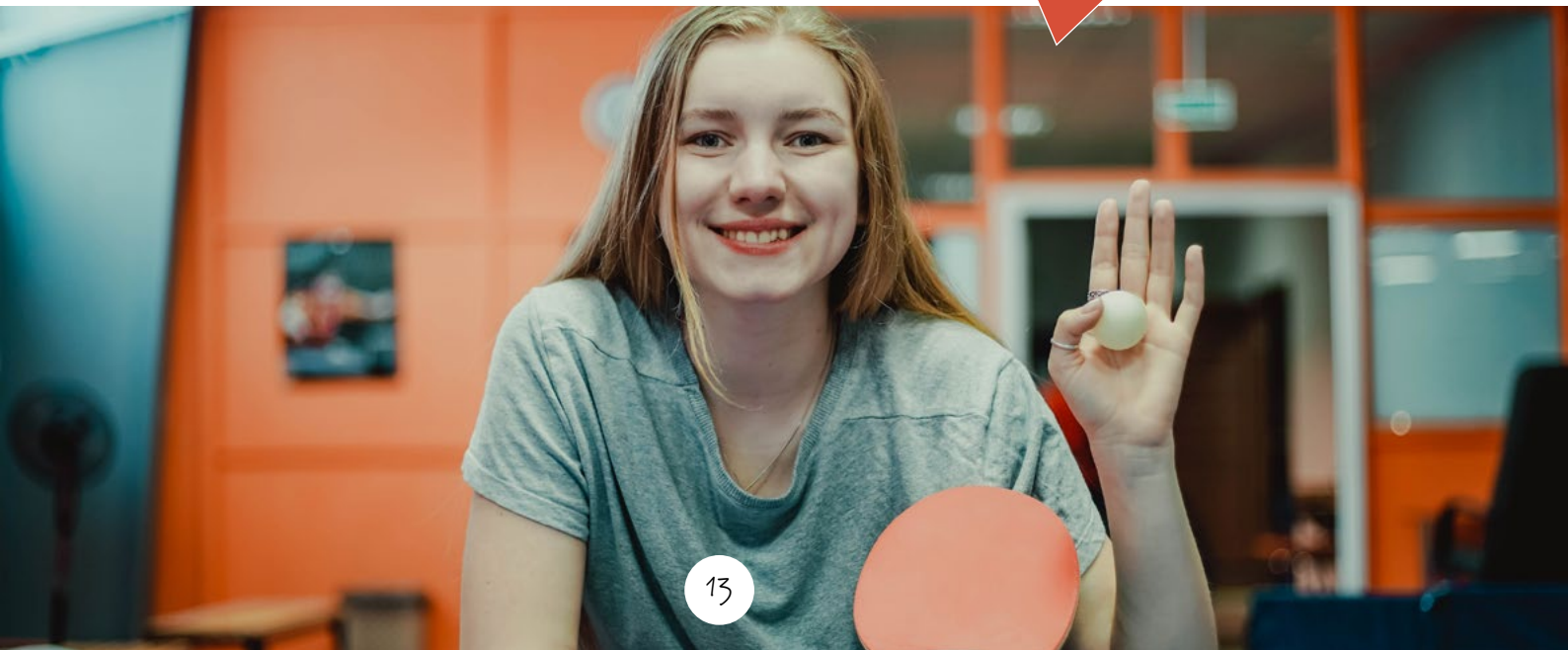
Milnes High ASN After-School Club:

A partnership between the Active Schools Coordinator and ASN leads at the school created the opportunity after requests from parents. Ten young people participated in 18 different activities including Boccia, Table Tennis, Health Walks and Curling. Taster sessions from local sport clubs have also been delivered via 8 local clubs to promote pathways into community sport.

100% of survey responders reported improved mental and physical health, gained confidence in everyday life, become better at sports, learned new skills, increased their physical activity, felt that the project was designed for them.

"The after-school sports club has given my son an opportunity to be active, make friends and interact with peers. This is crucial as due to family dynamics he is usually house bound and does not get a chance to be physically active or interact with others."

– Parent of participant





Relaxed Sports for Neurodiverse Children @ Keith Primary:

The Keith ASC and primary school ASN lead developed a programme in response to parents that were unable to find suitable opportunities for their children to become active. During the sessions parents have the opportunity to sit and chat in the school community room regarding the challenges they have faced, which has been well received.

Ten pupils with neuro-diverse conditions participated across the last academic year which has involved fun games, parachute activities and free play with the sports equipment.

"... he loves that he has made new friends with the same conditions as he has, he says he likes that he doesn't have to try too hard to be good because everyone is the same. He likes playing with the structured activities but also using my imagination with my friends. I also love ASN relaxed sports, the peer support from parents is amazing, we all support each other in both bad and good situations we have encounter and can laugh too."

– Parent

ASN Cycling Project:

A 3-year project has just been completed across Moray to provide opportunities for young people and adults with additional support needs to develop their Cycling skills. Outfit Moray were the lead delivery partner for the project which was funded via Scottish Cycling.

A total of 117 ASN pupils from 3 secondary schools and 5 primary schools took part in curriculum time session blocks across the 2024/25 academic year.

"It was amazing to see a pupil with complex ASN struggling to learn to cycle to then develop into a safe, competent cyclist. His parents, myself and other staff have noticed that his overall confidence and maturity has grown as a direct result of this cycling project"

– ASN lead



Trampoline Sessions for Neurodiverse and Physically Disabled Children:

A new club was created in the Milnes area in the last part of the 2024/25 academic year. Funding was sourced to allow a qualified Trampoline coach to attend a 'Rebound Therapy' course and further funding was sourced to ensure that the trial sessions were delivered for free.

Six primary school pupils benefitted from the sessions with some positive responses from parents and participants.



Other projects that made progress for this target group include the 'Swimable' project in Forres and Lossiemouth, 'Wednesday Night ASN Group' in Forres, ASN Clubs @ Lhanbryde, Mosstodloch and Millbank primaries.

Supporting families in **poverty** is another high priority area for **Moray Council** which is reflected in the work of the Active Schools team. The team continued to provide 100% of their programme at no cost to participants, progressed Sports Kits For All projects and coordinated a project supporting young people to access recycled bikes. The Cycling project was delivered in partnership with the 'Stella's Voice' charity, and 88 recycled bikes and safety equipment was provided to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds across the area. Details on the projects can be viewed here: [Supporting families experiencing poverty - Sport in Moray](#)

The team continued to make progress with the **care experienced** target group, with an increase from 67 to 78 young people involved in the programme across 2024/25. The team completed 'the Promise' network training in November 2024 and supported an alternative curriculum project at Mortlach Primary. The project involved Karate Academy Scotland delivering sessions to a small group of care experienced pupils, increasing their confidence to engage with community sport sessions. There were also four young leaders from a care experienced background involved with delivery and this is an area for further development across the 2025/26 academic year.

Volunteers, Clubs and Funding

Moray Active Schools	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number of deliverers	454	483	609
Number of volunteers	429	456	574
Number of young leaders	148	152	204
Young leaders with ASN	n/a	51	66
Care experienced young leaders	n/a	4	4
Coach Education courses delivered	30	30	30
Course Education course participant numbers	350	340	356
Sport clubs with links to schools	19	30	41
Funding sourced to support projects	£17,850	£13,936	£44,832

The team were able to deliver the initiatives described in the report thanks to building up a dedicated workforce. The Active Schools Coordinators regularly worked with school staff, young leaders, parent volunteers, college students, community club coaches and community volunteers to offer a range of different activities across the area. The continued rise in popularity of the young leaders programme was the main contributory factor in the increase in volunteer numbers. The partnership with UHI Moray was also successful, with ASCs providing placements in schools for the sport students. In total, 574 volunteers worked with the team across 2024-25, which equates to 94% of the coaching workforce.

The reporting system distinguishes by deliverer type, and the make-up of the volunteer workforce is detailed below:

- 204 Secondary Pupil Young Leaders
- 135 Family Members
- 80 Club Coaches
- 73 Teacher
- 34 Community Members
- 23 further education students
- 21 other School Staff
- 3 Others
- 1 Session Coach

The team organised 30 coach education courses that were delivered locally to 356 attendees. Partnerships between the team and sport national governing bodies (NGBs) ensured that the level of training available for the sporting workforce in Moray increased. The NGBs involved with the coach education delivery included:

- Scottish FA
- Scottish Athletics
- Scottish Handball
- Scottish Golf
- Basketball Scotland
- Cricket Scotland
- Netball Scotland

The team successfully applied for £6k of funding from a TSI Moray 'Local Action Fund' to support the development of **young leaders (YL)**. Part of the project committed to recruiting YLs from targeted backgrounds, including care experienced young people. The funding was used to supply hoodies to reward YLs for progress, provide training, and equipment with a focus on ASN activities. The total number of secondary pupil young leaders rose to 204 this year, increasing from 150.

The stats on the young leaders included:

- 66 with an additional support need
- 4 assessed disabled
- 8 ethnic minority
- 3 from SIMD decile 1 and 2
- 4 care experienced

We launched a young leader survey in March and 62 responses were received. The information in this survey will be used to guide our YL programme moving forward.

Some of the key responses from the survey included:

- 53% were very satisfied with the programme
- 44% satisfied
- In response to what they enjoyed the most, 40 responders answered, 'training & skills development'.
- In terms of personal development, 47 felt it boosted their confidence, 48 reported improved communication skills, 43 felt they learned leadership skills.

The YLs were asked to share positive experiences and highlights from the programme, one of the quotes included:

"Being a young leader has been brilliant. It has allowed me to learn about new sports which i have then taught to younger children. I have been able to assist less experienced young leaders and help them develop. Amanda is a brilliant leader of active schools and I feel she makes the young leader sessions more enjoyable."

– Young Leader

Two of the Netball young leaders worked with the **Moray Council** communications team to create a profile video for the programme:  <https://youtube.com/shorts/>

The first step on the young leaders pathway is the **playmakers** programme for senior primary school pupils. ASCs and school staff provide 6-weeks of training to build leadership skills in pupils, and gain experience delivering fun games to primary 1–3 pupils. Across 24/25, 650 pupils from 24 primary schools completed the training, building a base of sporting volunteers for future years.

“Playmakers has had a really positive impact on our pupils. We’ve seen learners grow in confidence, step into leadership roles, and really take responsibility, all through something they enjoy – sport.”

– primary school head teacher in Buckie ASG

One of the main efforts to reward volunteers came via the annual **Thank You Event / Recognition Awards** in June. Approximately 100 volunteers attended the event, a mix of YLs, club coaches, school staff and family members. An overview of the event was shared on the **Moray Council** social media pages and can be viewed here:  <https://youtube.com/shorts/>



Clubs

The number of community sport clubs creating pathways with local schools via the Active Schools team increased from 30 to 41 across 2024-25. Links were created via taster sessions, regular extra-curricular activity and club representatives supporting festivals. The clubs that recorded the most links were:

- Elgin City Football Club
- Forres Mechanics Football Club
- Moray Road Runners
- Forres St Lawrence Cricket Club
- Wardend Fishery
- Elgin School of Taekwondo
- Karate Academy Scotland
- Quasar Hockey Club
- Strathlene Golf Club
- Moray Rugby RFC
- Moravian Orienteering Club

The ASCs are currently supporting the Community Sport Hub Officer and leisure team to progress the club accreditation scheme for clubs in Moray, which will become mandatory from the end of November 2025. The programme encourages best practise to be delivered across the different sports, with 31 clubs already being accredited, and a further 15 in progress.

Funding

The team have continued to submit funding applications to increase resources and took in £45k in the last academic year, including some funding for CSH projects. The funding has supported ASCs to cover costs of paid coaches, provide training and hoodies for young leaders programmes, purchase equipment for playmakers and other projects. The main funders have included windfarms, Moray Local Action Fund, Newbold Legacy Trust and Tesco's.

Our social media leads continued to create quality content to ensure the high profile of team projects. We worked with the council communications team to create short videos to support with this, the Cross Country video become the most viewed content on the council pages at that time, and has amassed over 46k views. The team Facebook page can be viewed here: [Active Schools and Community Sport Moray | Elgin | Facebook](#)



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Next Steps

The review of 2024/25 has highlighted significant progress in some areas and steady progress in others. There are several areas identified that the team would like to develop further, these are highlighted below:

- **Maintain performance levels** of universal statistics and aim for continued steady progress in ‘equalities, diversity and inclusion’ target areas.
- The team will contribute 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.
- The principal officer has created a **‘Team Building & Wellbeing Calendar’** for 25/26 to develop strong partnerships and contribute towards the wellbeing of the team. The calendar includes regular opportunities for team interaction, include termly ‘connect & chat’ sessions between team members.
- The **male / female participation gap** decreased by 1% but is still wider than the national average. A focus on developing Netball, Girls Football and Dance opportunities will be progressed by the team. A 9-event Netball festivals programme has been scheduled to take place at Gordonstoun.



- To recruit new **school staff as deliverers**, the team are preparing to engage with schools early in the academic year to celebrate successes from the previous year and appeal for new leaders. The team will work with the education leads to plan training sessions for the ‘Newly Qualified Teachers’ (NQTs).
- A **‘Responding to Challenging Behaviour’** workshop is being developed for 25/26 in response to requests via the young leaders survey and other volunteers.
- The team will have input into the development of the **systems-based approach to physical activity in Moray**, the key strategic plan for moving forward. A transformation of the overall Sport & Leisure service is planned with a focus on demonstrating the wider impact of the service across the Council.

