

# INSPIRING SCOTLAND

A photograph of three young women at a party. The woman on the left is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt and a red sash, waving her hand. The woman in the middle is wearing a pink ruffled top and pink pants, smiling. The woman on the right is wearing a gold crown, a gold sequined top, and has colorful face paint on her cheeks, also smiling. The background is dark with some lights and a sign that says 'aca'.

**Annual Report  
2022-23**

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## We believe everyone in Scotland has the right to live a happy and healthy life free from Poverty or disadvantage

I am pleased to introduce Inspiring Scotland's Annual Report for 2022/23 which provides an overview of the work we have undertaken to deliver on our strategic priorities and mission to improve the lives of people across Scotland.

In such challenging times, the need for partnership to increase the impact and effectiveness of all we do at Inspiring Scotland has never been greater. We are committed to working with others, shining a light on success and sharing evidence of what works, so that together we can make a real difference and improve lives.

In this spirit we have supported over 700 organisations this year across 16 funding programmes worth over £50m. I'm pleased to report that as well as new funding opportunities being created, nine of our programmes have provided vital long term funding to organisations, offering five years or more of investment.

Through each of these programmes we bring vital financial support combined with a package of additional support which starts with our team and extends to a whole range of professional expertise delivered through our Specialist Volunteer Network. These additional benefits, which are central to Inspiring Scotland's approach, bring an array of skills, experience and knowledge to our charity partners, strengthening governance for example, through training and recruitment of board members. The sector tells us that this wrap around support is needed now more than ever.

This year we have focused on the work we do which truly adds value and we have challenged ourselves to be the best partner we can be. This has included using our knowledge and experience to lead and create cross sector solutions, sharing evidence of impact, demonstrating value for money, and most importantly remaining focused on creating social impact – so more lives can be changed for the better.

In 2022/23 the operating environment has been unprecedented for Scotland's third sector and presents real issues for people and families across Scotland. At Inspiring Scotland we remain resolute in tackling these issues and in doing so we aim to be useful and truthful, and not least, hopeful.

Despite the challenges, we draw inspiration and energy from all of our partners, from those who generously fund us, who support us in other ways, and from our charity partners whose unwavering dedication gives hope to many, and shows that solutions are possible.

Inspiring Scotland's experience gives me hope that even the most deeply rooted challenges can be overcome when we work together, with shared purpose.

**Celia Tennant**  
CEO, Inspiring Scotland



# Our year in numbers

**Inspiring Scotland managed 16 funding programmes worth over £50m and supported 723 organisations.**

During the year, six new funding opportunities were offered, and nine long term programmes continued, providing organisations five or more years of funding. Across the year we worked in partnership with a range of investors including the Scottish Government, local authorities, private businesses and individuals, industry bodies and trusts and foundations. Through each of these partnerships our focus was to direct resources in the most effective way possible and create meaningful change in people's lives.

## Summary of activity



**£42m**  
funding released

**£9.3m**  
additional funds managed

**£123m**  
requested in funding



**726**  
organisations supported



**225,000**  
people supported



**16**  
programmes delivered

**6**  
new programmes

**9**  
programmes offered 5 years + funding



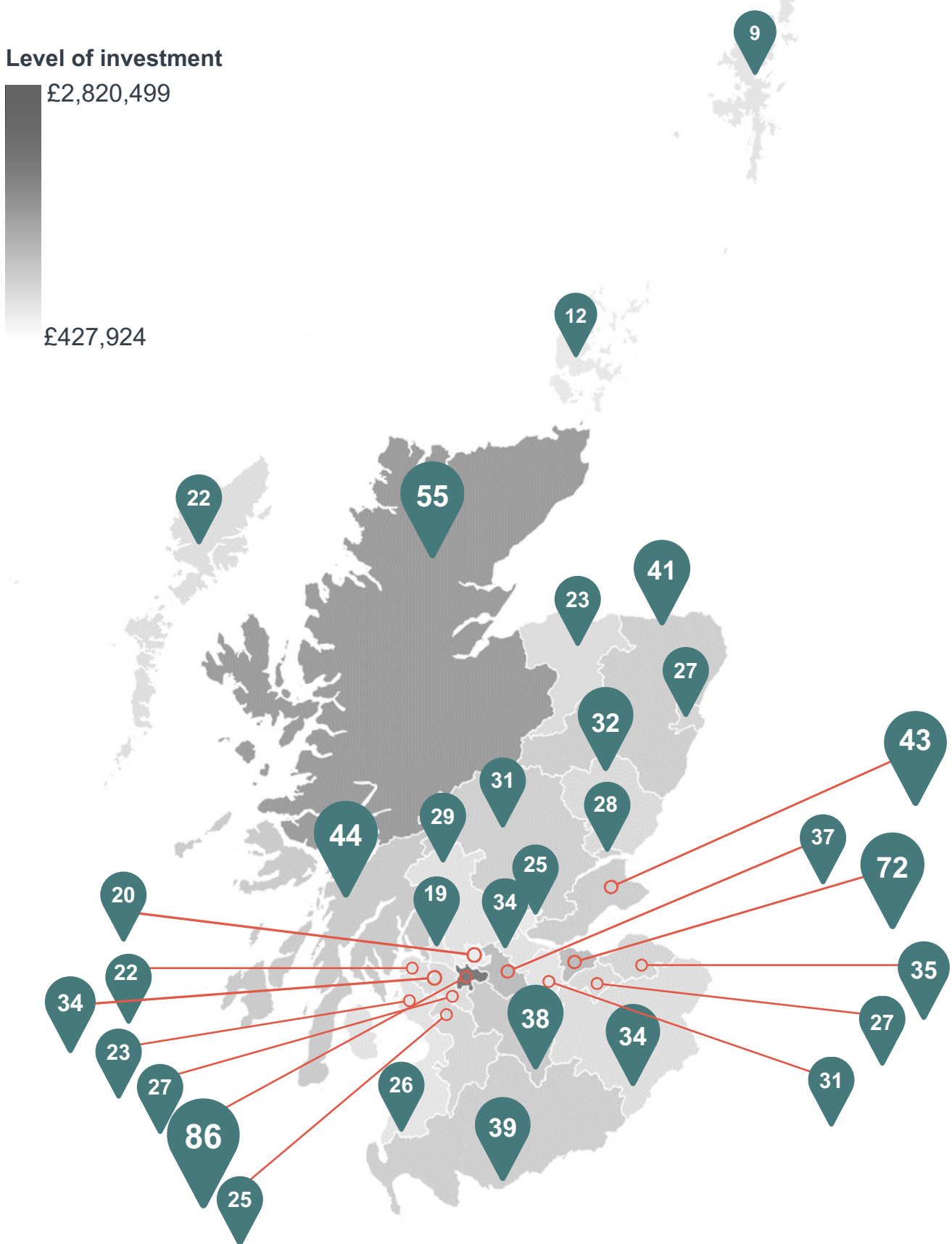
**580**  
specialist volunteers

**£430k**  
value of specialist volunteer support

**477**  
specialist volunteer projects

# Investment across Scotland

The pins in the map show the number of organisations funded by local authority area and the colour scale shows the amount of funding by local authority area.



Note: Additional £12,679,369 of funding was granted to organisations operating nationally. Does not include organisations supported by CashBack for Communities.

## Our strategic priorities



**We believe that everyone, regardless of their starting point in life, deserves the opportunity to lead a happy, healthy life, free from poverty or disadvantage. In 2022 we began working towards our refreshed five-year strategic plan, concentrating on four priority areas.**

### **Improving Life Chances for Children and Young People**

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Supporting children and young people throughout their life journey to improve outcomes for them and their families.

### **Climate**

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Challenging ourselves to change the way we work and work with others to help build climate resilient organisations.

### **Flourishing Lives**

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Supporting people who face barriers to maintaining a safe, included and flourishing life.

### **Challenging Ourselves**

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As a learning organisation we are driven to be better and to work in new ways to achieve more impact.

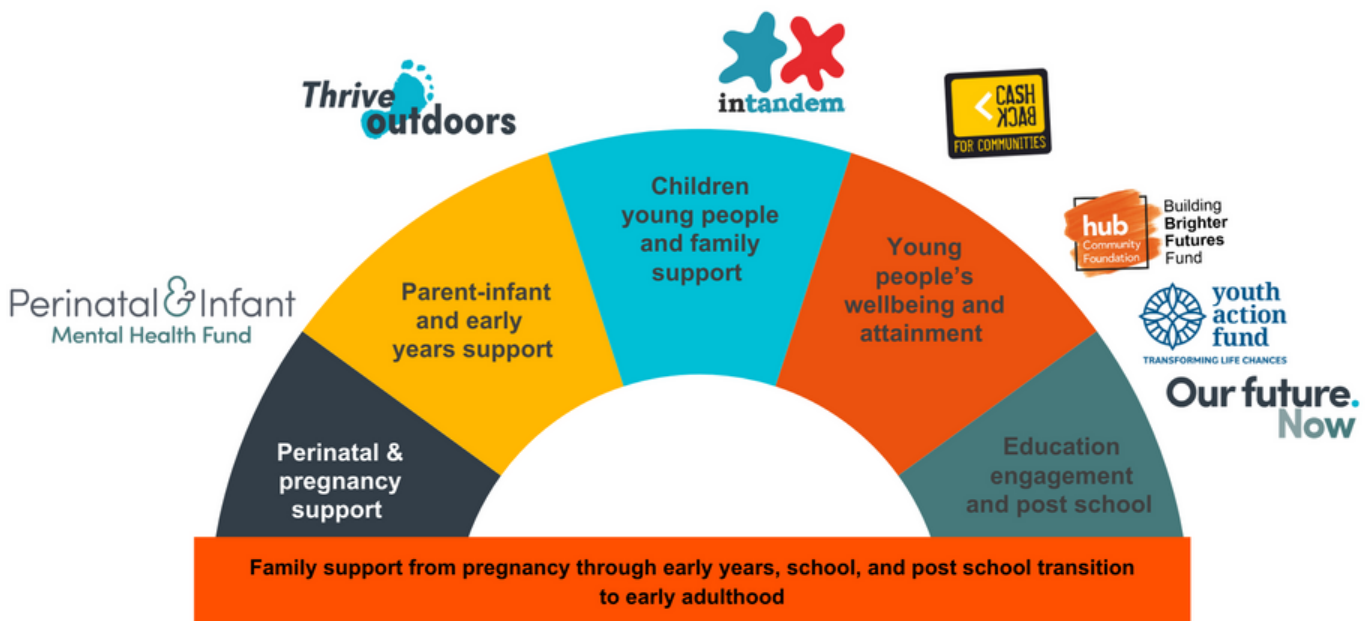
**We are working every day to improve lives and create a better Scotland for all.**

# Improving life chances for children and young people



**We believe we need to focus on children and young people throughout their life journey so that they have happy and healthy childhoods leading to positive adult lives.**

With a strategic focus on children and young people, over the next five years, we will fund and invest in organisations providing holistic, whole family support from pregnancy through early years, school, and post school transition, to early adulthood, to improve life outcomes for children, young people, and their families.



In addition to continued delivery of all our current programmes we set the following priorities for 2022/23:

- Continue long term investment in youth employability work.
- Develop understanding of infant mental health and community-based support to inform future programmes and investment.
- Support the development and expansion of intandem, Scotland's national mentoring programme for young people with care experience.
- Develop Thrive Outdoors programmes and build understanding of the barriers to play for children and young people with additional support needs.
- Support our trading arm subsidiary Willow Den to develop and sustain delivery of quality outdoor early years nursery provision.

## Committed to long term funding

**For 15 years Inspiring Scotland has committed long term funding to Scotland's charities who we believe can be best placed to make transformational change in people's lives. By committing to long term funding we can help create strong stable third sector organisations able to respond to the needs of the communities they work in.**

"One of the biggest benefits of Inspiring Scotland's funding is that it has been long term and flexible. The funding has been focused on developing the whole organisation, not just an individual project and that is very rare for third sector organisations, too used to operating on short term funding which limits the opportunity for growth." - Jimmy Wilson Chief Executive FARE

## Our future. Now

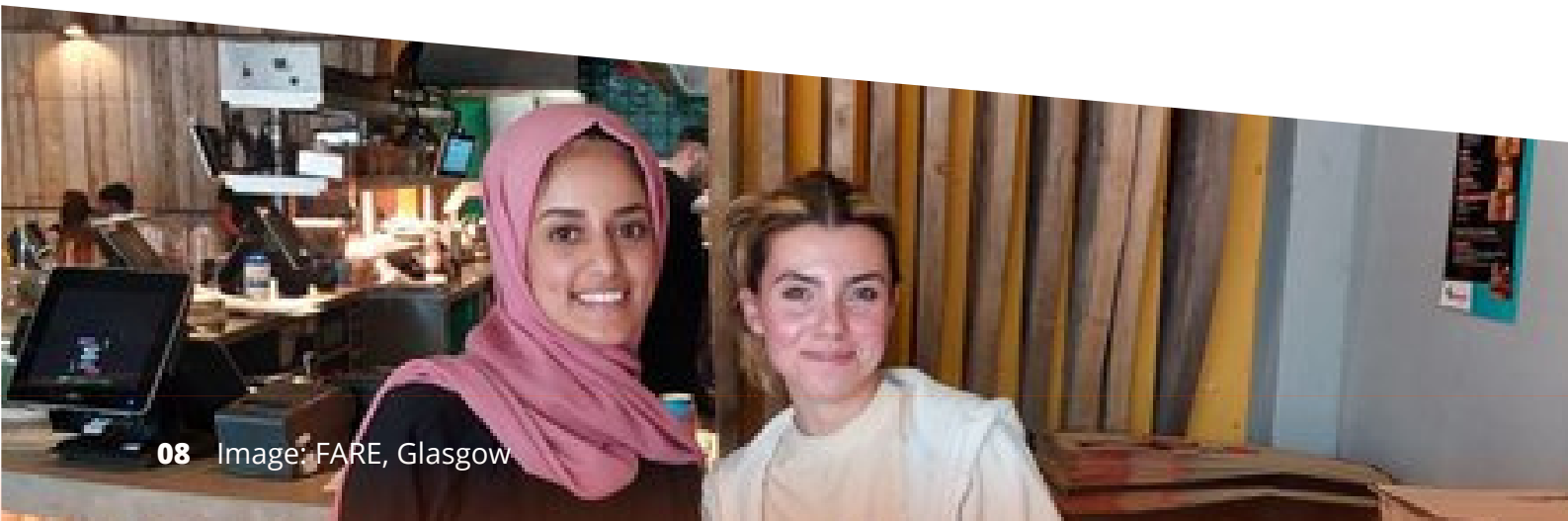
Our Future Now is five years into its 10-year commitment to positively change life chances for young people furthest from the labour market.

During 2022/23 Our Future Now continued investing in 12 charities working with young people among the worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis.

Despite these challenges, we know that with access to the right support, young people can change the trajectory of their lives.

Our Future Now equips young people with the resilience and skills required to open up better opportunities to succeed and live a happy and fulfilled life.

As well as being a long term funding programme, it is also a multi-investor model for every £1 of Scottish Government investment we have been able to leverage an additional £4, representing efficiency and value for money.





## Collaborating for the best start in life



As Scotland's national mentoring programme for young people looked after at home or in kinship care arrangements, intandem continued to support children and young people with care experience to build and maintain positive, loving relationships. intandem is managed by Inspiring Scotland and delivered by 11 partner charities across 19 local authorities

intandem is committed to supporting the work of The Promise so that children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected.

intandem invested in its youth forum, InVoice with the support of a dedicated participation manager.

Thanks to investment from the Robertson Trust, intandem expanded to offer mentoring for young people living in kinship care arrangements, meaning with a relative or friend.



**“Having a mentor has made me a lot happier. I was really struggling, mentally, physically...but when I got my mentor, she brightens stuff up... she genuinely takes some of the stress off my shoulders.”**

*- Cara, one of 200 children and young people supported by intandem*

## Bringing people together as a collective to learn and share

As fund manager of the Scottish Government's **Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Fund**, the team supported 34 charities to deliver mental health services to families across Scotland. In addition to this, we facilitated and convened a series of national events which brought together third sector, local authorities, education, NHS and the Scottish Government.

**Supporting Women, Reducing Harm** was a national event developed in partnership with women with lived experience, the Perinatal Mental Health Network, Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board and the Scottish Government.

The event focused on reducing the barriers to support for women and families, creating joined up pathways of care and outlining what good services look like for 300 people working in this area.

### Perinatal & Infant Mental Health Fund

**Families at the Centre** brought together 320 attendees to explore services supporting families in the perinatal period across Scotland.

We also hosted the 2nd annual '**Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Peer Support Scotland**' event bringing together 140 people and shared best practice and practical learning for people co-ordinating or facilitating peer support for parents and babies.

**“Hearing about all the fantastic work that is going on in Scotland in relation to PIMH was so inspiring and has made me think about what I can do in my everyday practice to keep the family at the centre.”**

*- Event attendee.*

## Understanding and scaling impact



The Thrive Outdoors team leads the development of outdoor play opportunities for children and families in communities, nurseries and schools across Scotland.

Thrive Outdoors continued its partnership with Glasgow City Council to deliver the **Active Play** programme in Glasgow primary schools. Active Scotland supported the expansion of active play in the Highlands.

In partnership with Scottish Government Thrive Outdoors delivered the **Outdoor Community Play Fund** supporting 29 organisations and expanding the support for children and families with additional support needs.

Thrive Outdoors continued to offer **consultancy and leadership training to the Early Learning and Childcare sector** to support leaders and services expand their quality outdoor play and learning experiences.



Active Play at Glasgow Primary School

**“There is such a buzz about outdoor learning around the county now, which we didn’t have before, and that is down to Thrive Outdoors”**

*- M Black, Early Years Manager, Scottish Borders Council*

## Building Outdoor Early Learning & Childcare

Willow Den is Inspiring Scotland’s outdoor nursery trading subsidiary. Created as part of our mission to increase the number of high-quality early learning and childcare for children not yet at primary school in a range of unique outdoor nursery settings across Scotland.

During the year Willow Den opened its second setting located at the Falkirk Wheel.



# Flourishing lives



**We believe that everyone in Scotland deserves, and has a right, to live their life to their maximum ability and change is best informed and driven by the people who experience the challenges most directly.**

Through our Flourishing Lives priority we fund, support, develop, and learn from organisations that help people and communities who face barriers to inclusion, and who may need support and services to thrive and live independently.



In addition to continued delivery of our current programmes. In 2022-23 we set ourselves goals to:

- Celebrate 10 years of long term support for the people and communities Link Up has supported and begin the transition to the next phase.
- Develop and expand the leadership and resilience programmes piloted with the Increasing Understanding Autism and learning disability programmes (Inspiring Inclusion).
- Collaborate with the Scottish Government to deliver funding programmes that deliver and shape social policy on a national scale.
- Develop our community capacity building and place-based approaches in rural areas of Scotland.

## A long term commitment to place-based support

In 2022 we celebrated 10 years of Link Up. Since 2012, Link Up has pioneered place-based working supporting 12 of Scotland's most deprived communities, with 4,252 people supported in 2022/23.

Link Up has demonstrated how with the right support, and time to build relationships, individuals and communities can begin and sustain a process of renewal.



This year has been one of transition, as over the course of 2022/23, all but three of the Link Up programmes have transferred to local ownership, with our local community partners taking full accountability for this work going forward. With our remaining three partner communities we continue to support community-led change with a focus on continuing to evolve place-based working.

**“I’m learning to think better of myself.  
Because of Link Up I’m getting to meet new people.**

**I feel so much more confident now and i’m putting myself  
forward for things which i wouldn’t have in the past.”  
- Link Up participant**



## Change is created by those with lived experience

We know that people with learning disabilities are strong and capable leaders.

In 2022-23 54 people took part in the 'Our Future Leaders' course. This programme is for people with learning disabilities who aspire to develop their leadership skills and was developed in partnership with the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD).

Our Future Leaders helps individuals to be more confident in their abilities, to express themselves clearly, assert their rights and responsibilities and advocate on behalf of people.



**“Part of leadership is finding ways to break down barriers, people don't always know I have a learning disability”**  
**- participant of Our Future Leaders course**

## Delivering the greatest possible social impact in partnership

Working in partnership with the Scottish Government, as the core investor in the third sector in Scotland, enables us to identify and solve problems on a national scale. By collaborating with us, the Scottish Government get greater value for money, are better connected to the difference funding is making, and have greater insight about social issues, delivery and what works.

In addition to other programmes, in 2022-23 we managed Scottish Government funding of **£34.67m** within our Flourishing Lives priority.

Funding through Delivering Equally Safe, the Equality and Human Rights Fund, Learning Disabilities funding, Increasing understanding of Autism, Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support Fund, Support in the Right Direction, Workforce Wellbeing Fund for Adult Social Work and Social Care, provided support to 509 organisations across Scotland benefitting 198,146 people.

## Developing place-based community capacity building

In 2022/23 we delivered the **Rural and Island Communities Ideas into Action Fund** for the Scottish Government. £2.9m was invested in 182 projects that responded to the unique challenges and opportunities of rural Scotland at a local, community level. In addition to funding, we delivered a programme of capacity-building activities aimed at building the long-term resource and resilience of grassroots community groups and the wider community-led local development sector.

Capacity building support included:

- An online resource hub covering key topics such as fundraising, impact and evaluation, and policy development with signposting to further support.
- A bulletin series collecting and producing useful resources and examples from across the Scottish third sector.
- Expert small group advisory workshops for emergent community groups, particularly those applying for funding for the first time.
- One-to-one support sessions with funded and not-funded community organisations, providing specific expertise and feedback.
- Capacity development workshops on organisational governance and equity, diversity & inclusion.
- Video impact stories created and shared on the [Rural Network website](#) to share the impact of community-led local development investment.

**Aberdeenshire based project, Pitmedden Youth Club received funding from the Rural and Island Communities Ideas into Action Fund.**

“Funding helped kick start a very successful community project to support and respond to an ongoing local need.

We now have almost 60 young people on our register and welcome an average of 45 weekly to the youth cafe: providing a warm safe space to socialise with friends.

Feedback has been incredible and the benefits to the young people's mental health is ongoing as they build relationships with youth workers and trusted adults and engage with peers from other local schools. Demand to continue has been overwhelming. Thank you for believing in us.”

Pitmedden Youth Cafe, Aberdeenshire



**“Funding helped kick start a very successful community project to support and respond to an ongoing local need.”**

# Climate



**In delivering our mission it is impossible to ignore the impact of climate change. We are challenging ourselves to change the way we work and work with others to help build climate resilient organisations.**

We are committed to an approach built around climate justice, where we work to avoid the poorest and least served in society bearing the brunt of the impact of climate change and the transition to a lower carbon economy. Our plan is built around our five added value goals and highlights the positive opportunities of climate related changes to create a fairer more just society.

We intend to drive change through our internal ways of working, our support to organisations and our wider influencing role.

## Key accomplishments this year:

- Commissioned Beyond Green to complete a Carbon audit.
- Began working on action plan to achieve net zero by 2045.
- Delivered climate essentials training for all staff.
- Active members of Scottish Funders Forum Climate Action sub-group, which is working on a co-ordinated net zero support programme for Scotland's third sector.

## Summary of Green Investments made

During the period, 48 grants were awarded to organisations which are categorised as green grants. The Environmental Funders Network has 12 different thematic issue categories through which it categorises green grants.

**48**  
grants  
made

**£900k**  
value of grants

## Top five categories of Investment:

- Sustainable Communities
- Energy
- Transport
- Agriculture & Food
- Consumption & Waste

# Challenging ourselves



**We are a learning organisation and are driven to be better, to work in new ways to achieve more impact. This requires us to work with our partners to improve what we do and drive change through deeper collaboration.**

Challenging ourselves also requires us to look internally and reflect on our organisation as a place to work. We want to enable all our staff team to reach their potential and love what they do.

During the year we challenged ourselves to:

- Better understand the impact of our model and build on the added value we deliver
- Improve our practice
- Improve our partnership working

## Adding Value

Underlying the Inspiring Scotland model is a focus on adding value to the organisations and people we fund and work with. With over 15 years of working in partnership, providing tailored support and gathering information on the impact of that support, we know that we add value through our five added value goals.



Inform and Influence



Support, develop & connect people



Strengthen organisations and communities



Make money go further



Encourage new ideas



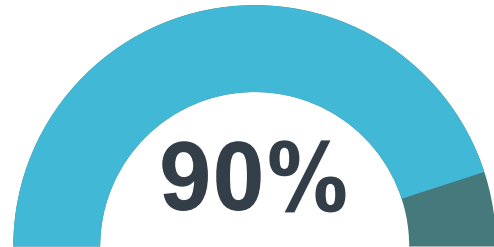
# Adding value

We support charities to deliver their best work, understanding that they are the experts in what they do. We focus on adding value - giving them the tools to do what they do best.

## How do we understand our impact and challenge ourselves to be better?





There is no one activity that can do this – it is an ongoing cycle of gathering feedback, talking to partners, and getting external input. This year we wanted to try and capture feedback across all the programmes we manage, so we revised our charity partner survey for 2023.

204 organisations we worked with across our different programmes took time to respond. Headline information is encouraging, but also gives us things to work on.



90% of organisations reported being part of an Inspiring Scotland portfolio brings benefit over and above the funding.

*“Inspiring Scotland wants us to succeed at what we do and are completely invested in positive change throughout Scotland.”  
- Feedback from charity 2023 partner survey.*

 <p><b>95%</b> can get support from IS staff if there are any issues with funded work</p>	 <p><b>77%</b> have developed greater partnerships and networks</p>
 <p><b>86%</b> have learnt new skills or gained knowledge</p>	 <p><b>72%</b> have a greater understanding of evaluation and impact</p>

*“Inspiring Scotland have always felt like a funding partner, there to listen and work with you in achieving outcomes.”  
- Feedback from charity 2023 partner survey.*



*“The level of support received from Inspiring Scotland staff makes us feel like our work is highly valued and encourages us that we are making a real impact in the communities where we work”  
- Feedback from charity 2023 partner survey.*

In 2022/2023 work to improve our practice focused on three connected plans delivering our commitment to:



## Fair Work First

We believe Fair Work can boost creativity, realise untapped potential, and increase productivity. Fair Work offers all individuals: voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect.

Activity this year has included the development of annual wellbeing reviews with staff, a quarterly magazine, regular staff surveys, a wellbeing group, and essentials training on a range of topics.

## Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

A staff group led and launched our EDI action plan with seven headline priorities agreed:

- Investing in staff training and workshops
- Producing overarching fund team guidance to support best practice
- Reviewing our internal HR policies
- Undertaking a stakeholder survey for feedback and challenge
- Reviewing equality data collected for different programmes
- Publishing an EDI statement with actions
- Undertaking an annual review of progress

Read our [EDI statement](#).

## National Trauma Training Programme Leadership Pledge of Support

We joined 58 other national organisations as signatories to the National Trauma Training Programme Leadership Pledge of Support.

As part of our commitment we are working to a trauma-informed plan including actions for us as an employer and funder.

Read more on our [Trauma Informed Pledge](#).

## Using Insight to inform and influence

Throughout Autumn 2022 teams gathered and shared information from organisations funded about:

- Cost-of-living crisis concerns for people they support, their organisations, their staff and volunteers
- What challenges people were facing due to the cost-of-living crisis
- What concerns partners had for the sustainability of their organisations
- What they were doing to mitigate the impact
- How Inspiring Scotland could provide support

A collated report was produced and shared with funders of programmes, Scottish Government and used to bolster other evidence being gathered on the impact of the cost-of-living and used to make the case for investment and support for the sector. Read the report: [Insights on the cost-of-living](#).

## Partnering with the private sector

We believe problems are solved through collaboration and in the benefits of bringing together the third, public and private sectors building partnerships to create lasting change. This year we have continued to grow partnerships with the private sector both as funders and supporters through the Youth Action Fund and our Specialist Volunteer Network.



Managed by Inspiring Scotland, the Youth Action Fund is a major charitable initiative by the Distillers' Charity. The project is funded by the proceeds raised from the One of One auction series, in collaboration with Sotheby's.

The fund is a six year long term philanthropic investment which aims to transform the life chances of young people in Scotland aged between 16 and 25, by building their confidence, resilience and skills to set them up for life and work.

The fund marked its first year of operation in March 2023. During that period it invested £1.1m in 6 charities and 500 disadvantaged young people were supported. Over half went on to secure employment, apprenticeships, further education, training, or work as volunteers.

***“Inspiring Scotland brings deep knowledge of tackling social issues across Scotland combined with a highly professional and reliable approach to managing funding.***

***Relationships are key to the fund's success and the team at Inspiring Scotland create the right environment for true collaboration between our organisation, the funded charities and industry.”***

**Geoffrey Bush DL**  
**Trustee, The Distillers' Charity**



Inspiring Scotland continued its partnership with Edinburgh-based global research and consultancy group Wood Mackenzie.

Wood MacKenzie were keen to explore how their senior leaders could deliver non-financial support to the third sector with a particular interest in youth employability initiatives.

Inspiring Scotland's experience in working with charities supporting youth employment and the ability to match professional volunteers through our Specialist Volunteer Network made for a perfect partnership.

In 2022 the second cohort of staff from Wood Mackenzie worked with six charities on projects ranging from business planning, database development, financial modelling and marketing strategy.

One of Wood Mackenzie's employees Mhairidh Evans who leads global research on carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS) part of the team who supported the Intercultural Youth Scotland's project.

***“The WoodMac team brought a fresh, external set of eyes.***

***Using our consulting and business management skills, we helped the team to gently challenge previously held 'truths'.”***

**Mhairidh Evans**  
**Head of CCUS Research Wood Mackenzie**

# Specialist Volunteer Network

The Specialist Volunteer Network (SVN) is one of Inspiring Scotland's unique offerings to the sector – providing free professional support to charities across the country.

With a network of 580 Specialist Volunteers, Inspiring Scotland provides a free, personalised service to match the skills of a volunteer to the support needs of the charity.

Over the last year, there was an increase in requests for training, business planning and organisational development. More and more senior leadership teams and boards wanted to come together in person to facilitate strategic and forward-looking approach with the new financial year.

Mentoring and coaching, as well as access to legal advice was in high demand. 23 charity trustee training sessions were delivered to a range of organisations. 44 Specialist Volunteers were matched with charity boards to join.



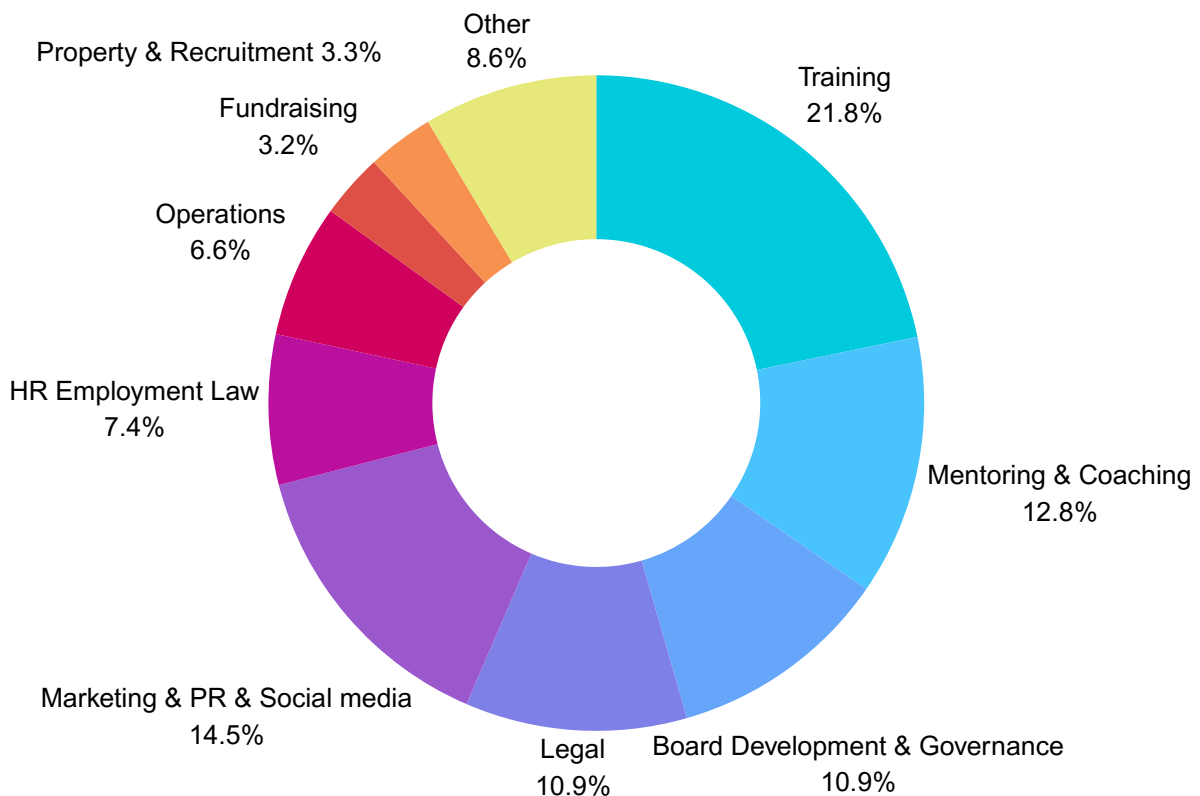
**580**  
Specialist  
Volunteers

**214**  
charities  
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**477**  
projects  
delivered

**£430k**  
value of  
support

## How Specialist Volunteers helped charities



# Specialist Volunteer Network

**Talk Now, Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support Fund funded charity required specialist support to review a lease for two premises they hoped to rent.**

Inspiring Scotland long term Specialist Volunteer Chris Rae, Real Estate Partner at CMS, an international law firm, and his team were matched to the case.

The team were able to support Talk Now in their departure from their current premises, as well as highlighting key information in a new lease with a different landlord. After a short time, the team at CMS, were able to support Talk Now to sign a more tenants-friendly lease at an entirely new premises.

**“We are absolutely delighted with the new premises, so happy Chris was there to help us with the small print and legal issues.**

**“We would not be where we are just now and delivering a safe and confidential service to our clients. We are so grateful to the team for all their support and sharing their expertise with us.” - Patricia Mair, Talk Now**

## **Specialist communications support for Rural Ideas into Action funded charity Ullapool Sea Savers**

Ullapool Sea Savers, a charity supporting local young people to raise awareness of the challenges facing the local marine environment, was looking for support on how to demonstrate the engagement the charity received on social media in cases for support.

Inspiring Scotland matched Sam Marriott-Dowling, a communications expert with a passion for helping the third sector. They introduced Janis to free resources for not-for profits, and provided training in how to create a visual dashboard which could then be used for reporting and funding applications in the future.

**“The Specialist Volunteer Network is fantastic. I have the confidence knowing that this group of professionals are behind me and can help with whatever challenge I’m facing.” - Janis Patterson, Seasavers**



# Thank you

**Our mission is to bring people, communities, organisations, and government to work together to drive social change and transform lives.**

Thank you to all the partners and supporters from across the private, public and voluntary sectors we have collaborated with over the past year. From generous and committed funders partnering with us, to charities and their dedicated staff teams working directly with people and communities across Scotland, through to the network of specialist volunteers giving their time and expertise to help transform lives.

By working together we can ensure more people in Scotland have the opportunity to live a happy and healthy life free from poverty or disadvantage.



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[www.inspiringscotland.org.uk](http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk)

**If you're interested in partnering with us,  
get in touch**

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