

THE MARK SCOTT LEADERSHIP FOR LIFE AWARD

2025-2026 Programme Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mark Scott Award brings together young people from different socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds during their final year of school.

Delivered over six months, the programme begins with a five-day Outward Bound residential that challenges participants to step beyond their comfort zones and build confidence, resilience and teamwork skills. These experiences equip young people with the self-belief and capability to take on new challenges. Back at school, participants apply these skills in practice, working collaboratively to design and deliver community projects that address real local needs. Through this process, young people strengthen relationships, raise their aspirations, and develop a stronger sense of agency and responsibility as active contributors to society.

KEY MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN 2025-26

- **144 young people** completed the Award
- **50%** of participants were from the **30% most deprived data zones in Scotland**
- **46 schools** were involved in the programme from across the central belt of Scotland
- **26 community projects** were delivered
- **72% of participants completed the SCQF Community Leadership or Teams and Leaders Award** alongside The Mark Scott Award
- The Award ceremony was held on 21st April 2026 where **the Award's 4000th participant was celebrated**



“

[The Award] has allowed me be more grateful and more likely to help others in need, sharing the love in communities and impacting everyone around me positively. It has been the best thing I've ever done!

Siobhan, St Andrews Academy , SIMD 2

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DELIVERY OF THE 2025-26 AWARD

Residential Courses

Four residential courses took place at our Loch Eil centre between August and October 2025, providing an opportunity for personal growth and connection. Through activities such as gorge scrambling, raft building and overnight expeditions, participants were supported to push personal boundaries, manage challenge and build trust with others.

This shared experience accelerated the development of confidence, self-belief and mutual understanding, helping young people to recognise and value different perspectives. By the end of the residential, participants were better able to collaborate effectively with peers from different backgrounds, demonstrating increased resilience, stronger communication skills and a greater capacity to work together to overcome challenges and achieve shared goals.

For many of the young people who, due to Covid during their earlier school years, had missed out on the opportunity of a residential, this was their first experience of learning with others in an outdoor setting. Despite this, the delivery team noted that the young people were well engaged and motivated to challenge themselves and were open to new experiences.

“

The Award has impacted me positively as it has [given] me so many tools to help me in uncomfortable situations. It has shown me that I truly can step out of my comfort zone and that I really can do anything I want when I put my mind to it. It has shown me how strong I can really be and that I am capable of big things if I allow myself to go out of my comfort zone and embrace the challenges.

Nicola, Clydebank High School, SIMD 3

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DELIVERY OF THE 2025-26 AWARD

Community Projects

The participants considered local issues within their local communities and how they could address them through their community projects. They presented their ideas in Project Forums which gave them an opportunity to gather valuable feedback from their peers and instructors.

The community projects focussed on a variety of themes including;

- A project to address loneliness amongst the elderly
- Environmental awareness workshops with S1 pupils
- *Disconnect to Reconnect* – a board games evening for the local community

SCQF Level 7 Community Leadership Award

The Mark Scott Award is accredited on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework as two Awards: Community Leadership (Level 7) and Teams and Leaders (Level 6). This formal recognition of experiential learning strengthens participants' sense of achievement and helps them articulate their impact.

In 2025-26 SCQF accreditation enabled young people not pursuing formal Level 7 qualifications to demonstrate their capabilities to higher education and employers. As a youth work programme, participation was voluntary, with individuals choosing to work towards the qualification. By the end of the Award, 92 participants (64%) achieved the SCQF Level 7 Award, of whom 48% were from the 30% most deprived areas in Scotland.

To support progression beyond school, both awards have now been added to the University and College Application System (UCAS).



Just a wee note to say thankyou so much for all your efforts in making up the welcome packs. They are so appreciated by our supported people. On behalf of the team, well done on achieving your Mark Scott Award. Wishing you all the very best as you take your next steps.

A message from a Service User from CEA (Committed to Ending Abuse) after the community project



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

We continued to monitor the participants’ gender, socio-economic background, religious background and ethnicity to assess the extent to which the Award is engaging with young people from a cross-section of Scottish society.

Gender

This year’s cohort differed slightly compared to the previous year, with a slight increase in the percentage of female and non-binary participants.

Year	Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not to say
2025-26	74%	23%	2%	1%
2024-25	67%	33%	0%	0%

Socio-Economic Background

In line with the Scottish Government’s focus on raising attainment for all, **50% of the participants in this year’s programme reside within the 30% most deprived data zones in Scotland.** Within this:

- **25% of participants reside within the 10% most deprived data zones in Scotland**
- **41% of participants reside within the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland**

Ethnicity

The ethnic group that the majority of this year’s participants belong to is **White (67%)**. In terms of representation from other ethnic groups, **13%** of participants are of **Asian** origin, **13%** are of **Black African** origin and **4%** are **mixed origin**, similar to last year’s cohort. This suggests that the Award is maintaining a steady level of recruitment of young people from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds. The table below shows a breakdown of the demographic data for this year and last year’s cohorts.

Ethnic group	2024-25 participants	2025-26 participants
White	69%	67%
Asian	13%	13%
Black African	10%	13%
Mixed origin	4%	4%
Other/Prefer not to say	4%	3%

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Religious Background

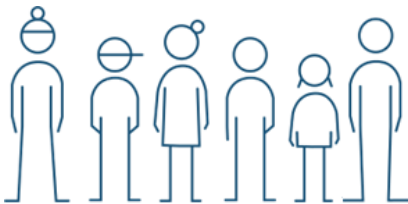
The Award continues to recruit young people with varying religious backgrounds. In 2025-26, **52%** of participants described themselves as having **‘no religion’**, **15%** were **Roman Catholic** and **17%** were of **other Christian** denominations or Christian but of no denomination.

The largest non-Christian group continues to be **Muslim (7%)**. The Award has also seen a slight variation in religious groups represented this year, such as participants who are **Buddhist (1%)**. The table on this page shows a breakdown of the demographic data for this year and last year’s cohorts.

Religious Profile Of Participating Schools

16 of the 46 schools involved in the 2025-26 Award were Roman Catholic denomination.

Religious affiliation	2024-25 participants	2025-26 participants
No religion	48%	52%
Roman Catholic	19%	15%
Other Christian	14%	17%
Muslim	9%	7%
Hindu	3%	2%
Sikh	1%	1%
Buddhist	0%	1%
Other	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	4%	3%



EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of the 2025–26 Award as with previous years combined pre- and post-programme questionnaires with in-depth interviews conducted after participants completed the Award.

To assess longer-term outcomes, online follow-up questionnaires were administered at 6, 18 and 30 months post-completion, alongside additional in-depth interviews.

Findings indicate that The Mark Scott Award continues to make a strong contribution to young people's development, particularly in strengthening social and emotional skills, developing confidence, raising aspirations, supporting wellbeing, and enhancing their sense of social responsibility.

As with last year, the development of relationships and interpersonal skills was a significant driver for the young people applying for the Award, and as such, a key focus that ran throughout the young people's learning and experiences on the Award.



There was one young person who was not leaving the house and missing loads of school [due to social anxiety]. Going into the community project, she said that the Award had given her a reason to leave the house to go to the meetings even when she wasn't able to go to school, which is a powerful [illustration of how the] social elements of the residential, really transfer over to the community project.

Kath Pender, Project Coordinator, The Mark Scott Award, The Outward Bound Trust



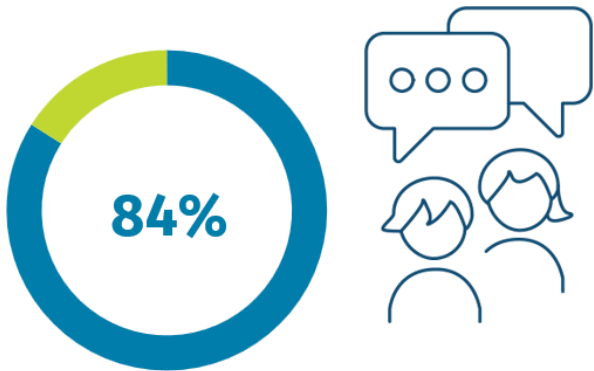
KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Social and Interpersonal skills

As in previous years, the Award strongly supported the development of social connections and interpersonal skills, bringing together young people from across the central belt of Scotland. Through shared challenges and support, participants built friendships and confidence, with bonds forming both during activities and informal time together. As part of the quantitative evaluation, respect for others, participants’ relationships, teamwork, and leadership skills were analysed together with their social capital and social confidence.

Social skill development was a key outcome and motivation for participation, particularly for this cohort who missed earlier opportunities due to Covid. At the end of the Award, improvements in interpersonal skills were seen in participants from across different SIMDs. The delivery team also identified lower confidence in interacting with adults, which was addressed through targeted coaching during community projects.

At the end of the Award, participants reported improvements in their interpersonal skills (N=116)



Social and Interpersonal skills: Average scores from outcome areas drawn from the National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills framework²



“

This Award has really helped me step out of my comfort zone and meet new friends, which definitely has had a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing. I now know that I am actually able to make new friends as well as people wanting to be friends with me.

Rachel, John Paul Academy, SIMD 7

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1. Participants names have been changed throughout the report to protect their anonymity, unless permission given.
2. <https://www.youthlink.scot/education-skills/youth-work-outcomes-skills/>

Compassion for and tolerance of others, social confidence

This year's evaluation shows that the residential experience continues to shape participants' social skills and confidence - a thread that follows throughout the Award. Bringing together young people from different backgrounds in shared challenges creates opportunities to build trust, teamwork and leadership. These experiences foster compassion, social cohesion and a broader awareness of life beyond participants' own contexts. This year, a new measure for social tolerance was used, which looks at participants' openness to diversity and perspective taking.

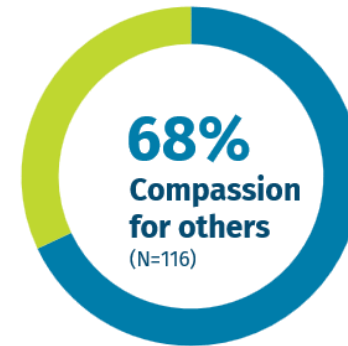
As the Award progressed, participants built on the connections made during the residential, developing greater confidence in working with people different from themselves and a stronger appreciation of diverse perspectives. Lasting friendships developed from the shared experiences with it came mutual understanding, and a sense of being united by a common goal of contributing positively to their communities.

“

I got to make so many incredible memories with my friends while on residential. I have learned how to be a better teammate and how to contribute well, while also learning that I can in fact be a good friend to others, and that they actually want to be my friend too. I have met some of *my* people doing this, and I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Jennifer, Gleniffer High School, SIMD 10

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At the end of the Award, young people reported an improved score for their **compassion for and tolerance of others**



Social Confidence

We continued to see gains in young people's social confidence in their interactions with people who they perceive to be different to themselves.

Across the SIMD groups we saw increases in confidence in young people asking for help or in helping people from different backgrounds.

These results indicate that the Award continues to benefit young people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. By bringing together individuals from different starting points and life contexts, young people build relationships across diverse backgrounds, fostering connection, mutual understanding and common ground within their peer groups and across communities.



“

It's helped me to understand how big our city is as I got the opportunity to work with so many new people that I could have never have interacted with. [This] has helped me to understand the simple concept of lots of different people with lots of different lives.

Charlie, Drumchapel High School, SIMD 10

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FROM QUIET TO CONFIDENT: GABRIELLA'S STORY OF FINDING HER VOICE AND VALUE IN TEAMWORK

Gabriella (17), from Holy Rood RC High School (SIMD 2) lives in Edinburgh and enjoys playing the flute and holds a black belt in Taekwondo. Before applying for the Mark Scott Award, she had not taken part in many outdoor or adventure-based activities. Having grown up as a fairly shy person, Gabriella saw the Award as a valuable opportunity to challenge herself, step outside her comfort zone and meet new people.

I actually grew up as a really shy kid, so I kind of wanted to push myself a bit more. I found that as I was growing up into my later years in high school, I was kind of coming out of my shell a bit more. I thought it'd be a really good opportunity to really push myself [...] My main goal for [the Award] was to just try and meet new people. I was really excited to do that; I grew up in a really small primary school where everyone knew each other. So, the thought of getting to know people from other places and many different backgrounds was interesting as well.

Taking part in the Mark Scott Award has impacted Gabriella's teamwork and communication skills. Much of her experience before the Award had been shaped by individual pursuits, so working with others towards a shared goal pushed her in new and valuable ways.

I think one of the main skills that I developed was definitely the teamwork aspect. Quite a few of my hobbies were quite individual. So, getting to really focus on the team aspect and how I can slot myself into different roles was something I felt I really developed in my time during the Mark Scott Award.

Throughout the Award, Gabriella not only learned how to collaborate effectively, but also began to understand the importance of communication within a team setting. Having previously found it difficult to voice concerns or express when she was uncomfortable, she gained confidence in speaking up and contributing more freely.

Growing up, I kind of kept stuff to myself if I was unhappy with something. Having this opportunity where I had teammates willing to listen to me and change stuff if I didn't like it or wasn't comfortable, I got to really know where my limits are, but also when is the right time to push those limits.

The Mark Scott Award helped Gabriella to find a balance between challenging herself and recognising her own boundaries while also reinforcing her self-awareness and her confidence. These attributes will be particularly important as Gabriella looks ahead to her future career in medicine.

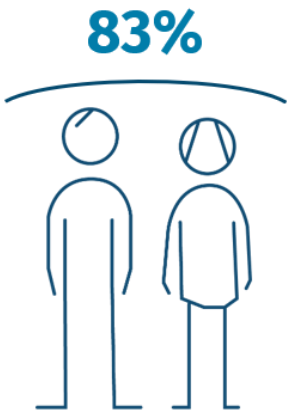
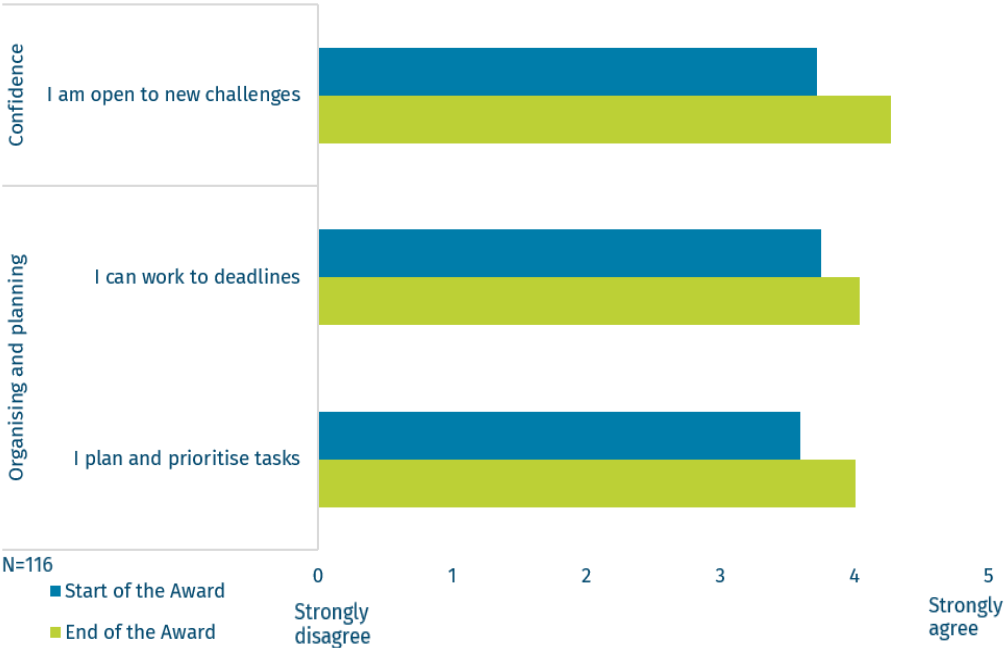
I think, especially with the kind of career I plan on going into, teamwork is very important. [...] During my interview, I spoke about how doing this award gave me an understanding of the different roles people have in a team, and how that can be linked to medicine as well.

Confidence, Personal Effectiveness and Self Management

Many young people reported a positive shift in their confidence in a variety of areas as a result of the Award. The residential experience laid the foundations, encouraging them to step outside their comfort zones and overcome perceived challenges. This was reinforced through the community project, where participants applied their confidence in practice, working with others, adapting plans, and managing their time and responsibilities.

Through this progression, confidence became a key enabler of personal effectiveness, supporting stronger organisation, resilience and accountability.

Confidence, personal effectiveness and self-management: Average scores from outcome areas drawn from the National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills framework



Young people reported increased **confidence in their ability to communicate with and lead others** at the end of the award compared to at the start (N= 116)



“

I can use what I've learnt on the residential and use it in new teams that I join or lead. I also now know that I have the ability to plan a project and that it can come to life.

Lucy, James Gillespie's High School, SIMD 9

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FROM DOUBT TO DETERMINATION: ISHA'S STORY OF PLANNING, LEADERSHIP AND POSSIBILITY

Isha from Cumbernauld Academy (SIMD 9) had previously attended an Outward Bound residential in S3 and was familiar with stepping outside her comfort zone. She applied to the Mark Scott Award to revisit that environment while taking on a new challenge through a community project, motivated by the chance to create meaningful change alongside her peers.

I'd been to Outward Bound in S3 and I'd really enjoyed it and then the thought being able to do that again and then doing the community project, it's stuff like that [a volunteer community project] I had always wanted to do but it's something that you can't really just do, like it's more difficult to do it by yourself. But the Mark Scott Award helps you like get to that point where you can do something you care about and actually make an impact.

Throughout the Award, Isha noticed changes in how she approached her work especially in her planning and organisation. Previously, she would describe herself as someone who would often leave things until the last minute. However, the expectations and structure of the Mark Scott Award encouraged her to adopt a more proactive approach and more effective working habits.

[...] we had meetings and weekly talks; it encouraged you to do it beforehand. So, we were done with our [community] project before the deadline...] I think it [Mark Scott Award] really helped with my planning and organisation as well as my teamwork skills.

Alongside these practical skills, Isha reflected on how her leadership evolved. She learned to balance taking initiative with giving others space, becoming more aware of when to step forward and when to trust others, key for effective teamwork and leadership.

I think that knowing when to lead and being able to sit back, that's really improved while I was at the Mark Scott. Because normally I'd be either into one thing and I'll be in charge and go for it. But I think that doing the project has helped me like learn how to sit back but also, lead when necessary.

As their community project progressed, Isha and her group faced moments of uncertainty especially in the beginning when things did not seem to be coming together as planned. Seeing the project come together over time helped to shift Isha's mindset. Experiencing the unrealistic become achievable has improved Isha's confidence and belief in her own abilities to overcome challenges.

I think a lot more things are possible now because [the community project] was something I didn't think we could have done [...] But it working, [...] made me realise that things are possible if you put your mind to it.

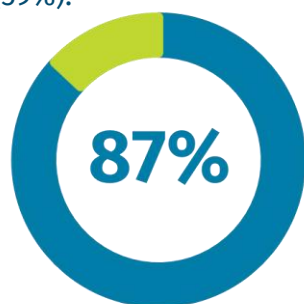
Resilience, Emotional Control and Wellbeing

During the residential, young people were encouraged to face unfamiliar challenges and persist despite discomfort or self-doubt. With support from instructors and peers, they learned to cope with setbacks, adapt and build perseverance and emotional control contributing to **a positive impact on their wellbeing – reported by 52% of participants** at the end of the Award (N=116).

This resilience was reinforced through shared experiences, as participants supported one another, they began to recognise challenge as normal and as something they were able to overcome.

In the community project, participants faced barriers due to community leader engagement and had to adapt to changing situations requiring them to adapt plans and sustain effort. Drawing on their residential experience, they problem-solved, stayed motivated and followed through.

A higher percentage of participants from SIMD deciles 1–4 reported improved ability to adapt to changing situations (62%) at the end of the Award compared to those from deciles 5–10 (59%).



At the end of the Award, young people reported an **improved ability to manage their emotions in stressful or changing situations** (N= 116)

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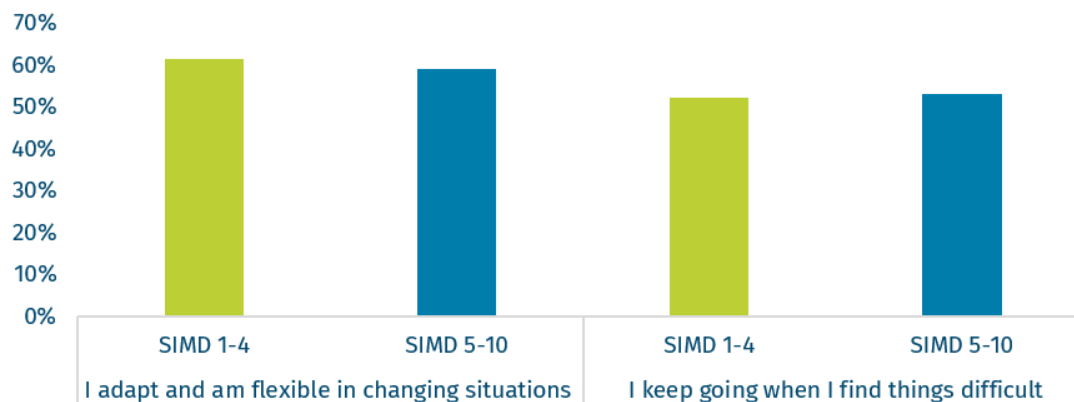
[The Award] has impacted my well-being positively, getting to do good deeds in the community (self fulfilment) and being able to make a difference in the outdoors (positive impact on my well-being getting to be outdoors).

Leila, Greenfaulds High School, SIMD 4

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% of participants reporting increased scores for resilience at the end of the Award compared to the start by SIMD

(SIMD 1-4 N=65; SIMD 5-10 N=49)



“

I think that the Award will give me a lot of experience with facing challenges and being able to overcome them and make something good out of them.

Neha, Bocclair Academy, SIMD 8

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FROM UNCERTAINTY TO UNDERSTANDING: MYLO'S STORY OF RESILIENCE AND COMMUNICATION

Mylo (17) from Lourdes Secondary (SIMD 1) already had quite a bit of confidence and experience in a leadership role as he was Head Boy at his school this year. Still, like many others, Mylo felt a bit nervous before starting the Award particularly about joining a group of young people he did not know.

I was a bit worried about it because there were quite a lot of people from my school, but I hadn't really spoken to any of them before. It was a bit nerve-wracking; I didn't know how I was going to get along with people.

After dealing with the initial stresses of meeting new people, Mylo shared how the residential component of the Award, with its challenging team building and team bonding activities, taught him and his group important lessons around resilience and emotional control. In particular, the raft building challenge demonstrated to Mylo that the process of working together in a team is sometimes more important than the result.

We had the raft building task, and I think everyone was a bit homesick and stressed, but you had to just like get that out of your mind. We had the whole planning part [of the raft building], which was a bit of a disaster for us. And we didn't really get to have a plan. So, we were like, 'okay, we need to just de-stress and we need to try and just do this together'. Our raft wasn't the best. It did fall apart a little bit, but we still completed the task.

For Mylo and his team, learning to regulate and deal with their emotions meant they could adapt by supporting each other and move forward despite their setbacks. Their experience reinforced the idea that challenges are not just obstacles to overcome, but they are more importantly, opportunities to build trust, strengthen communication, and develop a more resilient mindset.

The residential experience prepared young people for their community project. Mylo identified communication as a key skill he developed, learning that it involves not just speaking, but understanding how messages are received and adapting to different audiences.

Communication was definitely a big skill that I've improved on since the Award because I've always been someone that's been given team leader sort of roles, and we [my group] all had to communicate much more. I feel like you not only have to talk to [others], but [you have to consider] the way you come across to people. So, you have to find ways to best communication for each person that you know. I've learned that now, which I'm happy with and it [has] made everything else more smooth sailing.

Raising Aspirations

Our evaluation shows that the Award continues to provide young people with meaningful opportunities to take risks, achieve and reflect on their potential. Through these experiences, participants broaden their horizons, developing a stronger sense of aspiration and a clearer understanding of what is possible for their future. Young people described gaining the confidence both in a social and personal sense which open new opportunities and connections.

Participants across the SIMD groups reported an increase in their aspirations by the end of the Award, suggesting that the programme is effective in supporting young people from a wide range of backgrounds to raise their ambitions. This growth in aspiration was closely linked to increased self-belief, exposure to new environments and experiences, and the opportunity to take ownership of meaningful projects. Collectively, these elements are expected to help participants to reframe their expectations of themselves and to approach future opportunities with greater confidence and motivation.

At the end of the Award, participants reported increased aspiration at the end of the Award
(N=116)



“

It is a great experience [...]. I believe it will have a positive benefit in my future as this Award has shown me how to independently take a passion to an idea into a project.

Leila, Greenfaulds High School, SIMD 4

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“

This Award has instilled a newfound confidence I wouldn't have had if I never took part. I now and continue to have a lot more social confidence compared to a year ago, I am also more willing to try new opportunities and tasks that may be out of my comfort zone. These traits I will always have and can already see the change it has made in my life.

Helen, Gleniffer High School, SIMD 2

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THE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Young people as agents of positive change

The 26 community projects delivered this year demonstrate a growing emphasis on young people not just understanding their communities but actively contributing to them. Covering themes such as social isolation and loneliness, bullying, through to environmental awareness the projects enabled participants to turn local issues into practical action.

Through planning and delivering their projects, young people developed organisational and communication skills, while gaining a deeper understanding of their communities and their role within them. This process supported a shift from awareness to action, helping participants see themselves as capable of making a difference. At the end of the Award **70% reported feeling more able to deliver change** within their communities and **more likely to volunteer** in the future.

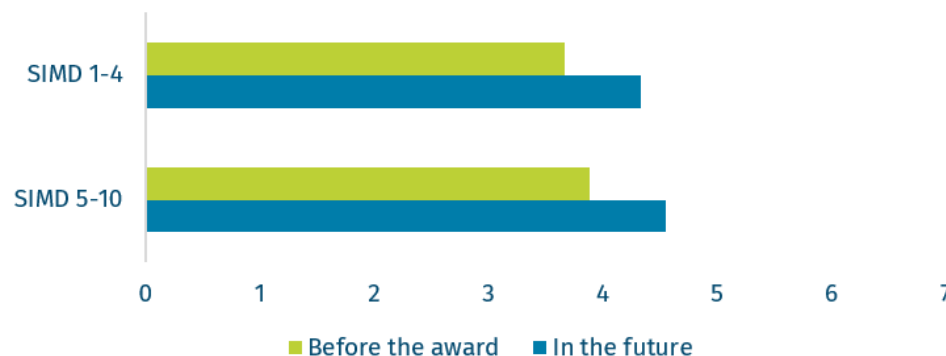
70%



At the end of the Award, young people reported feeling **more able to take an active role in delivering change** within their local communities (N=116).

How likely are you to volunteer on a regular basis?

(1 = Very unlikely, 7 = Very likely) SIMD 1-4 = 64; SIMD 5-10 = 49



“

[The Award] has made me realise problems that occur in some people's everyday lives that go unnoticed, making me want to try my best to help when I can.

Clare, Liberton High School, SIMD 5

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THE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Young People's Social Capital

By the end of the Award, **66% of participants reported a stronger sense of agency and trust in others.** These findings suggest the young people leave the Award feeling more confident to take initiative and contribute positively to their communities.

Overall, the community project element continues to support young people to develop as active citizens, with a stronger sense of responsibility and belief in their ability to have a positive impact on issues that matter to them and their communities.



Young people reported an increased ability to have **an impact on the world around them, to trust others and make a difference**, at the end of their Award

N= 116

“

Taking part in the Award has showed me that everyone in the community is worth loving as they are all treated fairly and supported. It is important to give people time, to never judge a book by its cover, to make sure to accept everyone and most importantly always show kindness as you are unaware of people's background.

Naomi, Clydebank High School, SIMD 3

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Taking part in this Award has made me aware that even the smallest action can improve the community. It has also taught me the importance of learning and how having the right knowledge will help us to grow and improve our communities.

Georgie, Holy Rood RC High School, SIMD 2

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The tables below detail an analysis of the community project beneficiary groups, which benefitted a wide demographic of the local communities, as in previous years.

Participants were asked how the Award changed their attitude towards their community, with key themes emerging such as **improved awareness of the needs of others, social confidence** in interacting with others and a **sense of impact that their actions** can have.

Target group	Percentage of projects
Wider local community members	35%
Primary school children	23%
Elderly community members	19%
Secondary school pupils	15%
People who are homeless, ill or vulnerable in society	8%

Intended benefit of community project	Percentage of projects
Quality of local environment (e.g. clearing & renovating a garden space)	13%
Education and Awareness (e.g. around social issues such as online safety, the climate crisis)	29%
Quality of Life (e.g. improving indoor spaces, clothing banks)	22%
Health & well-being (e.g. mental health workshops)	36%

It has [given] me a more transparent view on the public, and a more thorough look on how people of the older generation think.

Adam, John Paul Academy, SIMD 1

I feel like there are more things to get involved with now and appreciate the needs of others a little more.

Britt, Drumchapel High School, SIMD 1

I used to think it was only the local officials who could change the community and make a difference. However, this Award has opened my eyes to the real fact that anyone can make a difference. Whether it be a big or small action, it still matters. Everyone is able to contribute their time to allow positive change to happen within their community.

Helen, Gleniffer High School, SIMD 2

I have learned the significance of helping my community and how big of an impact i can make even at my age!

Ellie, Notre Dame High School, SIMD 1

COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN ACTION



THE AWARD CEREMONY

The Lord Provost of Glasgow hosted The Award ceremony in the Banqueting Hall at Glasgow City Chambers, on 21 April 2026. The event provided a meaningful opportunity for young people to reflect on their experiences and learning. It served not only as a celebration of achievement, but also as a key moment for participants to recognise and carry forward what they had gained from the Award. Niall Scott OBE, Chairman of The Mark Scott Foundation and Mark's father gave a short speech to honour and celebrate the 4,000th participant. He reflected on the reach and lasting impact of The Award over almost three decades.

The event also held significant value for parents and carers, with the scale and setting reinforcing a strong sense of achievement and helping young people feel recognised and valued. Framed by a theme of positivity, the ceremony celebrated compassion, respect and the impact of collective, community action, highlighting the importance of people doing good for one another in an increasingly divisive world.

With an audience of around 400, including families, school staff, partners and donors, the event created further opportunities for growth, with six young people confidently sharing their experiences on stage.



“

The Award ceremony is an opportunity for the young people to go “I’ve done something extraordinary, and big, and it’s worth celebrating” - it might be the only time they realise that. The venue really added to it; it made people think “ah wow, this is a big thing we’ve been part of”.

**Steve MacKenzie, Head of Centre, The Mark Scott Award,
The Outward Bound Trust**

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LASTING IMPACT OF THE AWARD

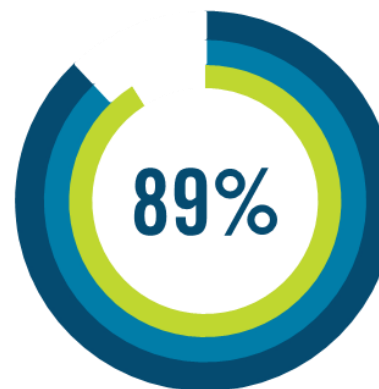
Participants continue to see improvements in their social confidence, their social capital and interpersonal skills up to two and a half years after their course. Lasting impact data was collected from participants 6 months, 18 months and 30 months after completing the Award. **Participants from all three cohorts agreed they have seen positive results from their learning through the Award**, with 91% from the 2024-25 cohort agreeing they continue to apply their learning 6 months on. Detailed analysis of the lasting impact on different skills areas is provided on the next page.

“

I'm autistic, so sometimes I struggle to understand what other people are doing in [a social setting. The Award] helped me understand how to work with a variety of people and how I fit into a lot of community spaces...I've definitely taken on a lot more forward-facing roles since being on the Award... in my local community hub I helped with organising a few events. Now that I'm at university I have signed up to be a student ambassador and I am a programme representative.

Kelly, 2024-25 participant (speaking 6 months after the Award)

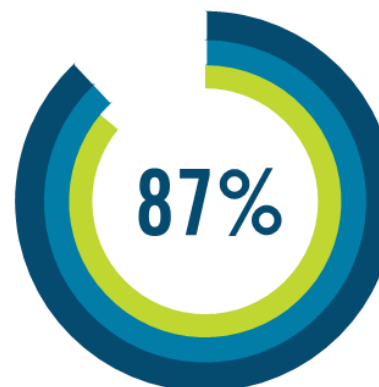
”



I have successfully applied what I learnt during the Mark Scott Award (N= 38)



I have seen positive results from applying what I learnt during the Mark Scott Award (N= 38)



91% 6 months on (N= 22)

88% 18 months on (N= 8)

88% 30 months on (N= 8)

86% 6 months on (N= 22)

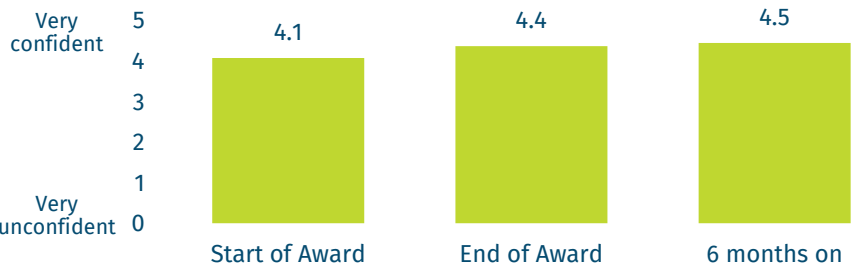
88% 18 months on (N= 8)

88% 30 months on (N= 8)

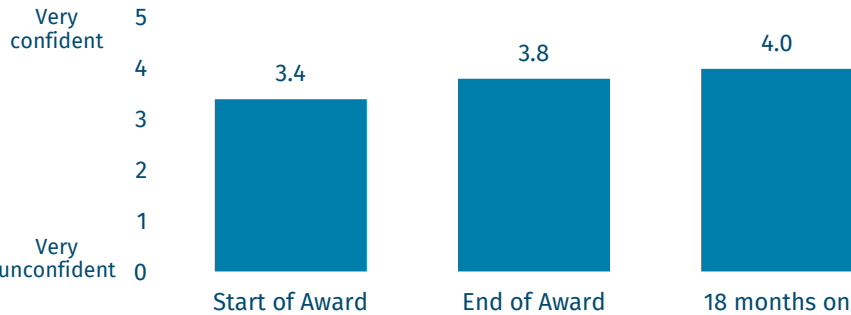
Maintaining Confidence In The Long Term

Analysis of the responses 6, 18 and 30 months on from the Award shows that the impact of the programme on **young people’s confidence meeting and working with others from different backgrounds is maintained long after the end of the Award.** Examples are presented below of the different skills maintained by each of the three cohorts compared against their pre-programme and end of programme scores.

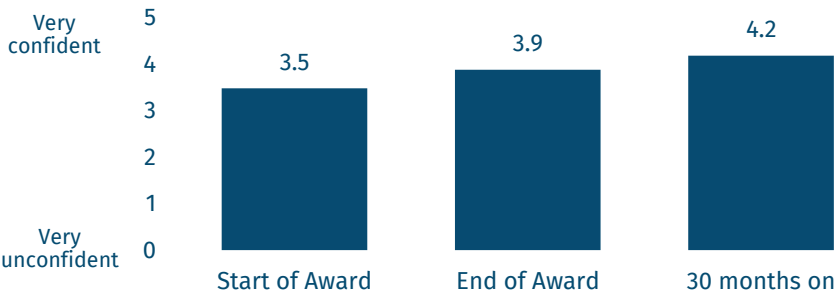
Social confidence: average scores at the start, end and 6 months after the Award (N=22)



Interpersonal and communication skills: average scores at the start, end and 18 months after the Award (N=9)



Social capital: average scores at the start, end and 30 months after the Award (N=10)



Participants’ comments illustrate how they feel the Award has had a lasting impact on their confidence and self-belief:

“I felt much more confident after completing the Award, and more able to cope with challenges and tasks I face without stress or anxiety.”

Indira, 2023-24 participant

“I’ve gained a lot of confidence and self assurance from doing the Award, and a greater ability to reach out to others, and create my own opportunities.”

Alex, 2023-24 participant

“Two years ago, I don’t think I could have even imagined doing something like [the Award], but I have the foundations now [to] go into new environments and meet new people and cope and actually manage to thrive.”

Casey, 2023-24 participant

FINDING HER AUTHENTIC SELF – GEORGIA'S STORY

Georgia is 17 and spoke to us 6 months after completing the Mark Scott Award. Before taking part in the Award, Georgia would often mask her personality to fit in with others, but found that as the programme progressed, she had space to feel safe and accepted by the others, eventually letting her guard down so that she could be herself.

“[I decided to be] honest with my group and just [tell] them, look, I've really struggled to be myself for the first few weeks ... and then we had this big emotional chat, and I think that was one of the things that stands out to me.

I think the Award really helps you with breaking down your own character, realising that your mistakes are all right.”

Georgia has since taken this self-acceptance and confidence with her to university and doesn't let it hold her back when faced with opportunities to engage with university life; she now seeks them out.

“[As a result of the Award] with uni, I really threw myself in it, I was joining group chats; I was messaging people... And I really did push myself to just put on my front face, don't put on a mask...let's just be me. Let's just be Georgia.”

Georgia reflected on the residential aspect of the Award, and how being immersed in nature was another stepping stone to better self-awareness as the outdoors provided space to put her anxiety into perspective.

“When we did the camping, just seeing all the scenery, the stars at night, you just realise how small you are and you don't really realise it until you're in the moment. And then it hits you that the things that can affect me and make me feel so anxious are actually [not] that big in the scale of everything.

It just changes your perspective so much.”

As well as developing her own self-awareness, Georgia's perception of others has also been positively impacted by the Award, and she now takes more time to get to know and understand others at university and in her part-time job.

“I think a lot of the time I judge people very quickly, like there's a lady that's just started at our work and instantly I'm like, oh, I don't know how I feel about you. [But] I think doing the Award [I realised] that you have to get to know someone before you judge them ... [maybe] something happened the day you met them [and] maybe they aren't going to be in their best mood for meeting everybody.

I've realised [it's important to take] those steps and [think], hold on, I should give them a chance to see who they are.”

LOOKING FORWARD

There has been a consistent growing trend of young people applying to take part in The Mark Scott Award. In the coming year we have received 450 applications for 156 places to date. An increased number of applicants than previous years which reflects the relevance and growing demand for The Award.

Over the last few years, we have deliberately commenced recruitment early in the year to engage young people. This allows them to complete paperwork in advance and gives them the opportunity to connect with the Award before the summer holidays.

The SCQF accreditation will continue to offer participants the opportunity to gain formal recognition for their learning whilst building skills for their futures. The SCQF Awards are now available on UCAS to add to their college and university applications.

The Award uses an evidence-based approach to developing the delivery of the programme and insights from the 2025-26 data and community projects highlights two emerging areas of focus for 2026-27. There is evidence to suggest participants from the lowest SIMD deciles are falling behind their peers in some measures. The team will spend time planning the 2026-27 Award delivery to understand which aspects of the programme may have contributed to this. However, we are aware the 2025-26 Award participants were those who transitioned to secondary education during the pandemic lockdown and as such missed out on opportunities to support their socialisation in a new school. We understand that those from lower SIMD deciles were disproportionately affected, which may have contributed to some of the results.



The second area of focus is the digital recruitment process and the impact of the SCQF Community Leadership Award on the programme outcomes. As a qualification, there are inevitable similarities to school and an incentive to apply for those who need to strengthen their qualifications. Both factors could affect engagement in the interpersonal elements of the Award experience.

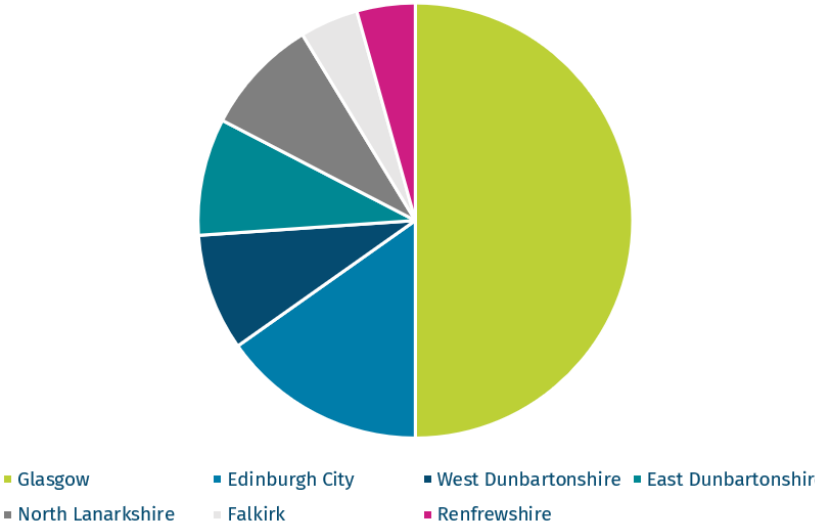
Adjustments to recruitment and the residential have already been implemented for 2026-27 to ensure participants are prepared for the 'challenge' of the community project and the importance of values in project choice to strengthen engagement. There will be an increased emphasis on the importance of 'soft skills' and relationships in the successful application of their projects. We will continue to monitor the attainment in low SIMD communities to ensure we can provide extra support to mitigate the additional challenges these young people face.

APPENDIX

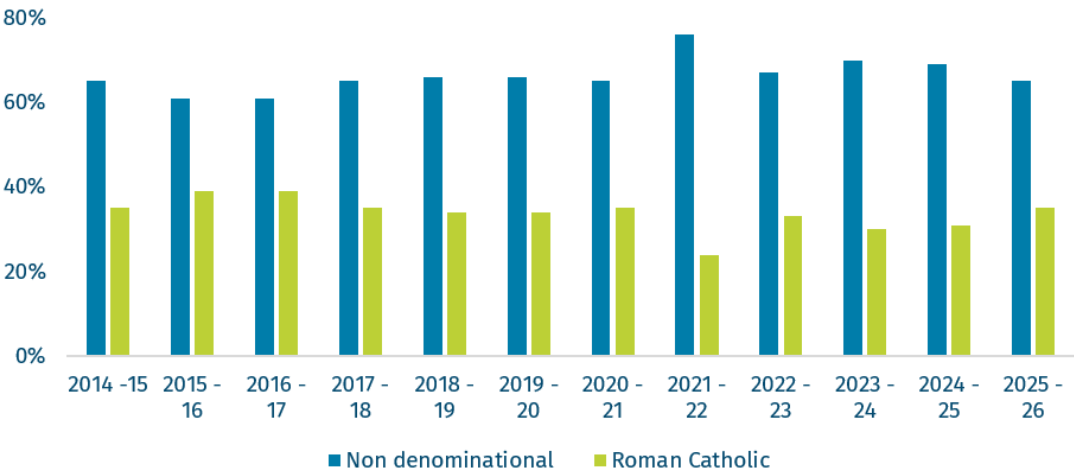
Analysis of participants' socio-economic background by SIMD decile 2014-15 to 2025-26

Decile	Most deprived							Least deprived		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
% of 2014-15 Award participants	13%	15%	11%	9%	12%	6%	6%	6%	12%	10%
% of 2015-16 Award participants	23%	15%	8%	7%	9%	4%	3%	4%	13%	14%
% of 2016-17 Award participants	19%	12%	11%	9%	9%	6%	3%	9%	12%	10%
% of 2017-18 Award participants	21%	10%	11%	8%	8%	10%	9%	8%	9%	5%
% of 2018-19 Award participants	21%	21%	11%	6%	8%	4%	7%	9%	6%	8%
% of 2019-20 Award participants	25%	13%	9%	9%	12%	4%	4%	10%	6%	9%
% of 2020-21 Award participants	18%	17%	9%	8%	6%	7%	9%	6%	8%	14%
% of 2021-22 Award participants	22%	17%	11%	10%	10%	4%	6%	7%	10%	4%
% of 2022-23 Award participants	23%	14%	13%	9%	8%	5%	6%	9%	9%	5%
% of 2023-24 Award participants	25%	13%	8%	8%	6%	4%	4%	10%	14%	4%
% of 2024-25 Award participants	25%	15%	14%	9%	4%	2%	4%	10%	8%	7%
% of 2025-26 Award participants	25%	16%	9%	9%	7%	5%	4%	9%	11%	5%

Location of participating schools 2025-2026

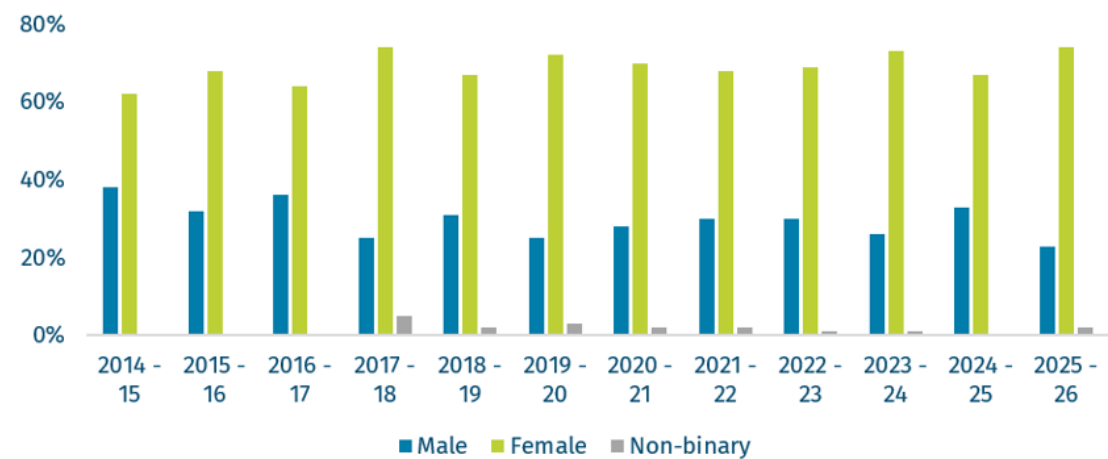


Religious profile of participating schools 2014-15 to 2025-26

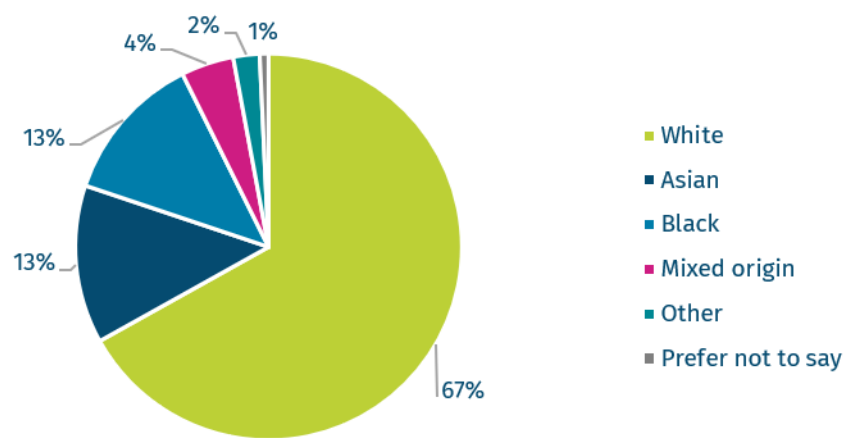


APPENDIX

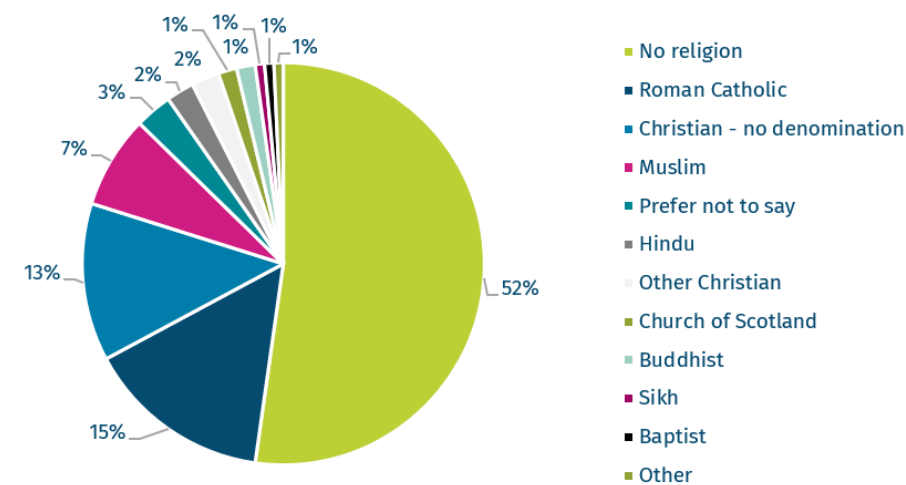
Gender analysis of participants 2014 -15 to 2025-26
(‘non-binary’ included as a gender from 2017-18)



Ethnicity of participants 2025-26

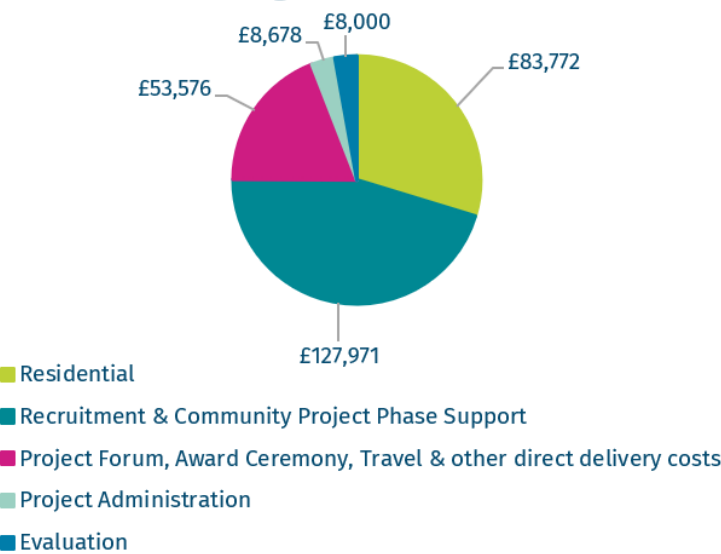


Religious affiliation of participants 2025 -26

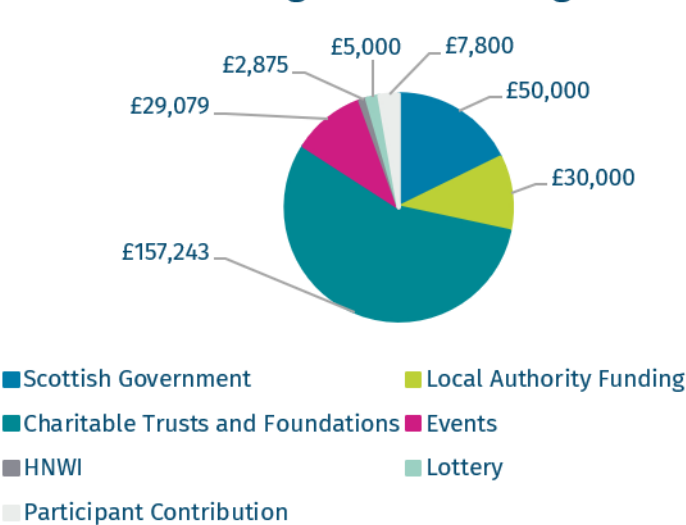


APPENDIX

Programme Costs



Programme Funding



The Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award Funders

Annual Mark Scott Foundation Golf Event
CMS Charitable Trust
Cruden Foundation
Ellen and Ian Graham Foundation
First Sentier Investors (Sponsor of Golf event)
Gannochy Trust
Glasgow City Council
Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust

Hargreaves Foundation
James T Howat Charitable Trust
Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust
Netherton Charitable Trust
Robert Barr's Charitable Trust
Scottish Children's Lottery Trust
Scottish Fisherman's Federation
Scottish Government
Souter Charitable Trust

The Derek Stewart Charitable Trust
The Hugh Fraser Foundation
The Khushi Foundation
The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation
The Mark Scott Foundation
The Mickel Fund
The Murgitroyd Foundation
The Pleasance Trust
W A Cargill Fund



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