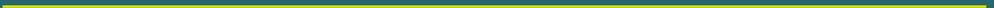




**The
Scottish
Government's
People and
Communities
Fund**

CASE STUDIES

The Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund



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INTRODUCTION

This booklet sets out five case studies, each one detailing the activities and achievements of a community-led project which has received funding from the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund (PCF).

Since being launched in 2012, PCF grant funding of nearly £51 million has been awarded to a wide range of community anchor organisations¹ (for example, Registered Social Landlords and Development Trusts) to support hundreds of community-led projects. These projects cover a wide range of activity types, target groups and localities, aligned with the current core aims of tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion. A distinguishing feature of the PCF is the partnership working between organisations and local residents (co-production) as a means to design and deliver local projects that address local needs.

In 2017, the Scottish Government commissioned an independent review of the PCF community-led approach to regeneration. The review, carried out by EKOS Ltd and Avril Blamey Associates, involved 12 PCF funded projects and looked to explore the effectiveness of this approach for funded organisations and the people they work with.

Five of these projects form the case studies presented in this booklet. Each case study is an example of the five co-production models identified by the study team, demonstrating there are multiple ways of working with communities. The case studies give an insight into how, and for whom, the PCF approach to regeneration is helping to bring about positive change.

The full report is available on the publications section of the Scottish Government website www.gov.scot/publications.

Further information on the PCF can be found on the Scottish Government's regeneration webpages <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/regeneration/>.

¹ Community Anchor Organisations have strong links to their communities and usually stimulate high levels of voluntary activity. They are well placed to spot the talent and opportunities in their areas and have the energy and creativity to nurture and exploit those. Increasingly, these organisations take an enterprising and assets based approach to their work.

Falkirk Area Welfare Benefits Advice Support Unit



Lead Organisation: —◦ **Falkirk Citizens Advice Bureau**



Type of Organisation: —◦ **Voluntary**



Location: —◦ **Falkirk**



Established: —◦ **January 1994**



Nr. of Employees: —◦ **11**



Nr. of Volunteers: —◦ **27**



Target Beneficiaries: —◦ **Benefit Claimants**



Funding Partners: —◦ **Multiple, including PCF**



PCF Funding: —◦ **£140,643** (2015/2016)

Background

Falkirk Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is a member of Citizens Advice Scotland, a very well known network of charities and voluntary organisations which provides advice to people in their local area on a wide range of issues including: benefits; debt and money issues; consumer issues; work-related problems; housing; and relationships.

Citizens Advice Scotland's main aims are:

- to support Scottish citizens with advice, information, education and representation when they need it;
- to work in partnerships with both Government and non-governmental actors to mitigate the harmful effects of welfare reform;
- to be a strong voice for Scottish consumers;
- to prioritise action on issues faced by vulnerable, poor and socially excluded members of the community; and
- to develop leadership across all levels of Citizens Advice Scotland in order to deliver better services for the people of Scotland.

“ I DON'T KNOW WHERE I WOULD BE WITHOUT THIS PLACE.”

A beneficiary

Key Elements of Co-Production

The Falkirk Area Welfare Benefits Advice Support Unit (herein referred to as 'the Falkirk Advice Project') delivers services in a traditional manner, with a core of staff who deliver advice and one-to-one support to beneficiaries. This is not to say that support is delivered in a standardised manner – the advice and support delivered to each beneficiary is bespoke depending upon their exact needs and circumstances of the individual.

At the same time, Falkirk CAB maintains strong links with other strategic and local organisations. This includes organisations such as Falkirk Council, Local Housing Associations, Jobcentre Plus, and Alzheimers Scotland, amongst others.

The partner organisations mainly act as referral organisations, either signposting people to take advantage of CAB services, or the CAB referring to partner services. They also act as partners, whereby CAB delivers services on their partners' premises where people might find it difficult to attend CAB themselves (i.e. nursing homes).

CABs are largely voluntary organisations with a small core of professional staff. Volunteers form the large majority of advisors. Mainly, the volunteers are community members seeking to support a good cause. The volunteers are provided with up to 26 weeks of specialist training to prepare for their role.

Co-production Model 1

Traditional Integrated Service Delivery



Description of PCF Funded Project Activities

The Falkirk Advice Projectworks in partnership with Falkirk, Grangemouth, and Denny and Dunipace CABS, and Falkirk Council to deliver welfare benefit advice to those in need.

A need was identified for extra welfare and benefit support owing to an increase in demand due to recent welfare reforms. Both the mainstream CAB services and Council advice services were overwhelmed with requests for assistance and this was too much for them to handle.

Therefore, the Falkirk Advice Project is designed to complement CAB and Council services, and to specifically support people with particular issues and offer them in-depth support to address their benefit needs. This can often include meeting them in a location where they feel comfortable, such as their home.

In terms of partnership work, one of the major benefits of the Falkirk Advice Project has been the improvement in the relationship and trust between the CAB and Falkirk Council through working and sitting on the project's steering group together.

Success Stories

One interviewee had come to the Falkirk Advice Project to receive advice on their benefits after going through a re-assessment for their disability benefit. The in-depth interview allowed the advisor to identify a much wider range of issues and to discuss possible solutions. As a consequence, not only was financial advice given, but help was also provided to get on a more manageable repayment plan for their debts. The interviewee was also made aware of additional benefit entitlements that they had not accessed before. This enabled them to get a car which helped to improve the quality of life of the interviewee.

A second interviewee had come to the Falkirk Advice Project after experiencing financial difficulty. Very quickly into the initial assessment, the advisor recognised the symptoms of depression and advised sensitively to go to the doctor to seek treatment. They then received financial and benefit advice which stabilised the finances of the interviewee. In addition, a more appropriate benefits regime was arranged.

Both interviewees had stabilised their finances, increased their incomes and felt better about themselves after receiving support from the Falkirk Advice Project. They also reported improved mental health and less worry. Both were very grateful for the support they had received.

Reported Achievements

Providing bespoke, personalised advice and support to people having benefit difficulties is the key element of the success of the Falkirk Advice Project. A number of beneficiaries reported that having someone take the time to sit down with them and discuss their problems more in-depth was invaluable, and in stark contrast to the bureaucratic processes they have encountered at the JobCentre and other public sector agencies.

PCF has supported the following outputs by the Falkirk Advice Project in 2015/16:

- 465 new clients seen at 11 venues throughout the Falkirk area (and in their own homes);
- 888 welfare benefit appointments with specialist advisers;
- 526 benefit checks to identify unclaimed benefits;
- 166 clients assisted to make a claim for identified benefits;
- Generated £1.2m in benefit gains for clients;
- 613 clients supported to prepare for a benefits appeal; and
- 232 appeals taken to tribunal of which 161 were successful.

“ THE FORMS WERE VERY CONFUSING AND I WASN’T SURE HOW TO FILL THEM OUT. THE CAB STAFF WERE VERY REASSURING AND VISITED MY HOUSE TO HELP ME WITH THE FORMS.”

A beneficiary

Study Teams' Observations

The PCF approach and its associated funding allowed the CAB to deliver a separate targeted and responsive needs-based advice service regarding welfare benefits. Recent changes to benefits have increased the numbers needing advice and this service is taking the strain from mainstream CAB and Council advice services allowing them to offer targeted support to people in crisis.

The levels of co-production with service users follows a traditional support model of advisor/advisee. Falkirk CAB appears to have greatly improved its links with partners at a strategic level – particularly between the CAB and the Council.

One of the major benefits for beneficiaries was that the project enabled services to be delivered in the community – generally in their own home. This allowed services to be delivered more easily to disabled and elderly people. This made people more comfortable, and at ease to receive advice.

There are ideas for the future, for example including delivering services in places such as nursing homes, etc.

Volunteer Development Programme



Lead Organisation: —→ **GALE**



Type of Organisation: —→ **Community Development Trust**



Location: —————→ **Highlands - Wester Ross**
(Gairloch, Poolewe, Aultbea, Laide)



Established: —————→ **2001**



Nr. of Employees: —————→ **18**



Nr. of Volunteers: —————→ **38**



Target Beneficiaries: —→ **Rural Communities**



Funding Partners: —————→ **Multiple, including PCF**



PCF Funding: —————→ **£25,884** (2015/2016)

Background

The GALE Centre is at the heart of a remote rural community in Gairloch in the Highlands.

GALE (Gairloch and Loch Ewe Action Forum), is a community owned and managed charitable development company and a community hub. Its key aim is to develop and improve the way of life and standard of living in the Gairloch and Loch Ewe area of Wester Ross. This involves working with a range of community groups and volunteers to develop sustainable community projects that tackle important issues within the community, such as improving the social life, the local economy, and the environment.

Over the last 16 years, GALE has delivered a diverse range of community owned and managed projects and services. The GALE Centre is open all year round and is a social meeting point for the community and visitors.

Projects include: social welfare initiatives, environmental and cultural projects, building sustainable community assets, and managing a range of community facilities and services both independently and in partnership with other organisations.

GALE targets harder to reach members of the community and offers supported volunteering opportunities for people with learning disabilities, training and social opportunities for people with mental health problems, social opportunities for the elderly and work experience and activities for local young people.

Membership in GALE is open to all, and local people are actively encouraged to join. The members elect the Board of Directors from their numbers to lead and manage GALE.

Key Elements of Co-Production

The new Volunteering Development Programme and training events focus on a distinct target group, i.e. new and existing volunteers at GALE. The improved processes and procedures are geared to engage better with volunteers, implement ongoing needs assessments and encourage a continuing process of capturing feedback from volunteers to help generate new ideas for service provision, tap into new opportunities and to develop the skills of volunteers in specific areas of interest and need.

The focus is on improving the collaboration between staff and volunteers, to support an improved management and co-delivery of services to the community and to develop the skills sets of the volunteers.

The recipients of the training are placed within the Community Anchor organisation and at times also with other partner organisations.

The role of the partner organisations is to signpost/ refer suitable candidates for volunteering and/or provide opportunities in their organisation.

Co-production Model 2

Employability and Skills Focus



At GALE, a two-way process is implemented whereby staff members are proactive in consulting with volunteers and community members to help determine local needs, and volunteers are encouraged to provide input into the development of activities and services and to provide suggestions and/or improvements for delivery.

The PCF project brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds and has enabled people to interact with groups they may not have previously engaged with.

Description of PCF Funded Project Activities

As well as supporting delivery of a wide range of volunteering activities, the PCF funding also enabled GALE to develop a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to improve and structure the Volunteer Development Programme. This included a number of training events and a part-time volunteer co-ordinator post.

The funded project activities included the following:

- **An ongoing volunteer needs assessment process (i) Regular review and (ii) establishing individuals' interests to generate new opportunities.**
- **Development of a comprehensive set of written policies and procedures including six-monthly reviews and self-evaluation procedures.**

- **Implementation of team building exercises and volunteer support initiatives.**
- **Review and development of a tiered system to encourage volunteers to progress within a number of specialist areas.**
- **Identified the need to produce a Volunteer Handbook/Package to make the Volunteer policies and procedures more accessible.**

The funding also helped to initiate a number of new projects, such as a Community Garden Group, and a youth committee for GALE to tackle issues for young people between ages of 14-30.

Success Stories

One young adult with Down's Syndrome volunteers with the GALE Centre twice a week. He serves customers in the community café with support from a member of staff and also in other areas of the Centre.

The young man has grown in confidence and takes huge pride in his contribution to the work of GALE in his community.

The other volunteers and staff at GALE have been able to help him identify skills, such as indexing and colour coding which are very useful for helping in other areas of the Centre, such as the community shop. He can now work independently, using his own initiative at times, as well as assisting others in the Supported Volunteering programme.

Customers and other local people in the community have got to know the young man and enjoy seeing him and have learned how to engage with him. The project has helped to reduce the stigma of having a disability and broken down some social barriers locally.

Since its inception, GALE has also been able to increase its partnership working with local community groups, social care, and with Skills Development Scotland to increase employability opportunities.

“ I HAVE GAINED A LOT OF SELF-CONFIDENCE FROM WORKING WITH NEW PEOPLE AND PEOPLE THAT I HAVEN'T WORKED WITH BEFORE.”

A volunteer

Reported Achievements

The Volunteer Development Programme has enabled the GALE to increase activities and services through the creation of a dedicated Volunteer Development Officer position, who works to support the expansion of the volunteer opportunities at the Centre for all community members. Through the better systems in place, GALE is now in an improved position to increase social inclusion within the local area. There are now more volunteers working at GALE which helps with their employability skills.

“ BEFORE THIS STRUCTURE, VOLUNTEERS WOULDN'T STAY AS LONG AT GALE AS THERE WEREN'T AS MANY LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR THEM.”

A staff member

Key achievements have been reported by volunteers and staff as follows:

- The volunteering project is very well structured and organised and this helps volunteers undertake their roles better.
- The structure at GALE is something which staff members feel has improved since PCF.
- Without funding, GALE wouldn't have had been able to hire a co-ordinator who created these structures which allow community members to become more proactive.
- The new structure enabled the NHS to commission services, which previously was not possible.
- More local people are engaged and empowered to actively participate in community owned and controlled organisations that deliver local services.
- An increase in the number of services available locally all year round.

Study Teams' Observations

Many staff members identified the dedicated Volunteer Development Officer position and the clear implementation structures as the key success factors of the Volunteer Development Programme.

The benefits of the volunteer training contribute to improved service provision in the local community, but also has helped the volunteers to feel more included and connected with their community.

“ AT FIRST WHEN I JOINED THE CENTRE I WAS A LITTLE UNSURE AS TO HOW I WOULD GET ON AS IT WAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT TYPE OF JOB. I THOUGHT I WOULD APPLY AND SEE HOW I GOT ON. I GAINED A LOT OF CONFIDENCE IN DOING THE JOB AND REALISED I WAS ABLE TO DO SOMETHING NEW.”

A volunteer

Inspiring Locally Grown Employability in Argyll



Lead Organisation: —→ **Fyne Homes (RSL)/InspirAlba**



Type of Organisation: —→ **Social Enterprise**



Location: —→ **Argyll and Bute**
(South Kintyre, Bute, Oban & Islands)



Established: —→ **2009 (InspirAlba)**



Nr. of Employees: —→ **5**



Nr. of Volunteers: —→ **56**



Target Beneficiaries: —→ **Rural Communities**



Funding Partners: —→ **Multiple, including PCF**



PCF Funding: —→ **£76,000 (2015/2016) (InspirAlba)**

Background

Recognising the importance of community in relation to housing provision, this project has been co-produced between Fyne Homes, a Registered Social Landlord (match funder and in charge of claiming and invoicing) and InspirAlba, a social enterprise (responsible for the delivery of the project).

InspirAlba assists community-based organisations to turn their ideas and aspirations into robust, sustainable business activities and provides a range of services, to assist organisations and individuals to build resilience and income which in turn delivers a range of environmental, social and economic benefits for communities across Argyll and Bute. Services include:

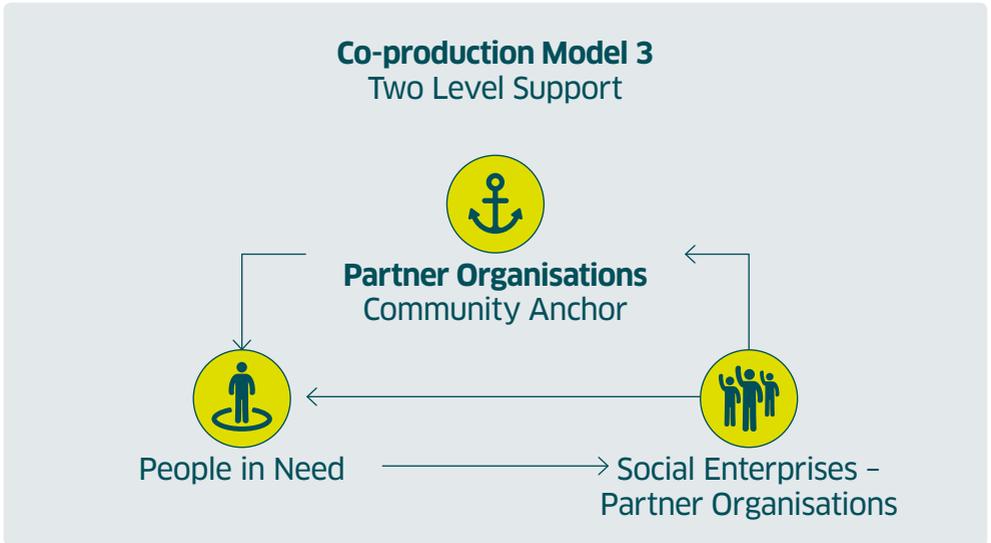
- **Business Support;**
- **Community Engagement;**
- **Project Development, Management and Evaluation;**
and
- **Financial and Income Generation Planning.**

InspirAlba has been managing the PCF funded project on behalf of Fyne Homes. The project focuses on employability and promotes social enterprise as an employment option for unemployed young people and adults who live in rural areas in Argyll and Bute and who face (often multiple) barriers to employment.

In this project, one of the key aims of InspirAlba is to give people with employment and health issues and/or disability an opportunity, to provide them with a nurturing environment through which they can feel valued and encouraged to start developing their employability skills.

InspirAlba works alongside a variety of social enterprises covering a wide range of industry sectors and activities.

Key Elements of Co-Production



In the PCF project, InspirAlba applies a co-production approach which works on a number of levels whereby the Community Anchor through its delivery agent InspirAlba, delivers the project through further partner organisations (i.e. social enterprises). Thus, the partners take on a central role in the delivery of the project by offering work placements as well as in-depth development support for

the beneficiaries often suffering multiple-deprivation issues.

InspirAlba maintains close links with the delivery partners to support the work placement programme. Good communication and feedback avenues are provided. Case studies are shared between all involved. This type of collaboration is strengthening relationships and learning opportunities.

Here, the operational rationale of a social enterprise to contribute positively to the social fabric of its local community is key for the PCF project to work at two levels: (1) through partner organisations gaining capacity and fulfilling their social policy remit, and (2) supporting beneficiaries gaining employability and life skills.

By working through individual social enterprises, the project was able to operate in a large geographic area, including remote rural locations and include a wide range of industry sectors thereby offering a spectrum of opportunities suited to a variety of interests and talents.

Working as a collective team, through social enterprises was regarded as most helpful in supporting people with multiple issues who were often unemployed as a result of physical and mental health barriers or addiction issues. The social enterprises were able to offer the required ethos, flexibility and additional support that was necessary to provide a person-focused approach. It would be unlikely that other businesses with more traditional employment models, would be able to accommodate such additional needs.

“ IN A SMALL RURAL AREA, NOBODY FORGETS YOUR PAST WHEN YOU HAVE SCREWED UP, IT IS REALLY DIFFICULT TO OVERCOME THE STIGMA. THE WORK PLACEMENT GAVE ME THE CHANCE TO SHOW MY COMMUNITY THAT I CAN CONTRIBUTE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

A beneficiary

Description of PCF Funded Project Activities

Beneficiaries are offered supportive and inspiring work experience placements with existing social enterprises. In addition, if participants seek to set up their own social enterprise, InspirAlba links them to the Vital Sparks programme which supports local people in turning their social enterprise ideas into solutions for the challenges their community is facing.

PCF funding provides project participants with a payment/salary for taking up work placements or a wage subsidy to bridge the loss/absence of

income during the period of starting up a social enterprise. This is of crucial importance for beneficiaries, because benefits are stopped as soon as a person commences a work placement or business development training.

The nurturing environment of social enterprises ensure that the work placements help people re-gain confidence and self-worth. Over a period of six-months a range of skills are learned, supporting participants in developing their potential and raising their profile in the wider community.

“ OFFERING WORK PLACEMENTS TO PEOPLE IN NEED HELPED US IN MANY WAYS. WE HAVE GAINED CAPACITY AND ARE A MORE INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION. BECAUSE THE PLACEMENT PROGRAMME WAS WELL STRUCTURED, WE DEVELOPED IDEAS FOR OUR OWN ORGANISATION AND WE FEEL MORE PROFESSIONAL NOW. THE PROGRAMME LET US MEET A VARIETY OF INDIVIDUALS RAISING OUR AWARENESS AND ABILITY TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. THE SUPPORT HAS BEEN INVALUABLE FOR ALL INVOLVED.”

A participating partner

Success Stories

“My work placement with the social enterprise was extended twice and now I have gained a permanent position as a recycling operator here. I learned a lot about recycling and I have become more compassionate about the environment.

The fact that the business is charity based and is helping people makes me feel really good. I was in ill-health before I started which also made me lose my

operator licence. During the work placement they encouraged me to regain my licence; my application was successful and I can now work as an operator again.

All this had a good effect on my health and has made me feel more resilient. I have also more friends now. The whole experience was only positive and I feel that I have real purpose in my life again.”

A beneficiary

“ BEING GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, I CAN NOW BELIEVE IN MYSELF, I NOW HAVE PURPOSE IN MY LIFE.”

A beneficiary

Reported Achievements

Acknowledging and providing flexibility is key for the success of this project. PCF is about supporting people who have difficult issues, to address challenges in the areas of social inclusion, poverty and employability. All people are different and a needs-based service cannot be rigid, it requires an approach that is bespoke, people-focused and hands-on and offers continuity of care and support. The many positive results achieved have been based on a huge commitment in providing time, compassion, and careful guidance, and taking one step-at-a-time to enable vulnerable people to re-build their confidence and skills in many different ways.

The Inspiring Locally Grown Employability in Argyll project was successful in creating the following results:

- High conversion rate of 85-90% from work placement to high quality permanent employment (reported by participating social enterprises).
- 10 unemployed people have been supported in work placements with social enterprises.
- 16 people have been recruited for enterprise support, of whom 8 were unemployed and 5 have care responsibilities.
- 25 people supported through training and employability skills.
- 10 new business activities established.
- 2 enterprise hubs established.
- 1 new programme established.

Study Teams' Observations

The project highlighted the strong capacity of the social enterprise sector to provide the necessary nurturing environment for vulnerable beneficiaries.

The importance of work placement payments to beneficiaries (in lieu of losing benefits) has been emphasised. This also helps to strengthen the feeling of self-worth and esteem.

“ IF THEY PAY ME - IT MUST BE TRUE THAT I DO WELL, IT'S NOT JUST WORDS.”

A beneficiary

“ I HAVE STARTED MY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WITH THE HELP OF INSPIRALBA. I EMPLOY PEOPLE AND PROVIDE WORK PLACEMENTS FOR BENEFICIARIES, JUST LIKE I ONCE WAS.”

A beneficiary

Action Health Education Employment Against Disadvantage Plus (AHEAD+)



Lead Organisation: —◦ **Community Food Initiative North East**



Type of Organisation: —◦ **Charity/Social Enterprise**



Location: —◦ **Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire**



Established: —◦ **1997**



Nr. of Employees: —◦ **30**



Nr. of Volunteers: —◦ **230**



Target Beneficiaries: —◦ **Disadvantaged and in-need**



Funding Partners: —◦ **Multiple, including PCF**



PCF Funding: —◦ **£185,375 (2015/2016)**

Background

Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) is a charity and social enterprise tackling issues such as poverty, social inclusion and employability. As its core operation, CFINE offers a range of food related services to people in crisis, located in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, including:

- **Food bank;**
- **Operator of Fareshare Grampian which distributes food which would otherwise go to waste;**
- **Operator of a network of dozens of community food outlets that distribute high quality produce at affordable prices in local areas; and**
- **Community Training Kitchen which offers cooking lessons.**

CFINE supplies free food primarily through its own food bank and through distribution of the free FareShare produce to c170 partner organisations in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire who in turn make the produce available to people in need. However, a range of additional services focus on providing a holistic service which goes beyond the basic needs of hunger and poverty to address the root causes of these issues so that the lives of service users can be improved sustainably (i.e. for the long term).

Once beneficiaries are in contact with CFINE, staff seek to engage with them further to assess their wider needs and to determine what type of support they might benefit from (finance, health, housing, employability, social inclusion). CFINE leads on the PCF funded AHEAD+ project, in partnership with Grampian Housing Association, North East Scotland Credit Union and Pathways (an employability charity).

Key Elements of Co-Production

The way in which CFINE (and the AHEAD+ project) engages with the community members and partner organisations exhibits a high level of 'co-production' and engagement in numerous ways.

At strategic level, the AHEAD+ project brings together a number of partners, not only to offer referral and signposting services, but also to co-design new services and become aware of additional development opportunities. The engagement with the partners further delivers joined-up services through co-location, and offering CFINE's previous service users volunteer positions in their respective organisations. There is some representation of partners on each other's Boards, with Grampian Housing Association on the CFINE Board.

At service user level, AHEAD+ has a particular interest in offering a person-focused service. This ensures that food bank customers are not only served with food, but encouraged to further engage with CFINE, leading to developing a closer relationship and trust between CFINE and the service user. This enables other support needs to be identified and addressed.

Social inclusion, health and employability are therefore important aspects covered by the person-focused approach. Encouraging service users to progress to becoming a volunteer at CFINE or with one of their partner organisations is an important element of this approach.

Co-production Model 4 Progression



The volunteers, primarily working in the food bank, then also engage directly with new service users. This has a number of particular advantages: for the volunteer to gain confidence and skills in communicating, customer care, mentoring and being a role model; and for the new service user: to relate more easily to the service 'speaking the same language', to feel inspired by the role model; and feel understood.

Description of PCF Funded Project Activities

The key aim of the partnership is to deliver a holistic service to low income, disadvantaged, excluded and vulnerable people in the North East of Scotland.

Although most of the partners had existing relationships before, collaborating in the AHEAD+ project has deepened the relationships for all partners, particularly it has improved the embeddedness of a range of services within CFINE (i.e. co-location). The creation of a dedicated officer-based at CFINE was crucial to help overcome barriers for service users.

With the ongoing implementation and administration of welfare reform, the demand for food and other personal and household items has increased considerably, and CFINE has increased its range of products and operations accordingly. The logistics of the food bank are sophisticated, including negotiations with supermarkets, food manufacturers (safety certificates for products over the sell-by date), warehousing and stock control, distribution logistics and route planning, to portioning food parcels and personal allocations to people in need.

In light of the increasing demand, the number of volunteers at CFINE has increased to 230, requiring professional management and co-ordination. The sophistication of the CFINE operation also means that there is a wide range of different volunteer posts available which provides opportunities for service users to become increasingly more involved in volunteering themselves.

“CFINE HAS BECOME A COMMUNITY HUB WITH LOTS OF SMALL PILOT PROJECTS.”

A member of staff

Success Stories

B was drug dependent, but prior to that had a good job, a wife and family and lost it all through drug use. He came to CFINE dirty and dishevelled, having come off drugs but still struggling in every sense, with no money and a constant struggle to 'stay clean'.

He came to get emergency food and the staff member suggested that he should return because he was in a bad way. B returned for more produce and in discussion with the staff member, she suggested he come in as a volunteer to give him a purpose, a reason to get up and stay 'clean'. He is now office-based within CFINE and volunteers 18 hours a week of his time, helping with the food bank and data input around food bank usage. This is a valuable contribution to CFINE's operation.

B's confidence has grown since his involvement with CFINE - he always shows up when scheduled and feels confident in each of the tasks he undertakes. B is now clean and tidy, looks and feels healthier, has a sense of purpose and is looking forward to a brighter future including securing employment - something that a few months ago was simply not tangible. He has also completed an 'Environmental Awareness and Healthy Eating' course.

Reported Achievements

PCF funding was essential for a number of co-location actions from partners providing the capacity to place staff within CFINE. Most of these positions are now fully embedded within the service. PCF has created a holistic delivery team to address the multiple needs of service users.

The food bank has acted as an effective 'hook' for the engagement process drawing people in and building their confidence to access a wide network of advice and support. This was substantially aided by the co-location of a range of relevant support services, such as the Financial Capability Officers.

The holistic delivery of AHEAD+ helped to engage vulnerable people with multiple complex needs, responding to their needs promptly and in-house. Crucial to the success of the initiative was that PCF created additional capacity to attend to the many new service users in a personal manner, allocating sufficient time to gain their trust and to help them gain life skills and confidence. The often chaotic lifestyles of people in crisis require CFINE to be flexible, available, personal and welcoming offering a safe place for people in need. Improvements in their wellbeing and personal skills development have a direct impact on their future employment chances.

“ HERE THEY HAVE TIME FOR YOU, THEY DON'T JUDGE YOU. CFINE HAS BECOME MY FAMILY.”

A beneficiary

PCF supported the following activities in 2015/16:

- Over 3,000 emergency food parcels handed out per month via CFINE's food bank and partners' services;
- At least 25 tonnes of FareShare produce distributed monthly;
- 125 instances of financial advice offered at the food bank;
- 252 referrals received for financial capability support;
- 42 adults with learning difficulties on work placements;
- 16 new community food outlets opened; and
- 331 new volunteers recruited.

“ ONCE SERVICE USERS BECOME VOLUNTEERS, THERE IS A HUGE CHANGE IN THEM, THEY START TO SHINE!”

A member of staff

Study Teams' Observations

This organisation successfully delivers a range of essential services and supports local people to access opportunities. Service users feel a great friendship with CFINE, they feel that this is a safe place for them to be.

There are elements of co-production with service users becoming volunteers and some become employed staff members. There is a strong element of community consultation and a person-focused approach is applied. A number of new initiatives have been established by CFINE with volunteers focusing on food in the community topics (training kitchen, mobile community cafe).

Inspiring Transformation



Lead Organisation: —→ **Next Step Initiative**



Type of Organisation: —→ **Voluntary**



Location: —→ **Glasgow**



Established: —→ **2009**



Nr. of Employees: —→ **5**



Nr. of Volunteers: —→ **30**



Target Beneficiaries: —→ **Black and Minority Ethnic**



Funding Partners: —→ **Multiple, including PCF**



PCF Funding: —→ **£123,638** (2015/2016)

Background

Next Step Initiative (NSI) focuses on engaging with the African and Caribbean communities in Scotland. NSI addresses key issues of social inclusion, employability, financial inclusion and social enterprise development.

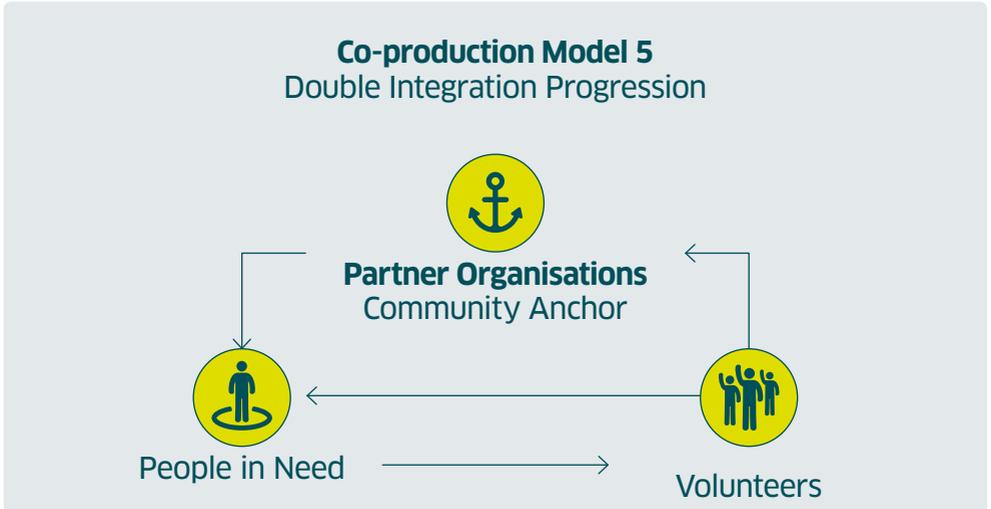
The key objective of the organisation is to reach out to and engage with individuals of the African and Caribbean community, help individuals to build their capacities and skills, develop their potentials, improve their quality of life, and support their integration into the civic life of Scottish society.

At NSI, working closely with relevant partner organisations and connecting them directly with the target communities is key to a successful model of community empowerment. Numerous awards have been won over recent years recognising NSI's 'Best Practice' in community engagement and empowerment. This includes an award from the United Nations - UNCTAD.

In addition to reaching out to local companies (work placements), NSI collaborates closely with a wide range of strategic and national organisations who have a key interest in engaging with the African and Caribbean community for their own purposes, policy objectives and recruitment strategies.

NSI operates an Employability, Enterprise and Community Engagement Programme developed and delivered jointly with its partner organisations building on a strategic and community asset approach. A series of community engagement events focus on recruitment programmes of partner organisations, at other times working with partner organisations on their strategies regarding community engagement and empowerment with the African and Caribbean community in Scotland.

Key Elements of Co-Production



Alongside delivering a diverse range of support services to the beneficiary groups, the NSI maintains strong links with other strategic and local organisations. This includes organisations such as Wheatley Group Housing Association, Police Scotland, the University of West of Scotland, and HMRC.

The partner organisations offer work and volunteering places. They also have a strong self-interest in working with NSI which enables them to reach and work with the African and Caribbean communities themselves, directly (for example, to implement their Corporate Social Responsibilities policies, to improve their service improvement targets, or to make them a more inclusive organisation).

At the same time, NSI works with the beneficiaries on a range of personal development topics, including cultural adjustment, social inclusion, and confidence building. By implementing a person-focused approach, NSI builds self-esteem and aspirations in people thereby encouraging them to progress from being a service user to becoming a volunteer.

Volunteering further enhances their skills attainment, delivering mentoring to new service users, and eventually progressing to employment, further education, or starting up their own social enterprise.

At the core of NSI engagement is relationships and partnership working (formal and informal) sharing of good practice, learning from experience, focusing on solution finding, and developing everyone's potential, knowledge and expertise.

“ PERCEPTION IS THE BIGGEST BARRIER - PROVIDING ROLE MODELS AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IS THE BEST REMEDY.”

A staff member

Description of PCF Funded Project Activities

Under the banner of ‘helping people to increase their chances’, PCF funded two strands of NSI project activity: social enterprise creation, and employability. This includes access to a wide variety of activities, including meeting and office space, radio station, and conference facilities.

Under the topics of ‘tacking poverty’ and ‘promoting social inclusion’, the key objectives were:

- To improve confidence, self-esteem and skills;
- To motivate and enable the development of personal potential;
- To raise awareness of opportunities and rights;
- To improve household budgeting skills, debt management and enhance access to credit union facilities;

- To enhance access to key networks and support provision;
- To encourage representation as trustees and board members in public/community organisations to influence decision making; and
- To facilitate entering employment or starting a social enterprise.

At the core of the service provision of NSI is the personal advice and support provided to each service user through which people’s needs and developments are reviewed, and encouragement and motivation is offered on a continuous, and ‘open door’ basis.

Success Stories

“It is one of the best and most interesting projects to be involved in. It provides an opportunity to learn and to build transferable skills. It makes integration easy and it is an opportunity to understand other cultures and to talk about yours. It helps to break barriers, build a sense of belonging, and be more open to others, without feeling lost while maintaining one’s own identity.

As a result of the confidence, experience and skills gained after 12 months traineeship with NSI and Riverside Museum, I was able to immediately get a job as an Account Coordinator with support of NSI Employability Programme. I am very grateful indeed to all the NSI staff.”

Adebimbe Ademosu: Former NSI trainee with Glasgow Life, Riverside Museum

Further to developing a linked-up approach in service delivery with other service providers, NSI ensures that its members are Board members on relevant networks such as SURF, Pollok Integration network, Ethnic Minority Poverty and Climate Change Network, Community Action on Climate Change.

All services and activities delivered by NSI are informed by its members and service users. This is facilitated through regular contact, applying a person-focussed approach and the delivery of bespoke advice and support services.

Suggestion boxes and views expressed by participants are taken seriously and help improve services. Through helping develop and tailor service delivery, participants gain a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Reported Achievements

NSI works with nearly 300 people per year, and PCF has supported the following activities (2015/16):

- 12 workshops undertaken (engagement and recruitment; skills training; social enterprise and business planning);
- Sudanese women social enterprise network and Somali group established (20+ participants);
- Incubation Hub (25+ users)
- More than 30 work placements;
- 35 mock interviews undertaken;
- More than 50 people mentored; and
- More than 35 volunteers recruited.

“ I HAVE BECOME A CONFIDENT PRESENTER AND CAN COMMUNICATE WELL.”

A beneficiary

“ WE ACTIVELY ENGAGE SERVICE USERS TO BECOME VOLUNTEERS AND INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PLANNING, DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES. THIS BUILDS CONFIDENCE, SKILLS, PRIDE, AND A SENSE OF BELONGING.”

A staff member

Study Teams' Observations

A well-thought through approach working at multiple levels of engagement for all involved. Excellent example for co-production at strategic as well as service user level (where Corporate Social Responsibility meets community engagement). NSI was instrumental in launching social enterprises.

Key to the success of NSI are the use of positive role models and providing opportunities to participate, engage, and contribute. The approach focuses on lessons learned to help continuously improve and tap into new opportunities for all involved. This represents a two-way process benefiting target group beneficiaries as well as partner organisations.

“ OUR GROUP HAD NO HOPE BEFORE WE CAME TO NSI, NOW WE HAVE.”

A beneficiary





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