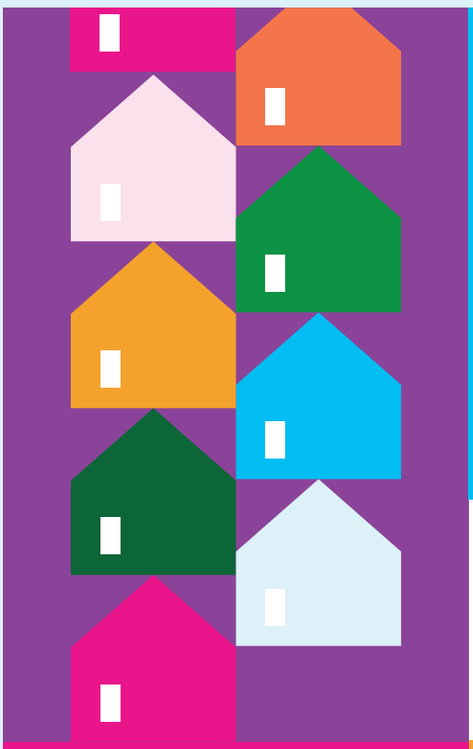
ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

OYCI
Ochil Youths
Community
Improvement









OYCI
Ochil Youths Community Improvement

SAFE

BELONG

GROW

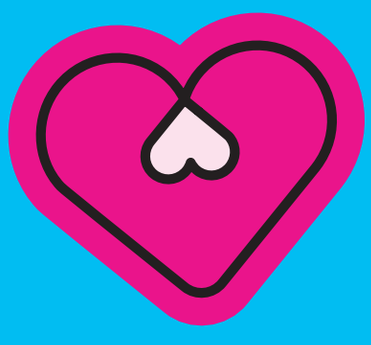
RELATIONSHIPS are at the heart of what we do

We are **LOCAL**

We grow great **FRIENDSHIPS**



We support **FAIRNESS & EQUITY**



We help others & **IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY**

We support a range of **DIFFERENT NEEDS**

We are **FORWARD THINKING**

We are **CREATIVE**

We are **INCLUSIVE/ WELCOMING & COLLABORATIVE**

We offer opportunities to **BUILD CONFIDENCE**

We have **FUN**

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Our Purpose: Safe, Belong, Grow

This year, we gave a clearer shape to something OYCI has always tried to do, this isn't new, it's what OYCI has always been about, we've simply named it as our purpose for the first time. After talking it through with young people, staff and partners, we landed on three words that sum up what every session, club and project is really for.

Safe. Belong. Grow.

OYCI is a youth-led charity. We help children and young people feel safe, belong and grow.

A young person who feels safe can relax enough to make a friend. A young person who feels like they belong can take the risk of trying something new. And a young person who's growing, gaining a skill, an award, a bit of confidence, carries that forward long after they've left the building.

Young people helped us get here. Across everything we heard this year, the same idea kept coming back: OYCI is somewhere you can just be yourself. This report is structured around Safe, Belong and Grow, because that's what the last twelve months were about.

Our Values

Relationships based on respect

Opportunities to build confidence

Fun and safe participation

Seeing the potential of the whole person

We operate with:



Kindness



Inclusivity



Fairness and equality



Collaboration



Helping others and improving our community

What this means for us in practice is simple: these values aren't a poster on the wall, they're the test every session gets measured against. When we decide whether to run a club, take on a project, or say yes to something a young person has asked for, we're really asking whether it offers fun and safe participation, whether it's built on respect, and whether it gives a young person a genuine chance to build confidence. These values are how we've committed to achieving our purpose of Safe, Belong, Grow.

What We Did: Year at a Glance

Our youth-led activities are free for anyone aged 10–18 in Clackmannanshire. This year that meant weekly clubs, in-school sessions, holiday programmes, after school care for younger children, a regular volunteering group, and a residential trip, on top of transition work in six primary schools and a project reaching around 100 pupils on gender norms and healthy relationships.



Who We Reached

92

regular participants across our core clubs (Connect, Junior Youth Club, Gaming, Coding, Clacks Youth Theatre and more)

1,342

individual bookings across the year

189

different sessions delivered

949

further participation experiences through Hi5, the Festival of Fun, outreach events, Forest School and our gender norms (VAWG) project

76%

of our regular participants have a recorded medical condition, additional support need, or other support requirement

60%

of participants live in Scotland's most deprived 40% of communities

159

Primary 7 pupils supported through Hi5 across 8 schools

61

Dynamic Youth Awards completed

What We Ran

Connect (S2–S6) and Junior Youth Club (P6–S1): our longest-running weekly sessions

Gaming, Coding, and Codesign clubs

Clacks Youth Theatre, running in both Tillicoultry and Alloa

Fun, Food and Friendships and Calm Creative Crafts: our in-school clubs

Our After School Club (ASC), providing daily term-time and holiday care

Nature Nurture, our forest school experience for children and young people delivered in the community and schools.

Hi5: our P7 to S1 transition programme

Volunteering: our regular youth social action group, including the Reach 26 event, designed and delivered by our young volunteers after Youth Scotland invited them back following Reach25

A residential trip to Fordell Firs, plus Glenmore Lodge

Our **Gender Norms Workshop (VAWG project),** delivered across 3 schools

Holiday programmes, the Festival of Fun, and community outreach events



Safe

Feeling safe is the foundation everything else is built on. Everything we do helps children and young people feel safe - trusted adults, consistent routines, staff who know them well, but two areas of work this year deserve a particular spotlight: giving younger children a calm, predictable space to settle in our After School Club, and starting an honest, age-appropriate conversation with young people about gender, respect, and the kind of harm OYCI's work aims to prevent, before harmful attitudes have the chance to take hold.

School Age Childcare

Across 2025/26, our after school club, provided a safe, nurturing space where primary age children could settle, connect and thrive. Daily routines, strong relationships and responsive support enabled children to feel secure, build friendships, and develop confidence and skills over time.



places available each day

individual children supported

children attending on an average day across the year

- **A calm, predictable routine, arrival, food, play, home time, gives children stability, and even after a difficult day at school or at home, children regulate.**
- **Strong relationships with families: early collection or extra communication with families and schools whenever it's needed.**
- **A range of tools to support emotional regulation, quiet spaces, dens, beanbags, sensory tools like weighted blankets, so children are given the time and space they need.**
- **Staff adapt to individual needs, from medication changes to grief and family change, and children are supported to eat, rest or withdraw whenever they need to.**

"Having separate eating and playing areas allows them to focus on food and conversation round the table and build on their social skills." OYCI staff

"They really enjoyed the visit from the Shetland ponies and the Samba drum man." OYCI staff

Case Studies

Child X's home life has been unsettled, with a difficult family relationship affecting him at home and at school. Since joining OYCI's after school club, Child X has felt safe and comfortable in the space and with staff, and has formed strong friendships within the group. Staff have built an honest, open relationship with his family, working together on strategies to support him. His Mum has been able to take on a new job with longer hours, something she wouldn't have been able to do without this service, and says she now feels supported. Child X is happy to attend during the holidays even when numbers are low, and has shown a softer, more compassionate side over time.

> ***"Why wouldn't you want to use this club, even if it is just for two hours in the holidays? You can get the washing done or have a coffee in peace and relax."*** Parent

Child Y has ADHD and autism, and initially found it hard to engage in activities and with other children, staying quiet at mealtimes and preferring to be on his own. Child Z often has to manage getting herself ready for school with less support at home than most. Since attending OYCI's after school club, Child Y and Child Z have built a close friendship, strengthened during holiday sessions, and enjoy role-playing games together. Their friendship has continued outside the club, with Child Y's family including Child Z and giving her opportunities she wouldn't otherwise have. Child Y is now happy to chat with staff, join in outdoor games with other children, and manage friendships more easily than before.

Gender Norms Workshop (VAWG Project)

Part of its REALITIES* research programme, our Gender Norms Project is an early-intervention project designed to help prevent violence against women and girls. Both phases of the project ran within this reporting year.

Phase One reached five classes across three primary schools, Tillicoultry, Strathdevon and Craigbank, around 100 pupils in total. Through quizzes, creative activities and guided group discussion, pupils explored how gender expectations shape their everyday lives. When asked directly, most pupils pushed back on stereotypes: 64% disagreed that boys are better at sports than girls, 62% disagreed that girls are better at schoolwork, and 49% disagreed that men should earn the money for a family. But the discussions also surfaced attitudes worth continuing to work on, no class could initially name a female inventor in our Inventors Quiz, and pupils talked openly about double standards in how boys and girls are treated in sport and online.

> ***"Girls can do it just as well as boys."*** P7 pupil, reflecting on Mulan

> ***"Everyone is allowed to work & earn money nowadays. In the past it was just men."*** P7 pupil

Phase Two invited four upper-primary pupils from each school to spend six weeks co-creating a resource for younger peers, working with visiting artists and social enterprise Braw Talent to produce an original animation, titled Kindness is Very Blob-like, and exploring spoken word and podcasting with podcaster and spoken word artist Lisa Kennedy. Across the workshops, young people landed on a small set of key messages they wanted the animation to carry: 'Treat people how you wanna be treated', 'Everyone deserves a chance', and 'Gender does NOT matter', built around the central question 'Is it kind? Is it fair?' A teachers' pack is also in development, so schools can keep having these conversations long after the project ends. A full workshop-by-workshop breakdown and acknowledgements are included in the Appendix.

Why We're Doing This

Violence against women and girls doesn't start with violence, it starts with attitudes that go unquestioned: whose sport gets taken seriously, whose achievements get remembered, who's allowed to be angry and who's expected to be caring. By the time those attitudes calcify into adult behaviour, the window for early intervention has usually closed. Working with pupils at upper primary age gives us a genuine chance to interrupt that pattern before it sets.

The impact for young people is immediate as well as long-term. Pupils told us things in these sessions they hadn't said elsewhere, about being excluded from games, about double standards in how boys and girls are treated for the same behaviour, about assumptions they'd never had the chance to question out loud. Naming those patterns in a mixed group, with adults taking them seriously, is a protective factor in itself, not just preparation for one.

What we're looking for next: seeing the animation and teachers' pack land with real impact once shared, and a wider reach across Clackmannanshire and beyond.

Why This Matters

Feeling safe isn't a separate outcome from everything else in this report, it's the condition that makes everything else possible. A child who is anxious, unregulated, or unsure of the adults around them can't relax enough to make a friend, try something new, or take on a challenge. That's why Safe comes first in our model: before a young person can belong or grow, they need to know they're secure.

This year that meant two very different kinds of work. The After School Club showed what feeling safe looks like day to day, consistent routines, sensory support, and staff who respond to a child's needs rather than their behaviour. The Gender Norms Project showed what it looks like further upstream: tackling the attitudes that, left unchallenged, can grow into the kind of harm OYCI's work aims to prevent.

What we're looking for next: continuing to build the trusted, consistent relationships that make children and young people feel secure in everything OYCI does, and using what Phase One of the Gender Norms Workshop taught us, that young people's instincts are often better than their assumptions, to make sure the finished animation and teachers' pack land with real impact across more schools.



Belong

Belonging is about young people finding their people. Whether that's a Thursday night at Connect or an Friday afternoon at Junior Youth Club, it's the place where new faces get folded in fast, and friendships outlast the session.

329

bookings at Connect across the year

254

bookings at Junior Youth Club



Connect (S2–S6) and Junior Youth Club (P6–S1)

Junior Youth Club is where our youngest members land as they move up from primary school, while Connect carries that on right through to S6. Both are youth-led, relaxed spaces built around games, crafts and simply having somewhere to be, young people book a place, but once they're in the room the session is theirs to shape.

Across our sessions this year, staff recorded teamwork as the single most common thing young people were building (25% of all skills observed), followed closely by relationships (19%) and communication (18%).

- **New members are welcomed and integrated quickly, and young people regularly bring friends along.**
- **Sessions are loud, social and playful, but conflict becomes a learning moment rather than a problem, staff observe and support rather than control.**
- **Young people speak up, share opinions, and support each other; quieter members visibly grow in confidence to join in.**
- **Staff respond sensitively to personal issues, from bereavement to everyday wellbeing, and sessions stay inclusive of a wide range of social, emotional and health needs.**

Members of our Volunteering group who have completed Place2Be mental health training ran wellbeing sessions at Junior Youth Club this year, giving younger members an early, low-pressure introduction to talking about mental health, led by young people rather than staff. It's a good example of how our volunteers support other young people right across our sessions, not just within their own group.

We run Connect and Junior Youth Club because young people need somewhere to just be, just a consistent space and consistent adults, every week. That consistency is what turns a regular session into a place a young person is willing to be vulnerable in: to ask for help, to talk about what's going on at home, to bring a friend who's struggling. Universal, low-barrier youth clubs like these are consistently one of the strongest protective factors against isolation and risk-taking behaviour in adolescence.

Other Weekly Clubs

Belonging isn't confined to Connect and Junior Youth Club, our other weekly clubs carried a huge amount of it too, and between them accounted for more bookings than any other activity we ran.



Gaming

606

bookings, our single most-booked activity of the whole year

Gaming runs in a young-person-led way. Staff set up the PS5, Wii and Switch, but young people choose what to play, popular choices are FIFA, Rocket League and Super Smash Bros, all games that need collaboration rather than solo play, so even something a young person plays at home becomes a social, group experience at OYCI. There's a waiting list system so everyone gets a turn on console (four young people fit around a Switch), and a table set up with board games, cards, and drawing materials for anyone not gaming. Chess has become genuinely popular, taught peer-to-peer by young people who already knew how to play, alongside Monopoly, UNO, Game of Life and a Yes/No guessing game. When the weather's good, the group sometimes moves outside for games like Sneak.

Gaming might look like screen time, but in a supervised group setting it does something different: it's one of the easiest ways to get quieter or more anxious young people sitting alongside their peers, taking turns, handling losing, and talking without the pressure of eye contact. It's often the first club a hesitant young person will try, because it feels lower-stakes than a club built around performance or conversation, which is exactly why it's our most-booked activity: it's the front door.

Codesign

228

bookings

Codesign is a year-long programme, run in partnership with Abertay University's games design faculty, where young people learn to build a computer game from scratch. This year's group spent the year building an original game called Just Like Clockwork, working through Bitsy, Scratch and GameMaker to cover the full development process: story and character design, art and sound assets, level design, coding, and even an early marketing and branding session (elevator pitches, deciding on a game identity, planning a trailer). Four workshop days at Abertay itself were the standout of the year, young people presented their game to university staff and students, got real feedback, and play-tested games made by Abertay's own students. The term finished with a sharing of the finished work to parents and a celebratory trip to McDonald's.

> ***"Abertay trips, showing our game plan and learning to make the game ourselves."***
> young person, Codesign

> ***"Going to Abertay, making the sound and interacting with all the different buttons."***
> young person, Codesign

> ***"It teaches you things you don't get taught in school. You meet new people.***

It's good for getting employed and your future." young person, Codesign, on why the project matters

"The pixel drawing quality they've done is so good." parent, Codesign

This year's Codesign group were all aged 10-14, and half had additional support needs or were neurodivergent. One parent told us their son had never enjoyed an after-school activity before Codesign, and that it had been a big part of his growing confidence this year.

Codesign gives young people a genuine technical skill and, just as importantly, ownership over something they've built themselves. Problem-solving and patience with failure are hard to teach directly, but they show up naturally when a young person is debugging their own code, or waiting weeks to see if their idea for a countdown or a sound effect actually works in the finished game.

Clacks Youth Theatre

234
bookings in Alloa

208
bookings in Tillicoultry

300+
young people aged 10-13 reached across the year's arts programme, term-time groups, holiday Play in a Week, and outreach

Clacks Youth Theatre ran weekly across both venues this year. The Alloa group adapted Rapunzel, with choreography created alongside visiting artist Lisa Kennedy, then closed the year by devising and performing their own Christmas play and organising a fundraiser themselves, taking full ownership of the writing, planning and delivery.

Both groups performed original pieces at Hubbub 2025, a one-off arts festival at the Macrobert Arts Centre, devised to the theme ‘Rebel Heart’ alongside other youth theatre, dance and orchestra groups. One participant said they felt ‘proud and happy’ to overcome their fear of big crowds, and another, usually reserved, young person called seeing their own script performed on stage ‘an exquisite theatrical experience’.

The group also travelled to Edinburgh's International Children's Festival (Imaginate), taking in the National Galleries of Scotland and two shows at the Traverse Theatre, a highlight for many who had never seen contemporary theatre before.

Our holiday Play in a Week (PIAW) sessions ran an Easter Circus theme and a Summer Heritage theme, the latter drawing on the Clackmannanshire archives and a visit from the Tillicoultry Rural Ladies, who came back to see the final performance. 11 participants achieved a Dynamic Youth Award through PIAW. We also delivered drama-based outreach in schools and a taster session with The Circle, which supports disadvantaged families and has expressed interest in future collaboration.

"Communication and listening. We don't judge each other." young person, Clacks Youth Theatre, on the group's strengths

"It was amazing to see how the young people had grown." parent, Play in a Week

Theatre asks young people to do the things that are hardest at this age: to be looked at, to make a choice in front of others, to fail in public and try again anyway. For a young person who struggles with anxiety or feels invisible elsewhere, doing that in a supportive group can be transformative. Clacks Youth Theatre also gives Clackmannanshire something it didn't have before we started it: a genuinely free, local youth theatre running across two accessible venues.



Fun, Food and Friendships and Calm Creative Crafts

33
Fun, Food and Friendships sessions run this year

24
young people attending FFF, 14 of whom have additional support needs

Fun, Food and Friendships is our after-school club at Alva Academy, aimed mainly at S1-S3 and skewing towards younger and more vulnerable pupils, though any pupil up to S6 can attend. Calm Creative Crafts is a genuinely calm, quiet lunchtime space for young people who are struggling with the school day. Both are drop-in, pupils can just turn up, and both reach young people who don't otherwise engage with OYCI's wider programme. Both are supported by our own young volunteers, two of whom put in a full year as Young Leaders this year, planning and running their own sessions.

Activities this year ranged from arts and crafts (including food crafts like slime-making and rice crispy cakes), games sessions built around Mafia and other drama-based games, and sports on the astro, to themed sessions marking World Kindness Day, National Poetry Day, and a session where young leaders taught Makaton sign language to the rest of the group.

"Feel included & happy, it's nice to hang out here and have fun with people I like." young person, FFF

"Coming to this club after a stressful day at school is just what I need!" young person, FFF

"I love this, I can sing without being judged." young person, FFF

These in-school clubs exist to catch young people at the moment they're most at risk of falling through the cracks, the transition into secondary school. A calm, familiar lunchtime or after-school space, in a building they already know, lowers the barrier to attending far more than an off-site club ever could.

What Young People Told Us

95%
of young people said they mostly or always feel like they belong at OYCI

90%
said they always have an adult at OYCI they trust to talk to

"Made friends." young person, on their favourite thing about OYCI this year

What This Tells Us

Belonging is working. 95% of young people say they mostly or always feel like they belong, and 90% say they always have an adult they trust, and those numbers sit right alongside our figures on feeling safe, which makes sense, the two build on each other. Making friends sits lower than almost every other measure this year, at 74% mostly or always, but that number needs some care in how we read it. Some young people already knew each other before coming to OYCI, word of mouth is often how they end up here in the first place, so they wouldn't say they 'made a friend' even though the club is clearly working for them socially. For some young people with autism in particular, being comfortable in a social space without being overwhelmed is the real win, but they may not always recognise or label that as friendship, even when it plainly is one.

Why This Matters

None of this works without belonging. A young person can feel physically safe and still feel invisible, and a young person who feels invisible won't come back. Every club in this section, whether it's a quiet Thursday at Connect or a raucous night of Gaming, exists to answer the same question for a young person: is there a place for me here? When 95% say yes, that's not a soft outcome, it's the mechanism that makes every other outcome in this report possible, young people don't build skills, take on leadership, or push themselves in a space where they don't feel they belong first.

What we're looking for next: exploring friendship-making specifically in terms of how our data captures this across a range of needs and understanding, and expanding the reach of our youth-led clubs and activities, for example to a wider range of venues.



Grow

Growing is where OYCI hands young people the wheel: a leadership role, a residential trip, a project of their own design, or a certificate that proves, on paper, what they already know they're capable of.

Volunteering, and Reach 26

Our regular Volunteering group gives young people the chance to identify a cause, plan a response, and see it through. This year's work fell under four themes:

- Climate Change: planting wildflowers and building bee baths and bee hotels with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), planting seeds in the community garden, and flood resilience work with TCV and FEL.
- Cost of Living Crisis: making and donating Christmas gifts to Tillicoultry Community Larder.
- Social Isolation: hosting a community coffee evening and community days to bring isolated members of the community together.
- Mental Health: running Place2Be wellbeing activities alongside Junior Youth Club.

> ***"I enjoyed helping with Christmas cheer."*** young person, Volunteering

> ***"All of the events, like the Easter and Christmas events, were fun to plan, and I felt like we made lots of people happy."*** young person, Volunteering

Reach 26 is a separate, related project. Five OYCI young people were recognised for the empathy, patience and leadership they showed supporting peers from across Scotland at Generation Cashback REACH 25, held at Fordell Firs in March 2025. That led to a further opportunity: three of them became Young Advisors for REACH 26, working alongside Youth Scotland, Girlguiding Scotland and Scouts Scotland to design and help deliver a national event at the University of Stirling in March 2026, focused on emotional health and wellbeing.

From September 2025 to March 2026, the Young Advisors took part in monthly planning sessions, shaping activities and workshops for their peers. They started out quiet and reserved, and grew noticeably in confidence over the seven months, developing real leadership skills, planning, teamwork, communication, decision-making and public speaking. On the day itself, REACH 26 welcomed more than 100 young people and staff, and our Young Advisors took on visible, meaningful roles: opening and closing the event, supporting participants throughout the day, and helping people move between activities.

It's a clear example of what happens when young people are trusted with real responsibility and supported over time, they don't just take part in something built for them, they help build it themselves. Three young people from the group have submitted for their Silver Youth Achievement Award off the back of this work, currently awaiting standardisation.

Our Volunteering group exists because young people don't just need support, they need the chance to give it. Planning a response to a real issue, climate change, cost of living, loneliness, and seeing it through builds a kind of confidence that can't come from being on the receiving end of a service. It also shifts how young people see themselves in their community: not as people things happen to, but as people who make things happen.

Nature Nurture

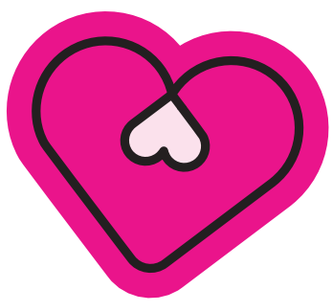
Nature Nurture gives children and young people the chance to grow in a different environment. Away from the classroom and surrounded by nature, they build confidence, resilience and relationships through outdoor, creative and experiential activities. Sessions combine Forest School principles with trusted adult support, creating a space where children and young people can try new things, work alongside others, and experience success on their own terms.

Nature Nurture gives children and young people opportunity to develop skills like determination, teamwork and positive relationships. For some, this means becoming more confident speaking and working with peers; for others, it means persevering with new challenges or finding a sense of belonging in a group setting. One participant who initially chose to spend most sessions alone gradually began joining group activities, building friendships and contributing ideas for games and activities, demonstrating clear growth in confidence and social skills over a six-week block.

Nature Nurture works because it allows young people to learn and develop in ways that are often difficult to achieve in more formal settings. Outdoor and creative approaches reduce stress and anxiety, support emotional regulation, strengthen resilience, and help children and young people become ready to learn. Through trusted relationships, a trauma-informed approach, and connection to local green spaces, children and young people can develop skills that transfer far beyond the forest.

Why This Matters

Growth does not only happen through qualifications or leadership roles. Sometimes it happens when a young person discovers they can work as part of a team, speak up in a group, persevere through a challenge, or simply feel comfortable being themselves around others. Nature Nurture creates the conditions for that kind of growth. In a calm, supportive environment, young people build confidence, strengthen relationships and develop the resilience that helps them succeed. both in school and beyond.







Hi5

159

P7 pupils completed the Hi5 programme

8

schools took part, including 2 from outwith our usual catchment

Hi5 supports the transition from Primary 7 to S1, run over eight weeks in Alva Academy's assembly hall and built around communication, teamwork, conflict resolution and friendship. Teacher feedback was, once again, very positive, and our young leaders did a great job engaging and motivating the P7s, several of them putting their own leadership training into practice for the first time.

The move from P7 to S1 is one of the biggest transitions a young person makes, and the anxiety around it can shape a young person's whole relationship with secondary school before they've even set foot in it. Hi5 gets ahead of that by building soft skills before term one starts, so young people arrive at Alva Academy having already met some of their new year group, and already holding a level 2 SCQF award.

Residential Trips

10

young people on our Fordell Firs residential

5

young people on our Glenmore Lodge residential

This year's second residential took the group to Glenmore Lodge in the Cairngorms in June 2025, a trip staff have named as a real highlight of the year. It didn't start on the day of departure: young people spent several Connect sessions beforehand building basic map reading and mountain safety skills, including three sessions with a visiting hillwalking volunteer and a visit to Ochils Mountain Rescue Centre, where the group climbed in and out of the rescue vehicles and got a look at the kit a mountain rescuer carries. A parents' information session ran alongside this, so families knew what to expect.

The group travelled by train from Stirling to Aviemore, sharing a chippy tea before being collected by Glenmore Lodge staff. Over the weekend, instructors Scott and Laerke took the young people through proper hillwalking preparation, map and compass skills, and what to carry in a bag for a day on the hill, before setting off through Glenmore Forest Park to An Lochan Uaine (the Green Loch), then Ryvoan Bothy, where the group left a message from OYCI in the visitors' book. From there, they climbed to the summit of Meall a'Bhuachaille (810m). One young person struggled with the pace partway up, having not eaten or drunk enough that morning, but after refuelling and resting, the group slowed down together and everyone made it to the top, showing real resilience and teamwork along the way.

Day two brought an orienteering challenge using 6-figure grid references, and a session on first aid and survival skills, building shelters and practising casualty care, before the group met Mac, a search and rescue dog, and took turns hiding in the grounds to be found. Every young person completed their Dynamic Youth Award booklet on the train home, reflecting on their favourite parts of the trip and what they'd learned.
For many of the young people who go, a residential is the first time they've spent a night away from home without family. That alone builds independence and resilience that a day session never quite can, and it accelerates trust between young people and staff faster than months of weekly sessions.

Accreditation

61

Dynamic Youth Awards completed this year

Broken down by project: Peer Mentors (5), Play in a Week/PIAW (11), our Gender Norms Workshop group (12), P7 Forest Fun (4), Fordell Firs Residential (10), Hill Skills (5), and Aberfeldy Residential (14). Accreditation paperwork can lag behind the activity itself, which is why Aberfeldy (a trip from the previous financial year) appears in this year's completed awards.

Alongside this, 3 Silver Youth Achievement Awards have been submitted from our Volunteering group's Reach 26 work, and the paperwork from Fordell Firs has been completed and banked towards possible Bronze Youth Achievement Awards next year.

50% of young people surveyed have already completed an OYCI accreditation, with a further 21% keen to. This year OYCI became an established Youth Scotland Awards Delivery Hub, formalising our ability to create accredited learning opportunities for young people, particularly those who struggle to achieve in formal education settings.

An award is proof, on paper, of something a young person already knows about themselves. For some of the young people we work with, an OYCI accreditation is the first formal recognition they've ever had of a skill or achievement, and for a young person who isn't on track for a full slate of school qualifications, a Youth Achievement Award can be a genuinely alternative route to the same credibility.

Employability

A newer, emerging strand of our work: young people are increasingly returning to OYCI after leaving school looking for volunteering or work experience opportunities. The strength of relationships built during their time with us means that trust and contact continue into this next stage of their journey, and we're now exploring how to formally support neurodivergent young people and those affected by poverty and trauma into work or study, helping provide a bridge into the world of employment. We've recently had an Expression of Interest funded to explore this further.

Why This Matters

Growth is the payoff of Safe and Belong, once a young person feels secure and feels they belong, they're ready to be stretched. That's what our Volunteering group, Hi5, our residentials, and our accreditation pathway are all built to do: give a young person a genuine challenge, with just enough support that they can rise to it.

What we're looking for next: turning the Fordell Firs DYA paperwork already banked into real Bronze Youth Achievement Awards next year, growing the number of young people moving from Hi5 through to Platinum-level accreditation over time, making sure residentials stay accessible – free - so a family's ability to pay doesn't determine if their child can take part, and building out the employability bridge for young people ageing out of our regular provision.

“Developing strong and meaningful relationships with young people and seeing them excel in different settings”

“It’s been a privilege to be a part of the team developing school age childcare for some of the most vulnerable families in our community”

“Every day is different and rewarding and we have a lot of fun doing what we do’

People

Staff Voice

"Developing strong and meaningful relationships with young people and seeing them excel in different settings - being willing to move out their comfort zones and have the confidence to try new things."

"It's been such a lovely journey to watch a young person who participated with us, go on to be a volunteer and now member of our staff team"

"It's been a privilege to be a part of the team developing school age childcare for some of the most vulnerable families in our community"

"Consistently being able to offer a wide variety of different activities for young people meaning there is something for everyone".

"Every day is different and rewarding and we have a lot of fun doing what we do - amazing colleagues and a brilliant staff team"

Staff Development

Our team completed a wide range of training this year: Be-Inn Unity's mental health training, which goes beyond typical mental health first aid to cover neurobiology, emotional regulation and central nervous system regulation, NHS Trauma Skilled Practice, GIRFEC Skilled Practice, NHS Community Cooking, Loose Parts Play, GDPR, Play: Why? What? How? (The Importance of Play in School Age Children), First Aid, Breakaway training, and Wildcraft Adventures training. Two staff are also nearing completion of an SCQF Level 7 qualification in Social Services for Children and Young People. Every Friday morning is set aside for team development and peer supervision, keeping staff up to date, informed and connected.

Our Chief Officer was also selected for The Hunter Foundation's Changemakers programme this year, a leadership development opportunity for charity and social enterprise leaders, learning about scaling an organisation from sector-leading experts and other charity leaders.

Everything in this report, the calm regulation in after school club, the trust built at Connect, the confidence built through Hi5 and accreditation, depends on staff who are skilled, supported and well. Investing in training isn't background admin, it's what makes the Safe/Belong/Grow model deliverable in practice: a staff team without up-to-date trauma and mental health knowledge, or specialist skills like forest school leadership, simply can't provide the kind of responsive, individualised support this report describes.



Board and Governance

The board met 5 times this year. Our AGM was held on 16 September 2025. One trustee, Jill Wanliss McIntyre, stood down this year, and we're grateful for her contribution to OYCI over the years.

"OYCI has continued to excel in its commitment to the young people and children at the heart of its work. I take great pride that despite the innumerable and ongoing challenges of 2025/26, OYCI has displayed great resilience and fidelity to the community it has served for 9 years." Christine Arjun, Chairperson

Good governance is what allows OYCI to take the kind of risks that make real impact possible: running a first-of-its-kind youth theatre pilot, delivering a sensitive project like the Gender Norms Workshop, taking young people away on residential trips. None of that happens responsibly without a board asking the right questions, holding the organisation to account, and bringing outside expertise and challenge. Our trustees give their time for free, and the scrutiny and support they provide underpins everything else in this report.

Annual Survey Results

64 people took part in this year's anonymous survey: 42 young people, 11 parents/carers, 9 partners, and 2 supporters.

Young People

When asked how often the following are true when they come to OYCI:



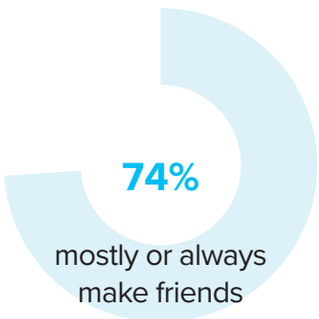
mostly or always have fun



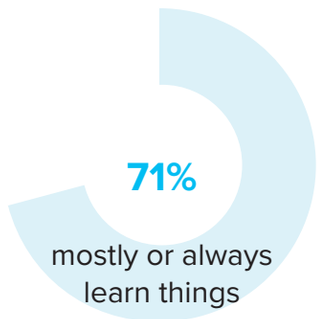
mostly or always feel safe



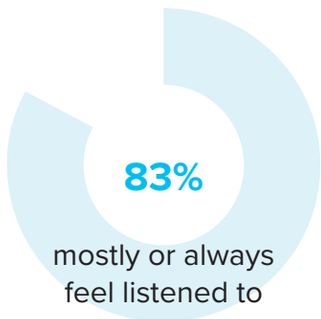
mostly or always feel confident



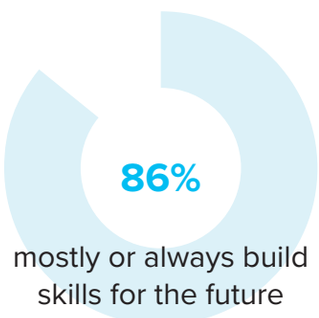
mostly or always make friends



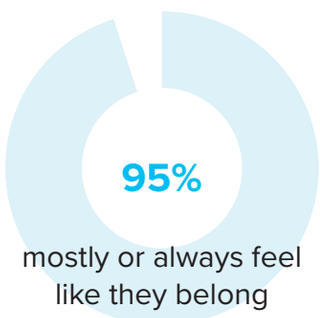
mostly or always learn things



mostly or always feel listened to



mostly or always build skills for the future



mostly or always feel like they belong



mostly or always have an adult they trust to talk to



have completed an OYCI accreditation



would recommend OYCI to a friend

Parents/Carers

91% said their young person has attended an OYCI activity since April 2025
The most commonly noticed changes in young people after attending OYCI were: having fun, building confidence, learning things, feeling safe, making friends and feeling listened to, several parents ticked every one of these.

Parents consistently linked the consistency of our sessions (same staff, same space, predictable routine) to reduced anxiety, improved behaviour and emotional regulation, feeling safe, and being able to engage socially.

Partners

100% of partners completely agreed that they would like to work with OYCI again, that OYCI delivers high quality services, that they can trust OYCI, and that OYCI adds value to their community. 8 of 9 completely agreed that OYCI provides a good service for young people (the remaining partner somewhat agreed).

Supporters

"OYCI provides a vital point of contact..." supporter

"Gives young people the chance to meet new friends..." supporter

What This Means for Us

The strongest signals in this year's survey are safety and belonging, 98% of young people feel safe and 95% feel they belong, and partners are unanimous that they trust us and would work with us again. That's a genuinely strong foundation, and it lines up with what we saw in the observational data across the year.

The area to lean into: recommendation and trust are about as high as they can be (98% of young people would recommend OYCI to a friend), which suggests word of mouth is a growth lever we're not yet using deliberately.

The areas to improve: making friends (74%) and learning things (71%) are our low-est-scoring measures among young people. To be clear, 74% is still a genuinely good number, most young people are making friends most of the time, it's just our lowest relative to everything else, sitting below fun, safety and belonging. As covered in the Belong section, some of this is likely about definition rather than a real gap, some young people already knew each other before joining, and some neurodivergent young people may be comfortable and socially engaged without necessarily labelling it ‘friendship’, but it's still worth exploring properly next year. Accreditation uptake also has real room to grow: half of young people have completed an award, but a further 21% say they'd like to and haven't yet, a clear, named group to target directly rather than waiting for organic uptake.

Supporters



OYCI runs on more than the funding that pays for it. It runs on a wide network of funders, delivery partners, schools, venues, and individual supporters who make free, universal youth work possible across Clackmannanshire. This section is a thank you to all of them.

Funders

None of the work in this report would be possible without our funders, and we'd like to say thank you to them for their continued support:

Partners

Nine partner organisations, including schools and Clackmannanshire Council, took part in this year's annual survey. Every one of them said they trust OYCI, would work with us again, and see us adding value to their community. That level of consistency, not just satisfaction but unanimous agreement across five separate measures, reflects relationships built over years rather than a single good project.

This year also brought new partnerships. We're now working with primary schools across a wider area, including St Mungo's, Redwell, St Serfs, Craigbank, Strathdevon, Clackmannan, Coalsnaughton, Banchory and Abercrombie, letting us start building relationships with pupils before they transition to high school. We've also begun working with the Family Support Collaborative, a third sector and local authority partnership aiming to reduce the number of young people taken into care through more integrated family support, Circle, who work with families facing multiple disadvantages, Tillicoultry Wildlife Group, helping young people look after local green spaces, and are exploring opportunities to work with Forth Valley Welcome, supporting families with refugee or asylum status, building on our New Scots project from last year.



Individual Supporters

Two supporters responded to this year's survey, people who follow us on social media, donate, or simply believe in the work. Small as that number is, their comments capture exactly the impact we're aiming for:

"OYCI provides a vital point of contact..." supporter

"Gives young people the chance to meet new friends..." supporter

Why This Matters

Free provision doesn't mean free to run. Every session, every residential, every accreditation costs something, and our supporters are the reason none of that cost falls on young people or their families. Beyond the money, our partnerships with schools and Clackmannanshire Council are what let us reach young people in the first place, and individual supporters and word of mouth are increasingly how new families first hear about us.

What we're looking for next: growing our small base of individual supporters (just 2 responded to this year's survey, a clear area to build), and using the trust our partners have already shown us as a foundation to deepen those relationships further.

Sustainability Report

OYCI is committed to being an environmentally responsible charity, and continues to reduce its carbon and environmental footprint across energy and water use, waste and recycling, transport, procurement, staff practice, and climate engagement work with young people.

New this year: pre-used office furniture donated by Apex, keeping bookings and communications online wherever possible, and purchasing pre-loved resources for sessions when appropriate.

Looking Ahead

Our current premises has been subject to a community asset transfer this year, our landlord has changed from the local authority to a community development trust. This has meant reconsidering our premises needs, and we've already begun running some services from different local venues. It's not without its challenges, but it also gives OYCI more exposure across the communities we serve, extending our reach in areas where rural transport can be a barrier.

We're nearing the end of our current 3-year strategy and looking ahead to OYCI's 10th birthday in June 2027. We're developing a new 5-year strategy and business plan, launching alongside that anniversary, focused on the services, programmes and partnerships that meet emerging local needs around poverty and trauma, and on scaling OYCI to meet rising demand.



Appendix: Gender Norms Project

This appendix expands on the Gender Norms Workshop (VAWG Project) covered in the Safe section, with a workshop-by-workshop breakdown of Phase Two and full acknowledgements.

Phase Two, Workshop by Workshop

- **Workshop 1:** drama games to build confidence, a Kahoot gender equality quiz (many were surprised to learn only 4 in 10 girls globally complete high school), evaluating creative social action videos, and designing a podcast introduction.
- **Workshop 2:** introduction to Braw Talent, group discussion on gender stereotypes and labels, and a first animation task, each group produced a completed short animation and identified their group's central message.
- **Workshop 3:** single-gender discussion groups so everyone had space to speak openly, followed by an introduction to spoken word poetry with Lisa Kennedy, participants wrote and read aloud haiku poems connected to gender norms.
- **Workshop 4:** table reading and consultation on the first script draft, plus a character design workshop creating both human and 'blob' versions of each character.
- **Workshop 5:** character artwork preview, voice acting and recording (every participant present volunteered to record), and creating posters around the film's key question, 'Is it kind? Is it fair?'
- **Workshop 6:** preview of the finished audio, behind-the-scenes interviews with participants on why the topic matters to them, and a collaborative art mural featuring the animation's characters and message, shown at the sharing event.

REALITIES Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the communities and collaborators who so generously gave their time, energy, and insights.

Please see next page for full REALITIES information and acknowledgements

Gender Norms Project: with special thanks to Braw Talent, a social enterprise whose founding directors Lydia Everitt and Darren Osborne guided the animation process throughout Phase Two, screenwriter Lisa Keddie, illustrator and animator Sooz Reilly, dubbing mixer Emily Wright, captioner Emily Benita, and Gordon Campbell, who filmed our behind-the-scenes footage. Thanks also to Lisa Kennedy, choreographer, poet and host of The Braw and the Brave podcast, and to Tillicoultry, Craigbank and Strathdevon Primary Schools, and above all to the pupils themselves, whose honesty and creativity shaped the work at every stage.



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University/Department: University of Edinburgh, School of Health in Social Science
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Any materials, publication or other dissemination of the Results (or any part of them) by any of the Parties shall not occur until the relevant Parties have collaboratively published the Results of the Project in the primary publications (the "**Primary Publication**"). Authorship of the Primary Publications shall be in accordance with normal academic practice. Each Party agrees to collaborate with the Project Lead when preparing any project materials, including peer-reviewed publications, so the Lead can play a meaningful role in co-authorship and ensure other relevant Parties are appropriately involved as deemed necessary by the consortium. Any and all materials, including peer-reviewed publications, linked to the Project **should include the following acknowledgement**:

This research was funded by a UKRI 'mobilising community assets to tackle health inequalities' Research Grant for the project titled: REALITIES in Health Disparities: Researching Evidence-Based Alternatives in Living, Imaginative, Traumatised, Integrated, Embodied Systems. The Project Lead is Marisa de Andrade at The University of Edinburgh. Other Co-Investigators include the University of Dundee, Glasgow School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University, Bethany Christian Trust, Ochil Youths Community Improvements, Artlink, Ninewells Community Garden, Flip of the Coin and North Lanarkshire Council."

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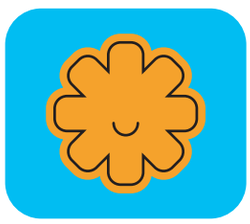
SAFE

BELONG

GROW



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are at the heart
of what we do



We are
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We grow great
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