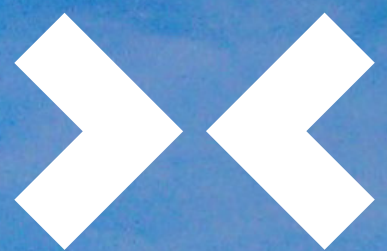




changes,
challenges
and choices

annual report 2013



apex

scotland

“You have positioned yourself as a leading third sector organisation in Scotland with a particular specialism in the field of employment, education and training for those with a criminal record and more recently, in the areas of desistance and prevention. This is vital work – not just for those who use your services, or for criminal justice agencies. It is vital work for every citizen in Scotland. Encouraging, supporting, training and helping a person with a criminal record begin to rethink their attitudes, find a job, restore their life - significantly reduces the likelihood of that person committing more crime. Your work contributes directly to the safety each one of us enjoys.”

JEANE FREEMAN OBE

Apex Scotland Board

Mike McCarron, Chair
Sue Brookes
Brian Cole
Sheriff Brian Donald
Brian Fearon
Anne Pinkman
Bryan Rankin
Beth Smith
Chief Constable David Strang

Patrons

Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell CBE QC
William Moodie
Viscount Weir

Front cover photo:

Inclusion pupils facing their fears

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Changes, Challenges and Choices

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2013 which we hope you will find provides you not only with an overview of the last year, but also some inspiration and encouragement as we seek to improve the life chances of our clients.

This year we have decided that the Report will concentrate not on the difficult business environment or the management structures involved in operating in an increasingly challenging environment, but on the challenges our users face and on the choices they have to make. We should always remember that whatever the difficulties involved in running a voluntary sector organisation, they appear very minor compared with some of the hurdles those who use our services have to negotiate in order to turn their lives around. For this reason we have chosen "Changes, Challenges and Choices" as our theme, a phrase which itself is descriptive both of our society, its structures and expectations, and the starting point for most of those for whom we work.

In this Report there are many examples of the type of positive choices our clients make and the challenges they have faced which I hope will say more about them as individuals and Apex as an organisation than I or statistics ever could. The cover picture, which shows some of our younger Apex Inclusion pupils involved in a personal challenge exercise, is a metaphor for what we are about. There comes a point in life when you have to choose whether to go forward, back or stay in an impossible place. The instructor can coach and advise but in the long run the decision is made by the person who has to make the move, to make a choice which for them may mean the difference between a positive future or continued offending.

Apex as an organisation has always had to face significant challenges both in terms of funding and a complex changing environment of regulation, stakeholders, political change and rising demand. There is no doubt that the days of specialist third sector organisations being able to concentrate on single specific areas of expertise has passed and been replaced by a complicated landscape of large, medium and small entities bidding for any work that is around, often in areas where they have no track record of delivery. This is not mission creep, as it is often referred to, but an increasing trend away from traditional charity behaviour towards a more competitive business approach where existence depends on ability to win funding bids rather more than the ability to provide quality user-centred services. It is no coincidence that a favoured discourse politically is that of the benefits of social enterprise rather than that of grant funded or Government-sponsored service deliverers. As you will be aware from last year's Report, Apex has embraced this and other ideas aimed at diversifying our funding base; however, there is no doubt that pressures on the third sector to become more businesslike do have a significant impact on the way in which we behave. Part of the choice we have to make is whether the gaining of contracts is worth compromising our values, and I hope you will see from this Report that Apex's primary focus continues to be about the individual and their recovery or change pathway, not on outputs and contract tick-boxes.



"We should always remember that whatever the difficulties involved in running a voluntary sector organisation, they appear very minor compared with some of the hurdles those who use our services have to negotiate in order to turn their lives around."

**ALAN STAFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

In our constant review of the changing environment and the needs of the society we serve, Apex has recognised that the issue of entry level and persistent low level crime is vitally important if we are to effect genuine change in the cycle of offending. This area not only represents the most obvious gateway into offending lifestyles but also constitutes the vast majority of cases with resulting cost and manpower expenditure managed by the justice system. Over the last couple of years Reducing Re-offending has been seen as the target for justice expenditure; the Apex Board has taken a specific strategic decision for us to focus a proportion of our activity on the lower tariff offending stream and on early intervention and prevention. We believe that if we can prevent young people graduating to prison or more serious crime there are significant benefits to be realised both financially and socially. In this Report you will find many references to this strategic approach and examples of the benefits. We continue to work with all parties to find a means of obtaining the sort of resources which will allow those benefits to be realised.

At Apex we have always held employment and positive use of time as being fundamental to change and sustaining changed behaviour among our service users. However, we have increasingly found that many of those who have failed to get into employment, despite the best efforts of job finding bodies, have been unready to make the lifestyle choices or social readjustments required of them. In short they are often psychologically, sociologically and technically unfit for work and each failure they experience, due to rigid programmes designed for the majority, serves as a reinforcement to that self perception. Apex prides itself on flexible and person-centred services which place greater emphasis on the strengths and needs of the individual rather than on any pre-planned approach. Gaining work and reducing offending are solid enough outcomes but these may be some way down the road for some whose positive outcomes may be more reflected in what they are able to contribute to society or their family groups.

As an organisation, therefore, our biggest challenges lie in finding ways of delivering core objectives and personalised support within the strictures of funding contracts, commissioned services and among what is at times a fiercely competitive operating environment. I hope this Report will illustrate for you many of the changes, challenges and choices we have faced and made regarding our strategic direction, as well as our performance against targets and how this is reflected in the success of our services. More importantly, I hope it will show how those services and our staff have made possible the stories you will read, and why we work so hard to make them happen.

In doing so I offer my thanks to those staff who, because of the constantly changing contracts and timescales we work to have either moved on or had to face redundancy. The sector is always an insecure place with few guarantees, which makes the commitment of all staff so special. However, I would like to make specific reference to Aidan McCorry, formerly Director of Corporate Services, who left us in February after over 15 years service. Aidan worked at the most senior levels within the organisation for much of that time and his loss from the management team has been keenly felt. A well known and respected figure in the sector, we wish him every success.

Alan Staff

Chief Executive

“We believe that if we can prevent young people graduating to prison or more serious crime there are significant benefits to be realised both financially and socially.”





Jeane Freeman OBE

Apex in Lithuania

Following contact from Tevo Namai, an organisation working in Lithuania providing skills training, basic assistance, post release accommodation and employability services for ex offenders, Alan Staff, Apex Scotland's Chief Executive, was invited to visit Tevo Namai, witness the work it is doing, and meet members of the Lithuanian Government, prison governors and local voluntary sector heads. He writes of this visit ...

Tevo Namai does a fantastic job working in two of the country's prisons with very limited funds and in a civil/social environment where there is little sympathy for those who have offended.

In a country of just 3.5M population, Lithuania imprisons almost 10,000 individuals; the facilities in which they are held are old and lack some of the most basic requirements.

Government spending per head is just 1.5 euros per day and there is very little in the way of throughcare or post prison employment opportunity. Apex is continuing to work with Tevo Namai to explore opportunities to mobilise the third sector in Lithuania into a more coherent voice and we are pleased to offer solidarity with our sister organisations.

Apex is looking to develop a range of European links which will open up strategic opportunities for us in terms of best practice sharing, exchange visits, wider potential job markets and access to European development funding, and even potentially developing some of our more innovative service models in these countries. It has been interesting to see how the demographics of Scotland and its reputation are attractive to many of the smaller European countries who see similarities which they can relate to.

Former Apex CEO challenges policy makers to listen to the public on Justice

Jeane Freeman OBE, founder and first Chief Executive of Apex Scotland, delivered our 25th Anniversary Annual Lecture to a packed house last September and spoke passionately about the need to listen to local communities as part of policy making.

In reflecting on the last 25 years of Apex working across the areas of employability and addressing criminal behaviour, she referred to policy shifts and changes which were often more designed to meet the needs of existing systems than to create strong resilient communities capable of playing an active part in establishing Scotland as a safer and more just society.

During the lecture and in the lively plenary debate which followed she referred many times to the invaluable role Apex plays in not only providing services to the client group, but also as a champion for community engagement and promoter of innovative practice which meets local circumstances rather than exploiting one size fits all options.

You can read or listen to the lecture online at www.apexscotland.org.uk

Alan Staff with members of Tevo Namai



How Have We Performed?

Over the last year Apex Scotland has worked with 2507 individual clients not including re-referrals or transfers between services.

We have provided those services as follows:

Criminal Justice Services in

- Dundee
- Perth and Kinross
- Angus
- Clackmannan
- Stirling
- Fife
- Highland and Islands
- Aberdeen City
- Aberdeenshire
- Dumfries
- Stranraer
- Glasgow City
- West Dunbartonshire

Youth Services in

- Inverclyde
- Renfrewshire
- Glasgow City
- Aberdeen
- Clackmannan
- Stirling
- Borders
- Dumfries
- Stranraer

School Services in

- Fife

Other services in

- Clackmannan
- Stranraer
- Highland
- Scotland-wide

The overall conversion rate from these services, from referral to starting programmes, is 67% which is a reflection on the ability of Apex services to engage and inspire potential service users and represents an excellent return when benchmarked against other providers.

This has been the result of more focused marketing to ensure that we receive appropriate referrals and much closer working relationships with other referral agencies.

Youth services

Apex continues to be one of the main partners in the highly respected Aberdeen Intensive Support Service. Apex staff engage with young people with problematic and chaotic behaviour who are often at the point of crisis. Our dedicated and experienced staff respond at any time of the day and night and usually at weekends.

Despite the continuing changes in the contracts issued on a year by year basis by Skills Development Scotland our performance against targets within those contracts was outstanding, with 98% of the contract numbers delivered. In a volatile market, when referrals are not in our control, this figure shows that Apex continues to be an effective and efficient deliverer of employment and personal development services for those young people most distanced from the labour market.

The Apex Fife Throughcare service worked with 73 young people last year, of which 44 have completed the programme and 29 have still to finish. Of the 44 who have finished the programme 55% achieved their personal desired outcomes, again a very creditable performance.

Schools

Overall the growth in our schools work with the Apex Inclusion service has shown very positive outcomes this year. These are being analysed by the Fife Educational Psychology Department to help us and them get a better understanding of the impact the programme is making on individuals from an educational perspective. The key performance indicators for this year will be different for each school depending on the specific targets set in those schools, which will range from reducing exclusion to working with challenging students, obtaining training certificates and providing drop in facilities.

Lochgelly High School – two Apex Inclusion pupils were trained as peer educators to raise awareness of drug and alcohol problems. 15 Inclusion students received a Saltire Award for volunteering and the team worked with 305 individual students out of a school roll of 760. 152 of these were formal referrals and this total included daily restorative justice meetings as requested by the school.

Kirkland High School – a total of 118 students were referred to the Inclusion Unit and the team worked with 130 individual students over the year. In addition, up to 25 students per day attended the drop-in sessions

Dunfermline High School – the Inclusion Unit worked with 404 formal referrals plus up to 25 students per day attended the drop in sessions during break times and a growing number of young people attended the breakfast club. Former students are increasingly engaging as mentors or Apex volunteers to develop the Inclusion services within the community as well as the school environs.

How Have We Performed?

Miscellaneous

In addition to our core or mainstream services a number of other bespoke services have enjoyed a very good year:

- Forestry activities in Highland and Central have, as always, been popular with clients and continue to generate very high attendance rates leading towards accredited qualifications. The latest stage of the development of the Abriachan Forest trail has been greatly enhanced by Apex staff and clients completing paths, viewing platforms and by the inclusion of a literacy trail.
- The Needle Exchange service in Stranraer has proved so effective that the local DAAT has extended this contract and now regards this as an essential component of drug services in the community.
- Our innovative and highly regarded Moving In service, run largely by clients for clients, continues to grow and more people have benefited from receiving much needed packs of household goods.
- Acu-Detox, the use of auricular acupuncture to assist recovery from drug or alcohol use or to reduce stress and anxiety, is now well established across the organisation and serves as a valuable adjunct to existing programmes as well as an added value option for programmes run by other agencies or authorities.
- Poppy Scotland/Apex Ex-servicemen Initiative is a programme offering specialist support to former service personnel who have become offenders or who have an offending background and are struggling to re-integrate or find employment. This is a pilot scheme in its infancy but has shown early promise.
- Work Programme related activity is mainly based on Apex staff providing specialist disclosure advice and guidance to those with criminal records and who are engaged with either of the two prime contractors and their delivery partners. Last year saw Apex deliver above target and increase the numbers of courses requested by programme providers. We look forward to continuing to work with the prime contractors and extending these contracts in the coming year.
- The Greenfield Café in Alloa gives Apex the opportunity to provide a real-life working situation for clients where they learn a range of retail and catering/hospitality skills.
- Our partnership with Community Safety Glasgow (formerly Glasgow Community Safety Services) continues to develop and innovate. We now have added financial support from the European Social Fund Priority 5 which has allowed us to work with far more clients than before. Such has been the strength of the relationships we have created with clients that many continue to engage with us after their statutory orders have ended.

Each of these and a range of smaller schemes run locally and developed by the service units in response to local need demonstrates not only the recognition that we need to diversify income and operate in a way which fits local strategies, but that we embrace innovation, partnership and client led initiatives creating a rich and diverse pattern of responses across Scotland.

For more information and for updates and news from the regional units go to www.apexscotland.org.uk/news

“Apex provides an efficient, flexible service for our clients to complete working hours towards Court Orders.

“I have found Apex staff to be accommodating and creative in their provision of placements and they always go the extra mile in order to fit round clients’ needs. On many occasions, clients have told me that they enjoy going there and that they find the environment comfortable and the staff approachable. This standard of service is crucial in the engagement process with clients working towards Court Orders and Apex has demonstrated that its approach works by providing a person-centred, structured programme which promotes stability and confidence-building.

“The modules run by Apex are beneficial to our clients in so many ways as they can learn new skills that are valuable to lifestyle changes such as improving employability prospects.

“Apex continues to deliver an excellent service for Criminal Justice Social Work.”

ANGELA EWAN,
Supervising officer,
Criminal Justice Social
Work, Aberdeen

Finance

In the financial year 2012-2013 Apex Scotland witnessed a **12.5%** reduction in income from the previous year as well as a **26.1%** reduction in expenditure.

The above is an indication of how we have managed to, broadly, maintain our income in challenging circumstances but have made significant inroads into reducing our cost base to enable us to operate at a sustainable level.

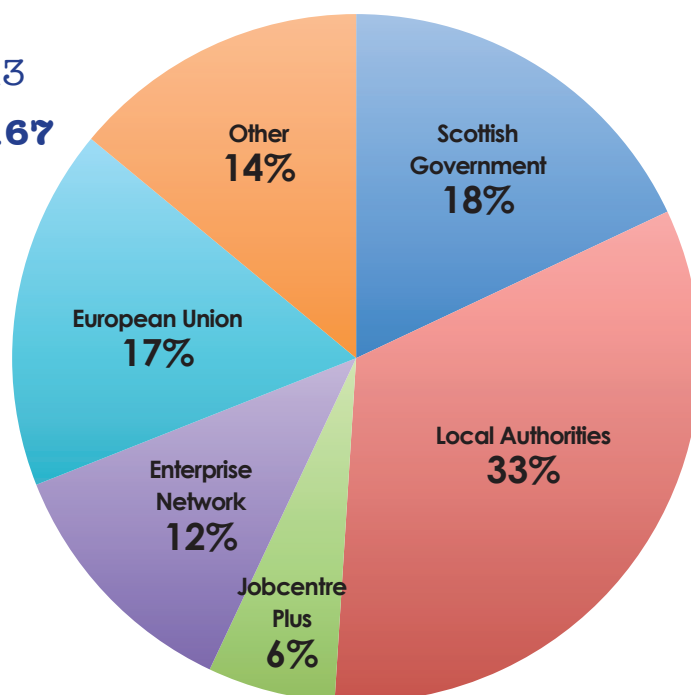
Income areas have remained largely the same as in the previous year but we have seen a significant growth in our European income. We continue to make efforts to diversify our funding base and to minimise reliance on any one income stream.

Challenges remain in regard to ensuring full cost recovery of services and to breaking into new areas of work, both geographical and sectoral, but we have seen steady progress in this area as well as continuing to explore new, or alternative, funding models.

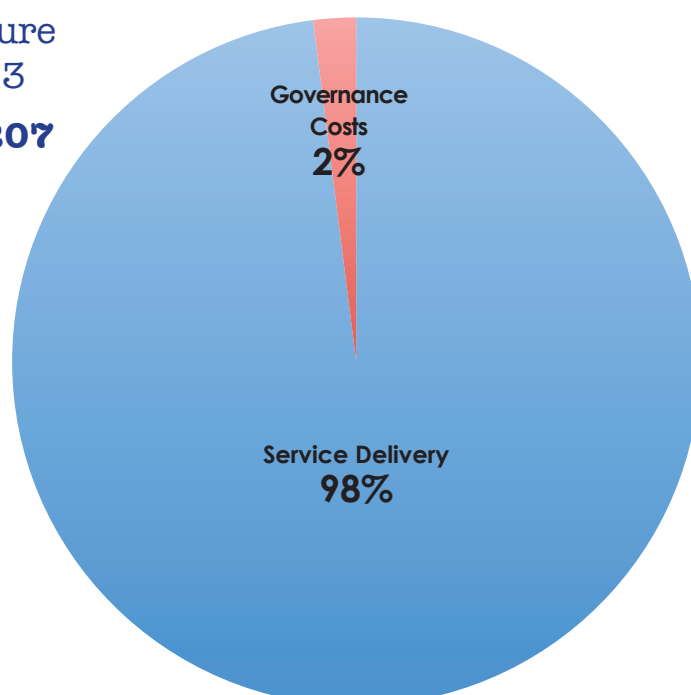
Our trading subsidiary, All Cleaned Up, commenced trading at the beginning of 2012-13. Whilst those figures are not reflected in this report, as we are reporting only on the performance and strategy for the charity, it is worth noting that, although we have not yet reached a position of profitability for All Cleaned Up, significant inroads have been made into establishing this entity as a valuable addition to the Apex Scotland family. The charity has invested in this social enterprise in the belief that it will provide a steady income stream for the charity in future years as well as providing real employment opportunities for our client group.

Consolidated accounting figures representing the performance of both the charity and the subsidiary can be found at Companies House.

Income
2012/2013
£2,529,167



Expenditure
2012/2013
£2,644,207



Partnerships – Delivering More

Over the past year Apex has entered into a number of key partnerships working towards our objective to be a partner of choice where this helps to achieve improved services for our client group.

The last year has to some extent been dominated by the developments around the Reducing Re-offending Change Fund, which saw two significant national programmes receive two year pilot funding jointly from the Scottish Government, Scottish Prison Service and The Robertson Trust to establish Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) in the areas of women offenders and persistent young male offenders. We are delivery partners in both these significant consortia led by Sacro for the Women's work and The Wise Group for persistent offenders. The PSP model adopted for these programmes will be an interesting process and we look forward to exploring this methodology going forward.

Other partnerships are mentioned elsewhere in this Report, including the Inclusion Plus approach in Dundee which brings together Apex, Includem and SkillForce as delivery partners in a PSP approach with the Local Authority, again initially funded by The Robertson Trust. The Women Only Workshop (WOW) in Stirling offers a great example of local need and resources coming together to produce natural partnerships and outstanding results, and ongoing partnerships with the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust allow us to widen the experiences we can offer to our clients.

Partnership working is not easy, it can be labour intensive and requires great maturity from all partners if it is to work well, but in our experience the results are usually worth the extra effort and diplomacy required. Apex will continue to explore opportunities for partnership in the future and we look forward to playing a significant part in the development of services which improve the life chances of our client group.



Apex teams working with the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission



“Apex is an active and positive partner in the work of our Community Justice Authority. The organisation brings significant added value to our partnership table, through its own strong links to a wide range of other partner organisations, its understanding of the needs and issues faced by service users, strong roots in the community, a creative and improvement-focused approach to reducing reoffending, and (very importantly) a very committed, approachable and talented team of staff.”

JUSTINA MURRAY, Chief Officer, South West Scotland Community Justice Authority

Personal Development Mentor

– doing what it says on the tin!

This year Apex has reviewed the role of its front line staff to reflect the changing roles and expectations of funders and planners and to offer a more balanced perception of what Apex staff actually do.

Following consultation, the previous job title of Employment Development Advisor has been changed to Personal Development Mentor which offers a better description of the work across many funding streams and delivery areas. The title reflects the values of Apex in ensuring that personalised programmes are demonstrably better than generic ones and the relationship between client and worker is the key to change. Development indicates that our involvement with a client is not simply to be a friendly

face but shows an emphasis on forward movement and change based on a recovery style approach with individual targets and goal setting.

Mentoring is what our staff have always done but has increasingly been seen across the provider spectrum as a terminology which suggests a dynamic and interactive relationship between client and staff member which operates both within and outwith structured programmes of intervention. This is the heart of Apex's approach to all service areas. A DVD is available on request which covers in detail the role and challenges of the Apex PDM. For further information go to our website at www.apexscotland.org.uk

A Day in the Life



IAN KIRK
Personal
Development
Mentor

I work with 16-21 year old care leavers in the Kingdom of Fife and although my primary role is to assist them into further education, training or employment I also have to spend a lot of time assisting them with other areas of their lives. All my work is done on an outreach basis; usually, I will meet my clients where they are living. This could be in a private or Council care home, with foster carers, in supported lodgings, or even their own tenancies.

My work takes me around the whole of Fife so diary planning is a real skill! There is no such thing as a typical day for me and I have to be ready to change plans at short notice on occasions but the following example is not unusual for me.

8.30am: arrive at office and action/respond to emails as required. Update social work records with details of work done with the previous day's clients. Check if any of my clients have been in contact with any of my social work colleagues since our last meeting before gathering paperwork required for today's appointments.

9.15am: my first appointment is with a 16 year old male. We attend an appointment at Skills Development Scotland to complete the Employability Fund referral form to enable him to start a 12-week training course. This is something we have been working on together for a few weeks now and it was good to see him taking the lead and completing the majority of the form on his own.

10.00am: next appointment, a 17 year old female in Dunfermline. Having previously assisted her to apply for a place at college, it is now time to help her to complete the paperwork for her Education Maintenance Allowance. This takes a bit of time due to the nature of the form but I am able to drop off the completed forms at college on my way back to the office.

12.00pm: return to office; lunch break.

12.30pm: a planning meeting at the local social work office for an 18 year old male who will be released from Polmont in the next fortnight. Various agencies are involved so planning is needed to make sure that we all know what each other is doing.

My **2.00pm** appointment, 30 minutes away, fails to answer the door. Spend 15 mins trying to track him down via his mobile. I am concerned as this is not like him and I want to make

sure he is okay. I spend another 20 minutes speaking to various agencies regarding his whereabouts before finally his mother calls to tell me he has an appointment with another agency and got mixed up.

I dash to my next appointment at **3.30pm** in Glenrothes to attend a risk management meeting for an 18 year old male who is a Schedule 1 offender. Due to the nature of his convictions, there are restrictions on the types of jobs or college courses he can access and so it is important for me to play a part in the management of this client to keep him and others safe.

4.15pm: Back at the office I have several emails and calls from clients to deal with and a full diary the next day to prepare for before heading home for a well-earned dinner!

The next day? Completely different! And so it goes, never a dull moment or two days similar. Whilst I am delighted to be working in partnership with Fife Council I remain a resolute advocate and ambassador for Apex. Although I have spent most of my career on secondment, my Apex ten-year service award sits proudly in my display cabinet at home, as I am a firm believer in the ethos of our organisation.

Prisoners' success with Apex at HMP Inverness

Apex Scotland's ASCEND project, based in Inverness, is a three year pilot funded by the European Social Fund.

This project enables Apex staff to work with prisoners prior to their liberation and thereafter into the community to improve their employment prospects.

Prisoners in HMP Inverness have recently achieved their Construction Skills Certification Scheme cards.



Some of the prisoners who took part in the test along with Mark Holloway, Katrina Beattie, Apex Personal Development Mentor, and staff from Pearsons.

Mark Holloway, Offender Outcomes Manager at HMP Inverness, said "We had 15 of our prisoner group take the tests with 13 of them passing and as a result have gained a Europe wide recognised qualification.

"Can I firstly take this opportunity to thank your staff for their hard work in making sure that the participants were ready to take their tests. It was encouraging to see the confidence of each and every one of the prisoners growing after each of their practice sessions.

"Some of the participants had never gained a qualification in any subject before and the lift in their self-esteem cannot be underestimated.

"We at HMP Inverness value the relationship we have with Apex Scotland and I look forward to continue to work with you to the betterment of those in our care. Thanks again and very well done to all."

Moving In Moves On in Stranraer

Staff and clients of Apex Stranraer were delighted to receive a donation from Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership's (DGHP) Community Pride Fund for their Moving In project which aims to help homeless people when they get their first tenancy.

Moving In involves making up packs of basic household items that anyone would consider necessary for starting life in a new home. Alison Bennewith, Apex Personal Development Mentor, said "For people who have been homeless, having such items may not have been a consideration or even a possibility. Packs consist of items such as cutlery, mugs, bedding and cleaning materials and so far it has proved a great success."

Vikki Binnie, Apex's Service Development Manager for SW Scotland, highlighted that the funding from DGHP has allowed the Moving In project to be rolled out across the whole of Wigtownshire which was not possible before. Vikki explained "Apex service users have played an active part in the project as they have assisted in making up the packs, been involved with fund-raising and even created their own artwork which is available for sale."

DGHP Board member Tom Gillan said "The Apex service is an asset to our community and I am very impressed with how much their own clients have been involved with this particular project."

District Management Committee member Willie Kirsopp agreed. "DGHP were delighted to have been involved with this - it is really what the Community Pride Fund is all about."

Another very important development which will significantly add value to this service has been a successful Big Lottery bid. This will allow the service to expand their partnerships with the food bank and other community activity in the area ensuring that Apex and its clients are fully engaged in improving their community and providing help and support where it is most needed. Apex Scotland is very grateful to the Big Lottery for its support.

Moving In relies on donations and Vikki confirmed "We are always looking for any items that you would use yourself and donations can be made at our office at Backrampart, High Street, Stranraer or you can contact us directly on 01776 700973 and we will arrange to have items uplifted."



Alison Bennewith and Vikki Binnie receive donation from DGHP for Apex Stranraer

Women Only Workshop

Over the past 12 months, the Apex WOW programme has become established in both Stirling and Clackmannanshire, and programmes are now running alternately in both areas.

The service concept and programme delivery for the target female service user group has been welcomed by partners in both areas, with referrals coming from a range of organisations and also self referrals. WOW has become embedded in local activity as the only existing provision of its nature in the area and continues to go from strength to strength.

WOW in Clackmannanshire was delivered in partnership with Women In Sport and Health (WISH*) and NHS Keepwell. The 15 women in the area who used the service engaged in a range of activity including; stress management, budgeting, Welfare Reform guidance, healthy living and cooking, IT skills and crafts. The programme also included a four-week 'Hidden Outcomes' challenge which was delivered in partnership with Alva Ecolodge. Here, the women composed 'natural art' through photography and also the design of various artistic pieces/sculptures which was then presented in an exhibition held in The Hub in Alloa.

A strong partnership has been established with ACE (Adult Learning in the Community) Cornton for the WOW programme in Stirling.

Ian Brown, Learning Support Manager from ACE Cornton, said: "As well as being an exciting example of the new partnerships being developed here at ACE, the WOW programme has been excellent in representing our work with high priority groups of Stirling residents. The participants in the WOW programme have overcome many of the barriers to learning, community participation and family cohesion that present themselves daily in other learners attending ACE. The solid attendance and progress made by



the women involved has been heartening to observe and above all it is good to see these women take up their rightful place in society as talented and confident individuals with a new group of friends to turn to in tough times."

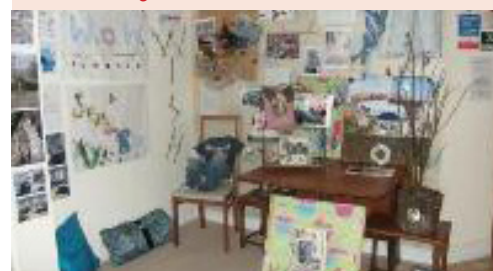
Over the past year, key links have been developed with HMP Cornton Vale with prisoners engaging with WOW as part of their pre-release and resettlement plan. The women often tell us that coming out of prison is one of the greatest challenges they have to take on and the WOW groups learn to utilise self help and support resources within the community to help this delicate and daunting transitional stage. As one service user put it "My confidence in myself and other people has increased. By attending this course I now feel more confident in getting out of the house, travelling on public transport and doing something for me."

Stirling WOW hosted a celebration ceremony in May with the women, their families and professional partners. The ceremony was opened by the Stirling Council Leader, Johanna Boyd, who gave WOW a glowing report and presented the women with their certificates.

Apex is aware that women who participate in the WOW service have multiple and complex barriers, all of which contribute to their lifestyles. Therefore the strength of a programme such as WOW, which is specialist, unique and tailored support, outwith mainstream provision, is that it provides the opportunity to tackle the real needs of the individuals involved and to put in place a flexible and person centred package of support that will help them progress in a sustainable way.

"I have enjoyed each session. Some days I didn't want to leave the house but the thought of going to WOW group made me get up and go out."

"I started doing things for myself a little bit at a time, making sure that I eat healthily and seeing my daughter with a smile on her face as she says to me 'well done mum'."



Some examples of the creative work achieved by the WOW Group.

Tackling the challenges of recession

College Development Network (formerly Scotland's Colleges) has teamed up with Apex Scotland to provide money management training for their front line staff.

Money for Life is Lloyds Banking Group's award-winning personal money management programme. In Scotland, College Development Network and Bank of Scotland are working together to embed vital money management skills in the wider further education and community learning sectors at a local level.

Colin Buchanan, manager of the project at College Development Network says, "Predominantly our role is to support colleges, but for this project we are able to offer similar opportunities out to communities. Research shows that there is a direct positive correlation between formal financial training and improved money management practice. We are delighted to be able to work with staff from Apex Scotland as they embark on the Money for Life qualifications."

Financial capability is defined as 'having the knowledge, skills, confidence and motivation to manage your money well. This includes understanding financial products, being able to use them and having the confidence and motivation to do so'.

Apex Scotland is accessing fully funded programmes to equip staff with the necessary skills to further disseminate sound money management practice to its clients.

The Money for Life programme provides three accredited, fully-funded qualifications:

- **Teach Me Financial Capability:** An online course to improve your own knowledge of money management and to run financial capability workshops
- **Teach Others Financial Capability:** A two-day course that enables those who are not qualified teachers – such as community or advice workers – to gain the teaching skills to run financial capability workshops
- **Money Mentors:** A two-day course to enable participants to gain the mentoring skills to give one-to-one money management support

Fiona Campbell, who supports young people aged 16-19 in the Central West area, was one of those who took part in the training and she said "Providing the Lifeskills element of the Government's Get Ready for Work programme, calls for working with young adults between the ages of 16-19, to increase their employability. In order to do this effectively, teaching a young person to become financially capable is a key part of my role. Young adults



Staff receive certificates of achievement from Colin Buchanan

have to be aware of the value of money itself, which in turn should lead the young person to recognise the value of work. I found the training very useful in the sense that I feel more equipped to look at the issue of being financially capable from a different vantage point, rather than trying to formulate a prescribed approach and telling the young person what they should be doing. We now work with the young person in getting them to think for themselves and having them really look at the bigger picture whilst steering them in the right direction if need be."

Gerard McEneaney, Head of Operations for Apex Scotland, said "We welcome the partnership with College Development Network and Lloyds Banking Group's Money for Life in supporting what is a highly worthwhile initiative. Our staff were delighted to be able to work with Colin and his colleagues at College Development Network. There is little doubt that the forthcoming welfare reforms will present a challenge to some of our clients and they will require support from trained and skilled staff in order to manage their finances. The Money for Life programme not only provides staff with current skills and knowledge, there are also lots of excellent materials that can be accessed to engage clients."

"All the Apex staff I have dealt with have been very helpful, and with all the work we have done I am confident it will help me to find employment in the future."

TONY, Apex service user

Where the Heart is!

Apex Renfrewshire recently delivered the Heartstart workshop to our clients attending the Get Ready for Work programme where they learned simple but vital lifesaving skills that can be used in a life-threatening emergency in order to help save lives.

The workshop took candidates through a number of different activities to ensure that they would be prepared and confident to help save a life. Each person learned to:

- demonstrate safe approach and assessment
- make a 999/112 call
- open an airway
- check for breathing
- demonstrate the recovery position
- perform rescue breathing
- check for signs of circulation
- perform one-rescuer, adult, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- demonstrate the management of choking for adults, infants and children
- know how to manage someone with a suspected heart attack
- know how to deal with serious bleeding.

Trainer, Derek Milligan, explained "At first the participants were a little apprehensive about taking part in the workshop but as we progressed through the session they seemed to enjoy what was being delivered. Using role playing games was the best way for the candidates to understand and demonstrate how the skills they would learn could save a life".

At the end of the workshop candidates were asked for some feedback with one comment in particular summing up the feeling of the group. "This was a really good workshop, you never know when you may need to use these vital skills and learning them is an excellent idea."

"Apex helped me to gain confidence and get back some self respect, and I got a job. The only thing that needs to improve is getting some more funding, which isn't the fault of Apex."

BRIAN, Apex service user



Apex Training Programme a real life saver

In November 2012 one of our Outdoor Peer Mentors, Alistair, completed his Heartstart training and the week after, whilst in Inverness City Centre, he witnessed an elderly lady collapsing in the street.

Without hesitation he was first on the scene. He checked her airways and, realising she had stopped breathing, he commenced CPR as he had been taught. He ensured an ambulance had been called and continued the CPR until the ambulance crew was able to take over.

Alastair attended with the casualty and her family member, who had been present, to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. The lady had suffered a heart attack and it was thanks to Alastair's quick reactions that he was able to save her life. Both the ambulance crew and her family were very grateful for his rapid response as she would not have survived without his intervention.

Inclusion

Building on the outstanding reputation gained in our pilot scheme at Dunfermline High School we have worked with The Robertson Trust to establish ourselves in two further schools in Fife – Lochgelly High School and Kirkland High School.

While these two schools each come with their own challenges and opportunities we have been encouraged by the progress made in both schools, most notably in demonstrating that this model is transferrable and that the same excellent results can be obtained in other venues. The model is being evaluated from an education point of view by the Fife Educational Psychology Department and we look forward to examining the findings of this and potentially using the evaluation tool across all services in the future. Going forward, the Inclusion model continues to attract great attention and in August 2013 we will begin an Apex Inclusion service in Buckie High School, our first venture beyond Fife. Further developments are expected in this year with the establishment of four Inclusion Plus services based in Dundee comprising a partnership between Apex, Includem and SkillForce and funded initially through a combination of The Robertson Trust and Dundee City Council. This is an exciting new venture and a key opportunity for Apex to demonstrate an added value variation of our Inclusion programme.



At Holyrood



Inclusion pupils try target practice

Although staff are based in different schools, the Apex Inclusion team work closely together to support one another and create ideas to contribute to the model's success. The three Inclusion Units have seen a number of initiatives and successes in the past year, some of which are noted here.

Now in the new school building the Apex Inclusion Unit in Dunfermline High School has continued its excellent record as a vital part of the school's educational environment and has continued its record of attracting significant national and international attention, hosting visits from senior policy and children's wellbeing officers as well as other schools and the media. Once again we have been delighted to have been mentioned positively in HM Chief Inspector of Prisons' Annual Report.

Holyrood Reception

Pupils from the Apex Inclusion Unit in Dunfermline High School hosted an event at the Scottish Parliament after an invitation by Children in Scotland. There was also an opportunity for the pupils to take part in a podcast interview on the Enquire website about their time in the Inclusion Unit, telling of what they have achieved so far and the journey they are on.

Children in Scotland were very impressed with the young people, saying "Jamie, Megan, Jade and Chloe were superstars! People are still talking about them! They made a lasting impression on everyone and should be very proud of themselves. It was clear that they had worked really hard to prepare for the event and their performance throughout the evening was excellent."

Children's panel presentation

Young people from the Inclusion Unit took part in presentations for the Children's Panel who were very impressed by their ability to communicate and to explain what Inclusion is and why it has been so important for them.



Community work with Asda

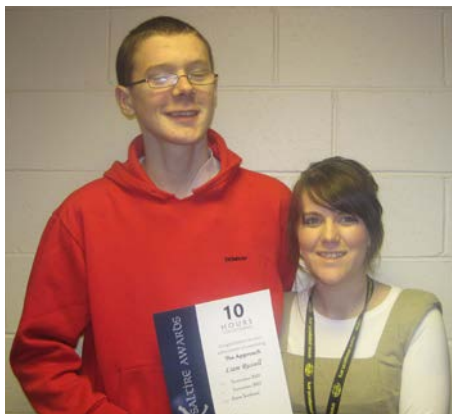
Peer Mentors

The development of students from attenders of the Inclusion Unit into mentors of others is one of the most attractive and successful elements of the programme which has seen many of those with the most challenging issues in their lives become some of our most valuable and effective assistants. This is not only very helpful for the new students who may feel friendless and socially excluded but also for the personal development of the young mentors themselves who takes on responsibility. The impact of this on the school is significant with some of the most previously disruptive young people becoming positive role models.

Lochgelly High School and local drug and alcohol service The Zone delivered a training day to pupils around the impact/consequences and effects that drugs and alcohol can have. Two Inclusion Unit pupils will now help to deliver other sessions and be peer mentors for fellow pupils, having received the relevant support to enable them to do this.

Saltire Awards

Two fourth year pupils who have been part of the Inclusion Unit at Lochgelly High School were awarded The Saltire Approach award for achieving ten hours of volunteering. Sara Blackwood and Liam Russell worked with Inclusion Co-ordinator, Kirsty Yeoman, in their spare time to put together a powerpoint presenting showing what happens in the Inclusion Unit and the challenges that the young people who use the unit face. The pupils then delivered this session at 2012's Scottish Learning Festival at the SECC. Kirsty said that both pupils were "fantastic", answering all questions the audience had.



Liam Russell and Kirsty Yeoman

Pupils' Successes

Chloe, our first ever Inclusion student to become a prefect, helps daily at the drop in as a peer mentor. Chloe was interviewed on the BBC's The One Show talking about the benefits of an organised prison visit and the impact this had on her.

Kerion, another one of our students who attended the Inclusion Unit, offered to assist Inclusion staff with many aspects of the Unit, including a peer mentoring role. Although he did not achieve the grades usually required to progress to further education, he took positive action with the help of the Inclusion staff and has now successfully gained a place at college to study mechanics as a direct result of the work he has done in the Unit.

Kirkland reports that there are young people who now attend the Inclusion Unit who were non-attenders. One pupil in particular, Greg, who did not attend school at all now goes to the Unit three afternoons per week. Having previously refused to engage or form relationships with anyone, Greg now joins in with group activities, speaks to the majority of staff and likes to display his work within the Unit. He is looking to attend his Home Economics class after the summer break.

The Inclusion Units continue to have many success stories and the staff work hard to create new opportunities to encourage engagement of the young people who use the Unit and help them with issues that affect them both inside and outside of school. Some of the latest initiatives and projects that pupils have been involved in are as follows:

Breakfast club and lunch club

– ensuring pupils have nutritious food improving behaviour and concentration.

Diversifire – an initiative for those who have been involved in fireraising, working with local firefighters.

Litter Pick Up – A benefit for the local community in partnership with Asda.

Fund Raising – Pupils have raised nearly £2,000 through bag packing, raffles and doughnut selling to help fund activities taking place outwith the school.

Ambassadors – promoting the Apex Inclusion model to interested parties.

Drug Court Visit – an insight into the criminal justice system and understanding the consequences of actions.

Sponsored Walk – night time trek on across the Forth Road Bridge raising £420.90 for Fife Young Carers and the Inclusion Unit.

Team Building – working together on the Lomond Hills involving activities such as building shelters, cooking outside and problem solving.



A Diversifire course

The partnership working between agencies was highly commended by a Children and Families social worker who commented:

"I feel that I must make you aware of three members of your staff who went above and beyond whilst working with a young person from Dunfermline High who was being brought into care.

"The Home School Link Officer and the two ladies from the Inclusion Unit, not only engaged well with social work but they also supported the young person to make the transition from home to care. I am clearly of the opinion that without their dedication and support that the whole experience would have been much more difficult for all involved, particularly the young person."

SHARON HYND, Children and Families Social Work, Rosyth.

All Cleaned Up

Apex's Social Enterprise



Individuals working with us have had the opportunity to strengthen their skills allowing them to evidence the good work they can do.

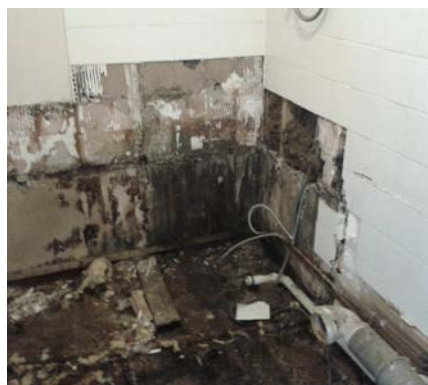
In April 2012 Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill formally launched our new social enterprise All Cleaned Up.

Trading from its business base in Leith, it operates as a social enterprise and provides commercial cleaning and clearance services across Scotland.

Crucially, All Cleaned Up targets ex-offenders leaving prison who have the relevant BICS (British Institute of Cleaning Science) qualifications and a COPC (Cleaning Operatives Proficiency Certificate) and employs them as paid technicians. The company also offers placement opportunities. Individuals working with All Cleaned Up have had the opportunity to strengthen their skills allowing them to evidence the good work they can do.

The number of commercial contracts completed during our first year range from basic builder cleans on 100 property new developments right through to specialist biohazard spills in the Outer Hebrides. Only recently we signed a four year contract with a major social landlord to carry out all its property cleans.

From a standing start the business has grown to an impressive 10 salaried staff with a number of individuals benefitting from our placements with a number now being in paid employment as a result of the assistance we gave.



Before and after the All Cleaned Up team have been at work



"A very pleasant company to deal with, all waste was removed with a waste transfer note provided, and best of all the workmanship was top quality. Cannot rate this company highly enough for their professionalism. I will definitely be using them again!"

JO ANDERSON



Recruit with Conviction partners with Apex

Recruit With Conviction started as an Apex social media campaign in 2011.

It is now an independent social enterprise working in partnership with Apex Scotland and a range of other organisations including Scottish Business in the Community, Scottish Family Business Association and No-Offence CIC.

By using expertise from the Apex ASERT programme to deliver specialist diversity training and building networks of business ambassadors to promote the message, Recruit With Conviction makes a critical contribution to improving employment opportunities for ex-offenders.

Positive Choices pay off

James was referred to Apex in March 2012 having been released on parole licence after spending three years nine months in prison for a serious offence committed when he was only 16.

Although he had gained motivation to change whilst in prison, upon his release he required a lot of help and additional support from his Apex Personal Development Mentor to build on that motivation. Together they worked on a number of opportunities to build his confidence, take part in purposeful activities, increase his employment potential and move towards his own positive future. Here, James tell his own story...



“I think [Apex] help you lot. I was using heroin on top of my methadone when I started to come here. I stopped using heroin with their support and I am coming down off my methadone. I have got a job, started going up town and I have made new friends.”

SANDRA,
Apex service user

Unfortunately I committed a serious offence at the age of 16 which resulted in a long custodial sentence.

My life before prison was unstable. I didn't have a job and intended to go to college. I spent weekends binge drinking and socialising with friends, and had no sensible interests or hobbies.

I spent three years and nine months in prison and was awarded parole for good behaviour. Right from the start of my sentence I made it clear to myself that I had to do everything in my power to turn a negative situation into a positive one. I achieved this by attending as many classes and projects within the prison that I possibly could to ensure I got the best from every experience.

I was involved in a lot of writing, drama and music based classes, for which I gained certificates and every course gave me the motivation I required to realise my capabilities. I paid close attention to the people I spent time with, so the friends I socialised with were sensible and positive influences. With this attitude, I managed to complete my sentence with success and no misconduct reports.

Whilst in prison, I had a lot of great “intentions”, like joining a voluntary agency or getting a job or taking driving lessons, but after my release, I struggled at times to establish my stance in life. Once you are “out” you realise you need time to recover. You can't just throw yourself in the deep end, you need time to adjust to outside life again and set yourself small achievable goals. I found that by sitting with my family and friends and actually speaking to them helped a lot. They gave me a lot of encouraging support and ideas.

Apex has also given me the tools, support and confidence in order to get me where I want to be in life. I sat down with my worker from Apex and felt at ease and I was able to speak with her about my difficulties. She helped me with my CV, and I was amazed at how good it was. I was beginning to realise my own potential and achievements. Apex helped me with my Disclosure Letter which I was very satisfied with, because I know this is important to employers. I also completed a personal development “Living Wild” programme with Venture Trust, which I found to be extremely beneficial for my own personal growth, as well as making new friends.

After a recent interview with a Tayside college, I've been accepted to study a music course starting this year, which is one of the things I am passionate about. I've been playing the guitar for two years now and using music software for six years, and now I wish to learn a lot more about it.

With the help and support from Apex I intend on finding work which will make me feel a lot happier and secure in my life, and hopefully it will open doors and enable me to have more positive opportunities.

Thanks to Apex Scotland.

JAMES
Apex service user

Leila makes the right choices



In October 2012 Leila Oliver-McCormick joined our Apex Highland team through the Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) initiative in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus. Here she shares her story ...

During my six months CJS placement I progressed from working in a reception/administration role to becoming an integral part of Apex Highland's service provision.

Before I started with Apex I was in temporary homeless accommodation and found it very hard to get through each week with the little money that I had. When I started as a CJS employee with Apex I had some more money coming in but my rent had gone up due to it being homeless accommodation. This was a particularly difficult period for me, however I worked hard and with the support of the Highland team I overcame every challenge that came my way. I am now a full-time member of the Apex Highland team and during my initial six months I undertook a number of training courses.

I did my NADA five-day Acu-detox training and am now delivering relaxation sessions both at our unit and within HMP Inverness as part of our specialist intervention.

I also completed my Heartstart training and am now a trained Instructor of Emergency Life Support Techniques and can deliver sessions to our clients both in our unit and within HMP Inverness.

“It has been a challenge through in and through out but I have managed to get back on top of things and have become more confident and positive about the future.”

I then went on to participate in Financial Capability – Teach Others and Teach Me training achieving three Credits at Level 3 in both elements.

Also in April I travelled to Edinburgh to complete a Level 2 Award in Fire Safety Principles gaining a successful pass. As a result of this training I am now the designated FEEM Officer for the Highland Unit.

I am now a permanent member of the Apex Highland team in a split role of Personal Development Mentor/Administrator but I am now looking at becoming a full time Personal Development Mentor in the near future. I have moved out of homeless accommodation into my own property and am finding life so much easier since I have been involved with Apex. It has been a challenging time but I have managed to get back on top of things and have become more confident and positive about the future and what the future possibly holds.

I wouldn't be where I am today if I didn't have such a great team in the North, so thank you to all of them for believing in me and helping me get to where I am today.

LEILA OLIVER-McCORMICK

Personal Development Mentor/Administrator
Apex Highland

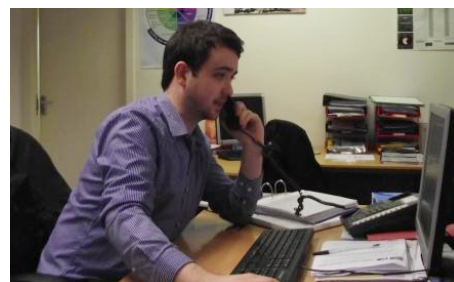
“All the staff I have worked with at Apex have been brilliant in assisting me, and I owe them a lot for helping me get my life back on track.”

GARY, Apex client

Community Jobs Scotland

Callum Gibson began working with Apex Stranraer in October 2011 as an Administration Assistant through Community Jobs Scotland (CJS).

Callum said: "Community Jobs Scotland funding offered me an invaluable opportunity to work and gain experience with one of the leading third sector organisations in Scotland. I was happy to find that my role wasn't limited to admin, I was able to do some client work and found that I liked the challenge that this kind of work presented. I very much enjoy working with Apex Scotland and I was lucky enough to be offered a full time position when my CJS contract came to an end. In the current job market gaining a first step on the ladder is incredibly important



Callum Gibson

and I am grateful to have been given this opportunity. I feel that I have improved a lot during my time at Apex and hope to continue to do so with my new role."

Service Development Manager Vikki Binnie said: "Having Callum on board has been great for the team in Stranraer and Apex as a whole. We know we can rely on him to get on with the task at hand and get the job done. Callum manages to strike the balance between being professional when dealing with other agencies and being friendly and approachable with the clients. It's been exciting to see his confidence grow and see him make the transition from Administrator to Personal Development Mentor."

Well done Callum!

"The Trust has always been impressed with the work carried out by Apex in Dumfries and Galloway, and the ability of the staff to engage with the most difficult to reach young people. The organisation does not try to be all things to all men, but refers people on as appropriate to their vast network of contacts. It gets down to the work that it is funded to do and does so well."

The Trustees of Holywood Trust, Dumfries and Galloway

The Gathering

The Gathering is a free annual event organised by SCVO to showcase the third sector and allow different organisations to meet and learn from each other.

This year's event, held in February at the SECC in Glasgow, saw over 120 exhibitors and 50 different workshops and events.

Apex Scotland was invited to sit on the panel at one of the larger workshops led by Angela Constance MSP, Minister for Youth Employment, who spoke about the continuing work to reduce youth unemployment and confirmed the Scottish Government's support for Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) for another year.

Apex's Head of Operations, Gerard McEneaney, spoke about the positive experiences Apex has had in its involvement in CJS since 2009; in this time the organisation has taken on 62 employees through this initiative. Gerard gave some examples of the benefits to Apex Scotland, the community and to the young people themselves.

One of Apex's CJS employees, Kevin Forrest, an Administration Assistant in Head Office, then spoke of his own experience and the challenge of looking for and securing his first job, saying "I feel honoured to work with Apex Scotland and enjoy being part of the team". He went on to explain



Kevin Forrest and Gerard McEneaney.

that this period of employment has increased his confidence, given him new skills and encouraged him to start looking at different options for his future, including potentially a move towards further education.

The panel were impressed by Kevin's calm and professional manner while speaking in front of so many people. Apex's Chief Executive commented that Kevin was "a credit to himself and to Apex".

Kevin has now indeed gone on to study at Telford College and is feeling excited about his future.

Staff Awards

The organisation enjoyed its Annual Conference held this year in the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline.

The event was very well attended and with the agenda ranging from getting to know Board members, designing an alternative Commonwealth Games mascot and strategic planning workshops there was something for everyone and feedback was excellent.

Traditionally at our conference we present our two awards for outstanding and innovative performance over the last year and this year the Sam Dow Award went to the Glasgow Team who, despite changes in location and a demanding partnership arrangement with Community Safety Glasgow, enhanced their reputation for achieving outstanding outcomes and adding value to quite a complex working environment.

The Betty Crawford Award went to the Inclusion Team who have coped with the expansion from one to three schools and been successful not only in maintaining their performance in Dunfermline High School but also achieving similar results in the two new schools, demonstrating that the model is replicable. Throughout the year the individual school units have developed their own unique style and have also shown an effective engagement with the local communities.

Staff also received a range of certificates they gained this year and 10 members of staff received 10 year's service awards. The closing address was given by outgoing Board member David Strang – formerly Chief Constable of Lothian and Borders and now HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland.



The Glasgow team with their Sam Dow award (above).

The Inclusion team with their Betty Crawford award (below).



Chairman's Report



At the start of the past year, Apex faced a challenge to balance its finances due to changes in the procurement environment. The collective effort of all staff and clear leadership from senior management has now achieved this and placed us in a strong position to build for the future.

That the quality of our services has been sustained throughout this testing period is a tribute to the morale and values of our staff and the organisation's investment over the years in training and communication. The annual staff conference brought out many examples of the imagination and team-work of staff in providing and enhancing services in local communities. For me, this is evidence that we are well on the way to achieving the aim of Apex being a learning organisation.

We have used these features of quality, values and knowledge as the basis for innovation both in service provision and in seeking to diversify ways of funding our services. Over the year this has involved action learning through our social enterprise, All Cleaned Up, and through work with Scotland's Futures Forum exploring new forms of investment for social and financial benefit in keeping with the spirit of the Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services.

Another new development over the year has been the impact of the young people who have come to work for us through Community Jobs Scotland. Their presence has been visible and their work valuable and we are very glad to be part of their embarking on life-long careers.

On behalf of Apex, I would like to thank all those agencies with whom we have had opportunities to work in partnership. I would also like to express appreciation for the ways in which Apex has been invited to collaborate with central and local government in the development and implementation of Criminal Justice policy.

What success Apex achieves is founded on the motivation of the people who engage with our services as clients. The relationships they make with our staff in addressing their unique life circumstances enriches Apex as well as benefiting themselves. The Annual Report provides some examples of this and Board members are seeking to know more by having some of their meetings hosted by local services during the coming year.

Finally, my gratitude goes to all Apex Board members, whose time and wise counsel have ensured very sound governance for the organisation and strong support for me as Chair. Special thanks goes to those who have stepped down during the year, Brian Donald, Sue Brookes, David Strang and Gillian Russell, and a warm welcome to new members, Erich Murch and Gordon Samson.

"What success Apex achieves is founded on the motivation of the people who engage with our services as clients."

MIKE MCCARRON
APEX CHAIR

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