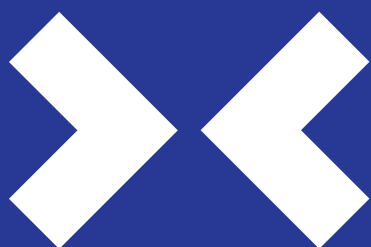


# ONE PURPOSE MANY APPROACHES



apex

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scotland

ANNUAL REPORT **2015**

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## Apex Scotland Board

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Eric Murch (*retired July 2014*)  
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## Patrons

Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell CBE QC  
William Moodie  
Viscount Weir

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# One Purpose; Many Approaches

The 2014 Apex Lecture which, as always, proved a great success, was delivered by Professor Lesley McAra from the University of Edinburgh and focused upon the outcomes of the latest set of results from the acclaimed Edinburgh Youth Transitions study. Perhaps not surprisingly this longitudinal study of behaviours and social outcomes continues to demonstrate the inter-connectedness of so many aspects of human action and, more controversially, suggests that we can do much to predict and divert such behaviours. In her analysis Professor McAra draws together the contributing factors which may promote or enable offending, including poverty, education, upbringing, environment, culture and opportunity, and robustly makes the case for earlier intervention and prevention to divert those young people who are most at risk of becoming 'offenders' into more productive behaviour patterns.

On the night someone said to me: "That sounds like she is reading the Apex manifesto"; and I have to agree with them.

Apex is committed to developing earlier interventions and taking a holistic approach to all of our clients, regardless of what programmes they first meet us through. Indeed, there is increasing recognition that good outcomes are dependent less upon the programme delivered and more on the quality of the relationship formed between client and mentor. That does not mean that good, research-based programmes are not important, but it does mean that the quality of those who are delivering is absolutely vital if we are to see real and lasting positive change which, after all, is why people come to us.

It is difficult, however, to 'sell' this concept in an age when ticking boxes, delivering set objectives and contracting on the basis of a set service model dominate the commissioning/procurement agenda, and still harder to balance the conflicting demands of matching a values-based ethos and competing with those who might wish to take a more pragmatic approach and take on contracts at below the level where quality can be ensured. In fact, where once the sector was known for its innovative approaches, it is increasingly the public sector which is able to find 'spare' funding for new initiatives and the third sector which is reduced to delivering contracted services to the letter having had no part in the design.

I wonder where this leads us? Our staff and management are committed to providing the best services we can, not because we want to win contracts but because we are committed to our clients and communities and, of course, because we want the personal pride of knowing that we are doing something really well. If we stray too far towards the "business" model we run the risk of losing that goodwill and commitment which produces added value to everything we do, but if we ignore the funding reality we can find ourselves unable to do the job at all.

Apex Scotland is continually being shaped and influenced by these conflicts and challenges and the result is a range of service models each with a discrete identity yet brought together by the values and approaches which we hold. As we adapt to social changes, new demands and opportunities we present many different faces but the focus of our actions and the motivation for them remains constant. I hope that as you read this year's Report you will develop a sense of the diversity of our approach and the strong values which drive it.



Our staff and management are committed to providing the best services we can, not because we want to win contracts but because we are committed to our clients and communities and, of course, because we want the personal pride of knowing that we are doing something really well.

**ALAN STAFF**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

# Our Services

**Just as the theme of this year's Report picks up the diversity of activities which make up the modern face of Apex Scotland, so the issue of performance reporting becomes ever more complex. Every different funder and scheme has its own reporting criteria and the outcomes expected from each project will be different, but all will have a performance expectation which we are required to meet.**

Producing high level statistics in this environment is not especially helpful as it invariably ends up comparing performances which are not really comparable. For instance, some services may deliver what the individual needs in a single intervention while others may need extended periods of involvement to make progress. Likewise, some client groups within the same service scheme have relatively straightforward needs while others may have highly complex and deep seated challenges which need significant investment of time and resource to deliver a positive impact.

That said, we continue to work at an holistic level as defined by our A Positive Future Wheel which requires us to consider the wide range of factors which contribute to the behaviour and life chances of every individual, and the performance of Apex over the last year shows a very positive and effective trend. Over the last year Apex Scotland services engaged with over 5,000 clients across Scotland, a big increase on last year, and the percentage of those referred who go on and engage in programmes is also improving at 76%. This is a key figure because our target client group is characterised by repeated non-compliance in service uptake and the ability to engage with those who have traditionally resisted attempts to involve them in any sort of positive pathway is a key skillset for our staff and selling point for our funders. An interesting development from this is that, of those who do engage, over 80% achieve positive outcomes as defined by their programme and, more importantly, themselves.

Although Apex is delighted to have performed well against all major targets it is helpful to pick out some of the more significant numbers which highlight the impact we have on our client group and the communities we serve.



- 173 clients progressed directly into employment
- 101 clients progressed directly into further education
- Over 600 clients gained work-related qualifications through Apex
- 16 peer mentors have been trained
- 1779 virtual visits were made
- 451 individuals accessed the Foodbank and its associated services
- 158 people received Moving In packs.

The development of training and skills which help our clients to access employment or to develop the motivation to work towards a more positive future is a significant outcome of the last year and we are very committed to developing this area of activity. Over the last year more than 40% of all clients undertook some form of qualification with the resulting positive impact on their employability and self-esteem. In addition to the CSCS card training which has been a very popular option, clients have accessed Heart Start training, Health and Safety in the workplace, conflict resolution, health/nutrition and food hygiene, Fire Safety, First Aid at Work, employability programmes, fencing and dyking, retail and stock-keeping and many other valuable skills which not only improve employability but contribute to the communities and others. This is particularly evident in the numbers of clients who continue to volunteer for Apex or in the community long after their programme has finished. Indeed, we are delighted that some of those who we have assisted in their progress have returned to work for or with us in many different roles and functions. **In some ways this feels like the most powerful performance indicator of them all.**

Other outcomes to note include health related ones ranging from basics such as getting a doctor and dentist, enrolling in a local gym or sports centre and understanding basic nutrition, to more targeted ones around drug and alcohol training, HIV and hepatitis prevention and mental health first aid. The improvement in personal physical and mental health has an impact on other achievements and longer term reduces the demands on other services by those who benefit from it. Another key area has been the development of personal financial planning skills, a vital aspect in desistance-focused services, and courses on finance management, budgeting and planning are popular and necessary. This is especially notable for the users of the foodbank schemes, but sadly is also of real importance for many of our younger clients whose personal finance awareness is not always very strong.

## 101 clients into further education

In our young people's service, Apex Inclusion worked with more than 900 young people in 8 secondary schools throughout 2014-15 across S1-S4. Interventions varied from 1 day to ongoing, with differing outcomes expected for individuals. Outcomes, however, included a contribution to a continuing reduction in exclusion; contribution to improved attendance; development of coping strategies and ability to engage with mainstream education; work placements; ASDAN awards; progression to Employability Fund; progression to employment, apprenticeships or college and achievement of Saltire Awards.

2015 sees Apex undertaking a significant investment in our data analysis and recording which should move us towards improved ability to analyse our impact on clients, although I suspect that the complications of comparing apples and pears may continue to prove a challenge for us. Even so, Apex remains committed to continuous improvement and we require quality data to allow us to do so. We are hoping that next year we will be able to present a more comprehensive set of data outcomes but, most importantly, to show our continued commitment to providing our clients with the opportunity to access a more positive future.



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# New Initiatives

**173** clients into employment

**This year has seen three new initiatives introduced into Apex's range of service provision. These new services illustrate Apex's ability to provide a fresh approach to fulfilling a local need and already these are bearing fruit.**

## Labyrinth

A labyrinth is defined as "a complicated irregular network of passages or paths in which it is difficult to find one's way; a maze".

Apex understands that being unemployed can be a challenging time. This is all the more so for unemployed individuals who have multiple, and often complex, barriers to moving back into employment. These barriers may include mental health issues, substance misuse, unstable accommodation, a lack of work history, qualifications or experience, and a criminal record. For these individuals, the path back to employment can seem like a labyrinth.

Labyrinth began as a pilot project delivered over 14 weeks from January to April 2015 in Angus and Dundee funded by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Flexible Support Fund, specifically for employability support for (ex) offenders. During this first project, fire attendants at Arbroath Fire Station facilitated a training day for Labyrinth participants to provide individuals with hands on experience and insight into their role and the demands and responsibility of the job.

The feedback received from DWP in Angus following this initial pilot was full of praise for the service and the staff. "It was amazing to see the rapport the girls built with customers so easily which allowed them to start having a positive influence on them straight away. It's plain to see the impact this course has had on customer's lives, they are going from strength to strength, are much more confident and have hope of a better future."



**Labyrinth clients try their hand at fire fighting**

The success of this pilot led to the launch of the Labyrinth service in Fife in March 2015, in partnership with DWP, with funding for a second nine month pilot in the area. An Apex Personal Development Mentor (PDM) began working closely with the seven Jobcentres in Fife to provide a mentoring service, specifically for (ex) offenders.

Since then, Apex has been delivering a mobile service across Fife which focuses on a mentoring relationship being established between the PDM and the client built around ongoing client self-assessment, action planning and the achievement of progressive milestones. Apex supports clients to access the relevant support services, training, skills-building workshops, and employment opportunities within and around their own communities. The PDM supports clients to sustain engagement with these services and activities, ultimately working towards a milestone where the client is independent, self-motivated and self-reliant – and more ready to join the labour market. Clients can also access local opportunities with existing Apex services such as rehabilitation and disclosure.

In April 2015, Labyrinth was upscaled and the new programme was launched as the key service in Fife specialising in the support of (ex)offenders, and recognised Apex as a formal partner of the Opportunities Fife Employability Pathway. We now work with more people within Fife and take referrals beyond Jobcentre Plus. Labyrinth Fife now employs a team of Personal Development Mentors who deliver a Fife-wide service to those whose current or historic offending behaviour is a barrier to employment.

## Secret Jobs

This year Apex Scotland and our subsidiary, All Cleaned Up (ACU), launched the Secret Jobs programme following ACU's successful application to become an official UKCPAS training academy. This is a DWP funded project where sector-specific training is given for those who wish to work in the commercial cleaning industry followed by job placement with ACU. Those who attend the course are those who have considerable barriers to employment and significant support is required by the Personal Development Mentors delivering the training and the supervisors they go on to work alongside. By the time this report goes to print, two courses will have been completed with nine trainees achieving their UKCPAS Foundation Certificate as well as a Level 1 Health and Safety Award from CIEH. Trainees are also encouraged to attend the CSCS course and obtain their CSCS card. At least one of the trainees has secured full-time employment.



**ACU Manager, Patrick Nicol, presents trainees with their UKCPAS certificate**

When asked if he thought Secret Jobs would help him in the future one trainee responded "Yes, very much, as it's all about applying myself after this course to gain full time employment and to now go on from here. So I think my future is good." Another said "Yes definitely. I always have the reassurance of contacting Apex staff at Secret Jobs for references. I also gained skills to help me understand [how] to work with a similar company."

This initiative is a perfect example of how we wish to develop our trading subsidiary, working effectively in partnership with Apex, whilst at the same time strengthening its own commercial viability and offering real work opportunities to our client group. With recent developments we are increasingly hopeful of the long term success of this social enterprise.

## Dumfriesshire Foodbank

Following the success of our foodbank partnership in Stranraer, a second Apex foodbank, in partnership with the Trussell Trust, had its official opening on Friday 24 July 2015. The foodbank is based in our office in Dumfries and is a response to the local need to support existing provision, given the statistics of poverty in Dumfries and surrounding areas.



We are working with 26 professional frontline agencies across Dumfriesshire who can refer to the foodbank via a voucher. The foodbank not only provides food but Apex staff offer to assist individuals with crisis and support management through our Apex services and signposting to partnership agencies.

The initial Tesco neighbourhood collection held at the beginning of July showed amazing local support for the new foodbank, with enough food collected to provide meals for 4179 people. The Dumfriesshire foodbank uses the donated food to create emergency food parcels containing three days' supply of nutritionally balanced food which is given to local people in crises. The foodbank first opened its doors at the end of March 2015 and in the first four months it has provided 185 people with food parcels.

We have had very positive feedback both from service users and the referral agencies, including comments about the welcome service users receive, the good quality of the food parcel along with a menu and cooking guidance which is included in the parcel, as well as the provision of hygiene products, baby food, nappies, etc when available.

Meanwhile, pupils from Apex Inclusion in Fife's Kirkland High School are showing great support for their own local foodbank in Fife. Following a school assembly for S3-S6 pupils where it was explained how a foodbank operates and the need for it, pupils volunteered to offer their support. Food was collected by pupils and staff in the run up to the Christmas holidays and several boxes of supplies were delivered to the foodbank facility which was delighted to have received this support from the school. This is an ongoing project and non-perishable food can be handed into the Inclusion unit any time.



**Apex PDM, Marta Bizior, with the Secret Jobs trainees**



# Inclusion



This has been an exciting year for our Inclusion service. Apex Inclusion works alongside schools to equip students with the motivation and skills required to engage in a formal learning environment, reduce exclusion,

raise aspiration, tackle ingrained behaviour and increase attainment and attendance. The Apex Inclusion service has fundamental values and principles but allows a strong element of flexibility to tailor the service and create a bespoke package that best suits the needs of each school, curriculum or young person.

At the end of June 2015 Apex had a service running in eight schools across four different local authorities. Our latest addition of Harlaw Academy in Aberdeen is an exciting development and we are looking forward to working with the pupils and providing a quality service for the school. The schools have commented that the presence of Apex Inclusion in their buildings has had a positive impact on their truancy levels and it is clear that all schools value the service. Here's what they have to say:

*"Apex has allowed us to reduce our exclusions for the session (9/14 to 4/15) to **81.4%** of what it should have been for the session (a reduction of **18.6%**)."*

*"Post-Apex they are slower to reoffend – there has been a behaviour change, there might be less resentment from pupils."*

*"I'm beginning to see a change in kids that come back so that makes me feel that something is working – for instance with one pupil I've seen him literally [go from] refusing to come into language class to coming in with a smile on his face."*

Informed by findings from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime there is an urgent need to develop more imaginative ways of retaining challenging young people within mainstream educational provision. Apex Inclusion is meeting this need through our project work which illustrates that, by engaging students in time-limited pieces of work and identifiable roles within a team, young people respond with increased responsibility and a heightened sense of self-belief, confidence and purpose to achieve. As well as examples of local involvement in their own schools and communities with projects such as Beat the Bully, working towards an Eco Flag award, assisting with local litter picks and foodbanks, Inclusion pupils have been successful achievers on a national scale.

Over **900** young people supported through Apex Inclusion and Inclusion Plus



## Museum2Go: Jewellery Project

The second phase of the Museum2Go project, run in partnership with the National Museum of Scotland, focused on the new Art and Design galleries due to open in summer 2016. This project challenged some pupils to create their own jewellery piece inspired by the National Museum's fantastic collections.

Pupils from Kirkland High School worked with the jewellers of O-Pin to explore the world of jewellery design. They were invited along to the National Museum of Scotland to find some inspiration for the project and then spent several weeks exploring different techniques and mediums. The pupils were then faced with the task of designing and creating their own piece inspired by their time at the museum. As well as working with professional jewellers, the pupils have also had an insight into how to present their work through working with Stills Photography and completing a photo shoot within the museum with their pieces.



Pupils honing their jewellery craft skills

In June 2015 the pupils were proud to display their own jewellery designs at a showcase event at the National Museum of Scotland. The jewellery that was created will be part of the teaching resource and displays within the museum.

Importantly, the young people involved learnt valuable skills, not only in terms of jewellery design and production, but in terms of working as part of a team, taking instruction, working to deadlines and considering their environment in a different manner. All of these are skills which will stand them in good stead in many other aspects of their life.





Pupils from Dunfermline High School's Inclusion service was offered an exciting opportunity to take part in a 12 week Judo programme called The Yellow Belt Challenge which was delivered by Fighting Chance Project. The Fighting Chance Project (Scotland) is a registered Scottish charity established in 2014 "dedicated to helping young disadvantaged people realise their potential through sharing with them the values of judo". The project brings together judo players with individuals who would otherwise be excluded due to reasons of finance, chaotic lifestyles, health or low self-esteem. As well as the obvious health benefits, the young people developed skills in terms of self-discipline, issues around body image and self-confidence.

The group of young people were recognised for their achievements at a presentation in Dunfermline High school. GB internationalist, Iain Feenan, who is Fighting Chance Scotland's lead coach, and Stephanie Inglis, <57Kg silver medallist from Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, joined senior coach Jim Feenan to present the Judo Scotland licences and certificates to those pupils who had successfully achieved their red belts.

The enthusiasm of the young people for this project inspired the Inclusion team to don their own white judo suits and take part in a judo taster session as part of their summer training. The staff commented that it helped them see for themselves the benefits and aims of the judo programme.

**Top: Pupils put through their paces with Fighting Chance Scotland**

**Left: Silver medallist Stephanie Inglis spent time with the pupils**

## Inclusion Leadership



**Marcus Cowie received a leadership award**

In October 2014 Apex Inclusion in Buckie High School decided to recruit pupil leaders to help staff during drop in sessions. Following an advertising campaign, the candidates applied with a personal statement and were asked to give a short 'speech' to the Inclusion pupils during a drop in. The votes were counted and the young people were formally interviewed, giving them the opportunity to develop their communication skills. By the end of the process, five young people were appointed as youth leaders and meet with the Inclusion worker on a regular basis to discuss new ventures and the organisation of the drop in sessions.

Two of the youth leaders were invited to attend the Youth Conference: Promoting Equality and Diversity through Peer Learning in February at the Scottish Youth Theatre in Glasgow. During the conference the boys had a number of opportunities to meet and share new ideas with other youth leaders in various schools across Scotland.

In June, we were delighted that Marcus Cowie, one of the Inclusion Leaders, was presented with the G C Smith trophy for leadership by Buckie High School. He received his trophy during the annual prize giving evening at The Fisherman's Hall and was beaming when he received it. Marcus also has been appointed a prefect this year and we are proud of the hard work he has put in to achieve this.

**Our young people achieved 75 Asdan certificates**



As part of the No Knives Better Lives initiative, the Scottish Youth Parliament created We-CTV, an interactive competition which allowed young people to explore the issue of interpersonal violence through creative media and to educate their peers on issues such as knife crime, abuse or online bullying.



We-CTV prize winners with author Cathy MacPhail and Inclusion worker, Rachel Brown

Obvious skills in terms of literacy were gained through involvement in this project alongside gaining a better understanding of important issues and the impact that such behaviours can have on the lives of too many young people.

As well as winning a hamper of books for the school, kindly donated by the Scottish Book Trust, each girl in the winning group also won their own Kindle. As part of their prize, they were invited to Edinburgh where they climbed the 287 steps to the top of The Scott Monument before enjoying lunch at The Elephant House, birthplace of Harry Potter. In the afternoon, the girls visited Floris books, met the very talented Scottish author, Cathy MacPhail, and took part in a writing workshop. The girls thoroughly enjoyed their prize day and would like to say a huge thank you to the Scottish Youth Parliament for giving them such an amazing opportunity.



Sanjeev Kohli with the Amor girls and Inclusion worker, Rachel Brown

The successes outlined above are just a flavour of the time and effort that our Inclusion staff put in to ensure that these young people who access the Inclusion service can recognise their capabilities when their circumstances and personal history suggest otherwise. There are a number of other exciting projects for our Inclusion team which are just getting off the ground and we are looking forward to seeing what the coming year brings for our young people. In its basic form, Apex enables schools to build positive learning environments where teachers can teach and pupils can learn and every student is given the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

*"Working in the Inclusion Unit has helped me more than I realised. I was so depressed and felt alone but when I started working with Inclusion it made me feel like I had a place to escape to - and not only a place to work but also a place where I knew I'd be heard and to help me forget about things that got me down.*

*I've made some brilliant memories in Inclusion and I will never forget it because it's helped me come this far when I never thought I would. Linda isn't just a teacher, she's an amazing friend to everyone that walks in here and she's made me realise that I didn't have to bottle things up any more. I would happily take a job like Linda's. I felt like when I was in here I had a small family that didn't argue; I always ended up walking out with a smile on my face."*

**Pupil, Kirkland High School**



# Investing in Young People

## Employability Fund

Apex is committed to working with young people to help them realise their potential and guide them towards the positive future they deserve.

Under the national Employability Fund programme, administered by Skills Development Scotland, we work with individuals between the ages of 16 and 24, finding a variety of ways to engage them in learning new skills with a view to widening their employment prospects. Apex's main role is to help the young people identify their personal barriers to employment and provide support to overcome them. A major element of this is helping each young person to achieve an ASDAN qualification. In the past year 75 of our young people have achieved this. At the end of their time with Apex, primarily on Stage 2 of the Employability Fund, it is intended that the young people will be able to move on to the next stage of the employability pipeline which may be further training, further education or employment.

As ever, the approaches our staff use with these young people and the work they do, both for the young person and in partnership with other agencies are integral.

*"[Louise's] willingness to be supportive to the young person by co-operating with myself has been very much to the young person's advantage. She drew out the best from her and built her confidence, she identified what would help her add to the experience of the course and we were able to assist in providing that. The young person was very lucky to have been placed on a course with Louise, she definitely goes the extra mile to get the best for her trainees. As a colleague from another agency I really appreciate her collaboration and professionalism."*

**Mentor, Includem**

Many of our young people discover noticeable differences in their attitude, behaviour and confidence once they start working with Apex. Some comments from our young people include:

*"I made a portfolio and created a CV and learnt more about skills and qualities. The service was perfect and helped me a lot."*

*"Apex has helped me understand the working environment and plan a better future. It has also helped my self-esteem."*

*"Apex is helping me to help myself. I am now in a routine and doing work that is helping me. If I was not here I would be doing nothing."*

*"Apex has given me a reason to get up in the morning and something to work towards."*



Top to bottom:

Brandon setting up for the day  
Lace making coffee for a visitor  
Parris helping in the Apex Borders office  
Megan completing tasks for ASDAN award  
Some of our young people

The following excerpts from some of our clients' stories who attend the Employability Fund programme in the Borders illustrate how Apex is helping individuals to achieve success – something that is replicated in our units across the country.

Thomas was introduced to Apex through his social worker. He had been a non-attender at school and had started to become involved in crime. Thomas' start was a little bumpy as he had been doing very little for the past four years and his confidence was at an all time low; he felt he had nothing to offer employers. We completed some work around the skills he had gained from past experiences and Thomas was surprised to see that he had quite a lot of transferable skills. We then succeeded in getting Thomas involved in The Mac Arts Centre in Galashiels (a social enterprise), where the Board actively involve community engagement. He volunteered his time to do painting, decorating and plastering which increased his confidence and allowed him to feel that he was able to contribute to the labour market. In time Thomas became proactive in seeking employment and he applied for a position with a law firm in Edinburgh as a facilities assistant. There was some stiff competition but Thomas secured the position.

James had disengaged from education at the age of thirteen and had no educational input in the past three years. He was referred to us by his careers advisor who thought that Apex would be the best place for him. He was a little unsure at first as he had lost a lot of confidence and was unsure if he would be able to commit, however he agreed to start on stage two of the Employability Fund. James settled quickly and found that he enjoyed coming to Apex, even though it meant a 32 mile trip every day. He worked hard, addressing all his barriers, and managed to gain an employability award - his first qualification. James was encouraged to look at routes into the career that he had chosen and decided he would like to apply for stage three of the pipeline. He went on to attend an interview and secured a placement as an assistant grounds keeper where he is thriving.

John had previously been referred to Apex to take part in a Lifeskills programme but he had disengaged due to the issues that had been going on in his life. John got back in touch with the Apex office a year later asking if he could come back as he felt ready to re-engage. He worked hard to prove his reliability and went on to achieve an ASDAN employability award. Personal Development Mentor, Tracy Hall, supported John in applying for a game keeping course - something he initially felt unable to do due to his lack of attendance at school. However, having attended Apex which evidenced his reliability, John was offered a place on the course he wanted. He has just completed his first year and has applied to go onto level two of the course.



## A.Y.E

Apex's Fife Throughcare Service has been rebranded as A.Y.E (Apex Youth Elite) and was officially launched at the at the 2015 Fife "Know Your Network" event in Burntisland with the new team.

The service is one which mentors care leavers and young people in care, towards the outcome of further education and employment, addressing any barriers they have and helping them overcome these challenges. The service has links with other agencies such as the Princes Trust and Skills Development Scotland which offer training courses and work placements.



## Young Voters

The Scottish referendum in September last year was a significant time for young people. Our Stranraer team decided to provide an opportunity for Apex's younger clients, aged 16-18, to get involved in the democratic process and to empower them to make an informed decision.

In conjunction with Community Learning and Development, the team ran three weekly sessions for the young people followed by a visit to the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh for an educational tour.

## Community Jobs Scotland

Community Jobs Scotland is a partnership initiative between the Scottish Government and SCVO that creates work opportunities for young people within third sector organisations in Scotland. Apex has been involved in the initiative since the outset, providing young people with work placements and training to improve their employment prospects. Apex staff support a CJS employee in their development as they learn new skills either in administration or as an assistant mentor working with our client group. Being a CJS employer is a significant role and one we enjoy and take seriously.

*Apex Scotland has made an important contribution to Community Jobs Scotland with 76% of young people employed by them achieving positive outcomes. They provide high quality jobs and a very supportive working environment.*

**Donna Mackinnon, Director of Employment Services, SCVO**

This year Apex has employed nine young people through the CJS initiative and, of those who have finished their placement, most have secured employment or gone on to further education. The comments we receive from CJS employees are often centred around an increase in confidence and motivation as well as an improvement in basic skills such as communication that they can take with them into their next job or perhaps into college or university.

David Callum first became acquainted with Apex through the Employability Fund and went on to successfully apply for a CJS vacancy when it arose in our Alloa office. His placement has now finished but he continues to volunteer in the Alloa office as a client support worker until his college course starts in Glasgow. David said: *"I have enjoyed my time working with Apex Scotland immensely. The CJS contract granted me my first full-time employment after more years unemployed than I care to count, and has granted me a plethora of skills and training that will no doubt aid me greatly in future endeavours. The environment has been nothing but supportive and Apex has encouraged me to try for my ideal college course - something I have wanted to do for years but never felt ready for. Thanks to the support and encouragement I've received, I'm proud to say I have recently achieved a placement on this course thanks to everything I've learned here, and will be starting soon."*

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# Community Support

**158**  
Moving In  
packs issued

Across Scotland, each Apex unit seeks to support its own local area, engaging with other organisations and businesses to ensure that our services benefit not only our clients but also local residents and the wider community. We strongly believe that our client group can be effective contributors to their community, given the appropriate support, encouragement and opportunity. All of the examples below are designed not only to produce immediate, tangible, results, but also to reinforce positive behaviours and increase aspiration amongst our service users.

This year this commitment to community spirit has been overwhelmingly evident in Stranraer where U-Turn clients and staff have taken part in a variety of projects, some of which are detailed below, in an effort to improve their own community. The U-Turn service focuses on volunteering and group work, offering people the opportunity to increase their self-confidence and gain work experience and skills and is available throughout Dumfries and Galloway. One volunteer said: *What a fantastic group of lovely people here in Apex Stranraer. It's like one, big happy family. Thoroughly enjoyed my time volunteering here. Would like to thank everyone involved and wish you all good luck for the future. Good things come out of good places.*

Towards the end of last year, Stranraer YMCA approached Apex to help reinstate the Santa Float - a local tradition which sees the decorated Christmas float visit the main town and every village in the surrounding area, raising thousands of pounds for local charities. Starting from scratch, building the float took more than two months and over 1000 volunteer hours but the team was rewarded when the float took centre stage at the turning on of the Christmas lights in Stranraer and received an overwhelming response from the crowd. Apex's logo appears on the back of the trailer detailing the work that the U Turn volunteers and staff did.



**Tending to the flower beds**

Following the success of the Santa float, the U Turn group joined forces again with Stranraer YMCA more recently to tend to the town's floral displays.

Similar gardening skills came in useful when the team stepped in to rescue a local garden that had been destroyed. The group had already been involved preparing the Aldouran Wetland Garden, a popular spot with locals, for an open day when it was badly vandalised. When residents took to social media to voice their disgust at the damage, the Stranraer team pledged Apex's help. Personal Development Mentor, Jackie Rae, sought help from the local Jewson branch who kindly donated and delivered the wood needed to repair the damage. The U Turn team worked hard to repair all the damage in one day to ensure that the garden was safe and ready for its open day and the team has been praised by the community for its efforts.



**U-Turn volunteers with the newly built Santa float**



**Repairing Aldouran wetland garden**



One project the volunteers particularly enjoyed was helping to restore Sheuchan Nursery's playground equipment, repairing broken parts of the climbing frame, making a new slide and restoring the broken sandpit. The nursery children were invited to visit the Apex workshop to pick the paint colours for their playground. Once everything was ready, the nursery hosted a special opening of the playground that was attended by parents and Apex clients. The children had composed a special song to sing and presented the U Turn clients with a picture they had made.

#### [Restoring the nursery's playground](#)



The team was also delighted to help Rephad Primary School in Stranraer to build a hen enclosure. The school wanted to keep a few hens in the school grounds to encourage the children to learn about food as well as caring for and managing animals. Headteacher, Alistair Young, said: *"We were delighted that Apex Stranraer U Turn was able to help us out with a project to build an enclosure for 'hens on holiday'. None of this would have been possible without the skills and labour provided by Apex. We are really grateful for their help and support. The U Turn service is a great project that is working hard to put something back into our local community and we can't thank them enough."*

Moving In is a service that the Stranraer team initiated to provide starter packs for local people on benefits or low incomes so that they have some basic necessities once they receive the keys to their new property. This year Apex Stranraer was awarded funding by the tenants of Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership to help support the initiative. The wider project also incorporates Wigtownshire foodbank, in partnership with the Trussell Trust.

Complementing this service, Apex Stranraer has recently launched a free hot food drop-in twice a week which is run by client volunteers and staff. This new drop-in is already being well used and local Citizens Advice has been invited to attend once a week to assist customers with an immediate need. Apex is the only provider of a hot meal service in the Stranraer area.

The Harm Reduction service was introduced by the Stranraer team in the second half of 2011. It is provided



#### [Rephad primary school's new chicken enclosure](#)

for those individuals who require a safe environment to dispose of, or exchange, injecting equipment. As well as helping individuals to dispose of their equipment, staff talk to those affected about harm reduction, give information about blood borne viruses and naloxone as well as signposting clients to more specialised workers to get targeted help. In the past year the Stranraer team has exchanged around 10,000 needles with an approximate 30% return rate.

Apex is committed to working with its local communities to provide quality services for our service users and others who require support. Please contact your local unit to find out how we can assist you.



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# Volunteering

Over **15,000**  
volunteering hours  
completed

Apex is a champion of volunteering, encouraging clients to improve their skills, confidence and employment prospects by working with staff members on local projects to for the benefit of their communities as well themselves. The feedback from community groups has been overwhelmingly positive and our volunteers have found themselves gaining valuable life skills such as planning, time keeping, problem solving and team work as well as having pride in a job well done.

Jessica Shackleton from Allanton World Peace Sanctuary in Dumfries said:

*"We rely on knowing there will be extra hands on a Wednesday and knowing that a group will be arriving at a set time for a given number of hours is especially useful. We have a great deal of confidence in Apex and enjoy working with the volunteers who respond to the outdoor work and tell us that they enjoy being here at the Peace Sanctuary. What can be achieved is directly related to the regular commitment of Derek and his team and helps us to plan ahead with confidence. Our wonderful U-Turn volunteers are major contributors to our community network. We thank you for being partners to our aims."*

Our volunteers in Dumfries received certificates for their volunteering contribution from Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway.

Clockwise from right:

Apex volunteers at work;

Volunteering benefits communities as well as individuals;

Apex clients learn new skills through volunteering.





## Green Outlook Action Project

The Apex Forth Valley team was involved in the Green Action Outlook project, a 12 week course starting in September 2014. The project is a volunteering opportunity for 16-25 year olds to gain work experience, earn awards, meet new people and learn new skills such as gardening, landscaping, conservation and maintenance. Four clients attending the Forth Valley unit all took part in the project every Thursday, each achieving a number of certificates including the Saltire Award for 25 hours volunteering, the Discovery Award from Scottish Waterways Trust, a Water Safety Award from Green Action Falkirk, a Certificate of Achievement from the Scottish Waterways Trust and Emergency First Aid certificate from St. Andrew's First Aid.

The project involved creating a public nature trail path, building play parks for children and creating garden areas within the confines of the woods. An award ceremony in January at the Falkirk Wheel allowed invited guests to see first-hand the good work that the Apex volunteers had accomplished.



The Green Outlook Action Project certificates are presented



Larissa Karpa (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) receives her Saltire Award, with Joe Tole, Gayle Kaufmann (Apex) and Cate Gallows (ACVO)

## Saltire Awards

Saltire Awards are Scottish awards designed to formally recognise the commitment and contribution of youth volunteering to voluntary organisations. Supported by the Scottish Government the Saltire Awards enable young volunteers to record the skills, experience and learning gained through successful volunteering placements provided by local and national voluntary agencies.

Apex encourages all its young volunteers to register with the Saltire Awards so that their efforts are formally recognised.

This year, Larissa Karpa from the Grampian unit has earned the Saltire Summit Award for outstanding contribution to volunteering. There is a maximum of 12 Summit awards each year in Aberdeen, and each nomination is rigorously assessed by a panel of peers known as Saltire Ambassadors.

Larissa is a Personal Development Mentor currently working with women in Aberdeenshire, but she didn't start out that way!

Larissa contacted Apex in 2013 when she was still living in Germany, offering to volunteer in between studying at Aberdeen University. She started volunteering with Apex in November that year. Larissa's role was to run personal development training sessions with people coming through the Criminal Justice system on statutory court orders. This client group is extremely difficult to engage and presents with many challenges, but Larissa was more than capable.

Larissa has recently completed her degree in Psychology, bringing a great deal of extra knowledge to Apex. However, Larissa doesn't stop at teaching and mentoring others – she also wholeheartedly embraces the Apex ethos of continuing personal and professional development, and lifelong learning. Larissa often tells our clients that the route to paid work is via volunteering and she is a wonderful example for them to follow.

The volunteering experience is a growing element of Apex's activity, particularly developing peer mentors in units to pass on to other clients what they have learned. You can read about our other volunteering efforts in different areas of this report.

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# Embracing Challenges



Highland Service Development Manager, Alistair McDonald with Winona Wall

The largest challenge, however, was to repaint the outside of the main two storey house in the grounds, restoring it as a focal point of the sanctuary. Local business owners David Ross from Ross & Co Painters and Decorators, and Gordon Brown from Safe Access Highland also answered the call for help! Ross & Co provided the external treatment, paint and equipment and even provided a member of staff to work alongside the volunteers, giving guidance to complete the task. Safe Access Highland provided a scaffolding tower to enable the work to be done safely.

Never ones to shy away from hard work (or the Scottish climate), the Apex Highland team sets itself and its clients a significant one or two day challenge each year to support another local cause that would benefit from their efforts. Last year the team formed a relationship with local charity, Horses in Clover, a self-funded, private animal sanctuary for numerous horses, dogs, chickens, geese and ducks run solely by husband and wife team, Winona and Bill Wall. Following last year's challenge of renovating the grounds, the team has continued to support the charity on a regular basis with clients volunteering to feed and muck out the animals.

This year Apex Highland decided that its challenge would continue the renovation work already begun at the sanctuary and so, over two days in May, volunteers of Apex staff and clients set about the essential maintenance of the property including land clean-up, cleaning and decorating the new welfare station, as well as painting and building new chicken coups. New animal bedding, feed and treats for all of the animals were also provided by Apex.

Participants gained valuable practical skills as well as improving their social and emotional skillset, all of which are key to the progression of our service users.

Winona said afterwards: *"Having the house painted has helped the look of the Sanctuary but it has also changed things for myself and Bill in so many ways. This was a massive and generous contribution from Ross & Co along with Apex Highland and Safe Access Highland and we will never forget their commitment and generosity."*



The repainted house



One of the residents at Horses in Clover



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# Mentoring

16 peer  
mentors trained

In Apex, to be an effective personal development mentor (PDM) requires understanding, non-judgement, and the ability to motivate the people you work with. Flexibility, the ability to think on your feet and a sense of humour also helps! Our staff take into account the needs of each individual client.

One of the unique things about Apex is how we work with disengaged individuals. We have a proven track record of helping clients move into employment, training or further education because we recognise that everyone is different and people's needs change, both their own development needs and their personal support requirements. In order to make a lasting difference we focus on what is important and positive, help remove barriers and support each client's journey to self-reliance, helping them to make decisions to move on positively and setting realistic goals. A relationship with a PDM requires trust so that the client can feel empowered to find their own answers. In time, this relationship will help the client grow in confidence and be able to leave Apex when they are ready.

Our staff are passionate about what they do. Here are some of the stories of those we work with that will explain why.

## Ross' Story

*I was put in touch with Apex prior to liberation from prison. I can't thank Apex enough for all the help and support whilst being released from prison. What makes them different from any other organisation is they have a realistic approach in guiding you from further offending and trying to help you with any underlying issues you may have. They are very flexible about how they meet you and discuss matters that they can help you with. When I was going for a job trial they paid for a pair of trousers which was, at the time, a weight off my mind as I didn't own a pair of black trousers and that was a barrier in my mind. I am now on a zero hours contract with a hotel chain as a night porter and at present there are plenty of shifts. I would not have been able to do this if it wasn't for the help and support from my Apex worker Louise. I have a lot to thank her for. Over time my confidence has completely increased and I have a very positive outlook on life. I have been actively recommending this service to people who I think would benefit from help and assistance as they have what it takes to genuinely help people who want to be helped.*

*At present, along with my current employment, I have started my own commercial and domestic cleaning business which I take great pride in. This has all been because of the confidence I gained during the good positive support from my personal development mentor at Apex.*

*My longer term plan is now to give something back to the community and people who have been in similar situations like myself; to give others the opportunity to move on from offending and give them stability and belief in themselves by offering the possibility of employment.*

## Sam's story

Sam was referred to the FAB cooking group run by our Tayside team by his social worker. Sam had been in and out of jail, serving time for drug offences. His Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO) was nearing completion and his social worker was worried for Sam as he was extremely vulnerable and mixing with people who impacted negatively on his mental health. Sam was extremely quiet when he first arrived and it was hard to get him to engage. However, he enjoyed the cooking side of the service and took part with great enthusiasm.

As the weeks passed, Sam became more animated and was found to be participating in much of the general conversation. He built up a great friendship with another member of the group and was happy to demonstrate his newly acquired skills to guests at the end of the course.

The group has also been an avenue for Sam to expand his knowledge and experience of cooking to the extent that he is currently volunteering for two separate organisations – Menzieshill Community Centre and the Salvation Army. This allows Sam to give something back to the community as he realises the importance of the community and his path out of offending. Sam has progressed immensely. With his new-found confidence he applied to college and he will start a Professional Cookery course in August 2015.

Sam said: *"If it wasn't for the cooking group and the support offered from Apex staff and Alison (CJSW student) I would have been getting up to all sorts and would no doubt have been back in prison by now. It's given me the confidence and opportunity to get involved in other projects and I'm really glad I came."*

## Bet's Story

Apex started working with single mum Bet in the autumn last year. At the age of 47, Bet was determined to address some employability issues now that the last of her children had reached school leaving age. The idea of returning to work filled her with dread, feeling little self-worth or achievements to speak of. Bet had struggled with substance misuse, poor relationships with her mother and abusive alcoholic father since a teenager. She entered into adulthood, chaotic, rebellious and looking for escape. Her twenties saw her first child being taken into foster care due to her chaotic lifestyle and deteriorating mental health. Life became an increasing struggle and although she tried to address some issues, she remained dependant on prescribed medication until her forties.



Bet excelled in her position at Marks and Spencer

After Bet had first met with us she started to compile a CV with her PDM, which consisted of a retail and service jobs when leaving school. We introduced her to auricular acupuncture – sessions are held in Apex units. She found this extremely beneficial for her anxiety and helped her socialise with clients facing similar experiences. We identified that a Scottish Business in Community work placement with Marks & Spencer in Inverness would be ideal experience for Bet, allowing her confidence to grow, expand her CV and increase her employability. She enrolled in the pilot 'Positive Change' motivational interviewing group which focused her attention on short term action leading to self-development and employability skills. She also attended our SMART Recovery programme and by accessing free counselling with Addictions Counselling Inverness she continues to maintain her well established freedom from substances entirely.

We continued to work with Bet to boost her confidence and skills and she excelled in Marks & Spencer, after initially finding the full-time on your feet hours a huge challenge. Upon completion of the placement we sent out copies of her CV and applications to all local retailers. Bet's enthusiasm dropped almost instantly, she missed the full time busy position and felt rudderless without it. She attended one interview in which she felt unprepared, out of her depth and beyond her comfort zone. We worked with her on her interview preparation, presentation and research skills through the SAPHIR Programme and provided her with information about tax credits and benefits to help her see a possible transition to re-enter employment.

Throughout our time working together, Bet's demeanour and attitude has become increasingly outgoing and positive. Her confidence and self-belief makes it easier for her to cope with momentary disappointments and setbacks. In April 2015 she started full time employment as a care assistant for Castle Care in Inverness, received her housing benefit, travel expenses to get to work and working & child tax credits. The skills she developed during her time at Apex and her experiences since means she is now more outgoing, confident and resilient as a person, mother and employee.



Facebook post from  
Corrina in Dumfries

"If you are struggling in life and you want to change for the better but don't know how or where to start – I strongly advise Apex! Apex has truly helped me and still is in many ways. Helping me to believe in myself [and] building my confidence which is opening new doorways to a lot more opportunities and revealing other hidden talents and skills. Helping me to understand and be more aware of the pros and cons of the choices I've made and make, learning how to change my unhealthy lifestyle that I was living.

Apex has helped me gain new skills that I've needed to learn. Some were as simple as healthy eating and nutrition which has a big impact in the long run; learning to manage finances; making my CV and IT skills. I've also gained structure and experience through volunteering from gardening to construction, teamwork, problem solving and mentoring others. I've gained various qualifications such as spraying, health and safety and first aid, all to help me for future employment.

All of the staff at Apex are genuine, friendly, caring, understanding and so easy to talk to about anything. The type of people who love their jobs because they love to see you become the best you can be. My favourite quote of theirs is: "if you can't get in the front door, try the side door. Never quit, there's always a way to conquer – it's just finding the way. Thanks to Apex."





## John's story

John came to Apex in September 2014 to seek support after hearing about our Moving On service through a friend. John has a complex history. He had been a highly functioning heroin user for a large part of his adult life, holding down several jobs and maintaining a relatively high standard of living. However, managing this double life took its toll, he experienced a family breakdown and was no longer able to hold down a job. It was at this point around three years ago that he realised something had to change and he sought help from his GP. John was prescribed methadone and referred to the specialist alcohol and drug team. He stopped using heroin immediately and after a year he stopped taking methadone altogether. However, in the chaos of his detox he picked up his first ever criminal convictions and became known to police.

When he came to Apex, John's only expectation was some kind of guidance about how to get in to voluntary work. At his initial meeting it was apparent that he was an intelligent and skilled individual with clear aspirations; he wanted to use his own experience to help others by becoming an addictions worker or volunteer. However he was overwhelmed with issues including low self-esteem, lack of confidence, current relationship problems, his recent convictions and run-ins with the police. He was unsure of how to move forward or how to pursue his ambitions.

In his first week attending the Moving On service, John agreed to an action plan that would give him the tools, stability and confidence necessary to pursue his goals. One of the first actions was to give John a full understanding of his convictions and their relevance to his future, we also assisted him to complete a letter of criminal record disclosure to give him the best means of disclosing his convictions to employers. He completed a quality CV that demonstrated his experience and value and also boosted his confidence. John completed Apex interview skills modules and mock interview scenarios that dealt with the difficult questions around this criminal record and gaps in employment.

John was relieved to have someone to talk to in confidence about his issues, knowing he could phone and arrange an appointment whenever he needed to. He was keen to pursue a healthier lifestyle and now attends weekly gym sessions with his Moving On PDM which has been a great boost to his self-esteem. He also attends a weekly healthy cooking group at Apex and is learning to cook nutritious meals from scratch. The value of these activities for John has been great - his mental and physical health have both improved as a result.

The long term target of John's action plan was to take the first steps towards becoming an addiction worker. To this end we assisted him to identify and apply for a voluntary opportunity at an addiction support organisation. His value was recognised immediately and he now volunteers weekly alongside staff. He has been offered a full mentoring position pending a PVG application. John is now convinced he wants to pursue this line of work as far as possible, he understands that his convictions may limit him but is determined to use his past experience in a positive way. Seven months after our first meeting, he has a more stable life and is feeling very confident and positive about his future.

## Tony's story

Tony first engaged with Apex through the New Routes service in March 2014 while he was six months into a nine month sentence. He was a prolific offender who had previously been in prison twice before and had never engaged with support services during these sentences.

Apex met with Tony a number of times before his release to build up a good working relationship. At first the meetings with Tony were quite difficult as he was quite quiet and did not speak much. The months went on and the more Tony engaged with his mentor, the more he started opening up and started to talk about his past and what goals he had for the future.

Tony stated that he would like to gain his own tenancy as things were quite strained at home living with his mother and would also like to gain employment as a joiner as that was what his dad worked as.

On the day of Tony's release Apex's Personal Development Mentor (PDM) collected him from HMPYOI Polmont and took him back to Dundee. The PDM and Tony completed a number of tasks together, including applying for council housing, applying for his ILA funding, registering with a GP and making a claim for his job seekers allowance as Tony did not have confidence to do these himself.

Tony met with his Apex mentor weekly and his confidence began to grow. He received his ILA funding and used this to complete his CSCS course which he passed with 98%. He also joined the Princes Trust programme and completed a number of their courses, building on skills and confidence.

We registered Tony with the Dundee job brokers Craigowl who helped complete his CV and forwarded it onto a property management company who were looking for an apprentice joiner through the Dundee Employer Recruitment Incentive. Tony was successful in his application and the company employed him as an apprentice joiner to help with the maintenance of their properties. After a few months the company that Tony worked for rented him one of their own properties to live in. Six months on Tony is still completing his apprenticeship and is attending college once a week for this. He is also still staying in his flat with his new partner.

# Award Winners

**1779** virtual visits made

## Virtual Visits

**Apex Scotland has received a number of external accolades over the year, reinforcing the value attributed to so many of our services.**

Our innovative partnership with the Scottish Prison Service in particular being recognised on a number of occasions. The Virtual Visits service in Aberdeen (now known as Family Visits by Videolink), a secure video-conferencing facility for friends and family of prisoners, has been praised by those who use the service and commended by those we work with. The service offers a crucial opportunity for families to maintain contact which may otherwise be lost, or fractured, whilst one member of the family serves a prison sentence. It was particularly thrilling for this service to be selected from hundreds of applicants as a finalist in the Scottish Charity Awards 2015 in the Perfect Partnership category.

This has been an important acknowledgement of the dedication of the team in Aberdeen who give up evenings and weekends to support families using the Virtual Visits service as well as the constant liaison with prisons and their staff.

This high profile event at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh saw Service Development Manager, Helen Chamier-Tripp and Centre Co-ordinator, Gayle Kauffman, celebrating our Perfect Partnership with the Scottish Prison Service, along with another four hundred representatives of charities and sponsors from across Scotland.

First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, opened the proceedings with a speech thanking the Third Sector for all of our hard work and the importance that charities play in shaping government policy. Scottish presenter, Kaye Adams, introduced all of the finalists and announced the winners.



### Scottish Charity Awards:

**Ian McGregor (SPS), Helen Chamier-Tripp (Apex Scotland), Kaye Adams, Rachel Dalton (SPS), Gayle Kaufmann (Apex Scotland)**



### Winner of Social Impact Award – Apex Grampian Team

In addition, our Grampian unit was awarded the 2014 Social Impact Award by ACVO for the Virtual Visits project. There has been great support for this nomination from the Scottish Prison Service who has sent its very happy congratulations to the team. The service has now assisted over 1,500 visitors!

Finally, the service was also nominated for the Redemption and Justice Awards (Partnerships).



One of the most rewarding aspects of what we do is the feedback from service users. Here's what they have to say about our Virtual Visits service:

*"It's so great that I'm being given such support, the people are so nice at Apex and I like coming here."*

*"This is a lifeline to relatives, especially for Perth and Barlinnie."*

*"Getting up to Peterhead can be hard financially, it makes a big difference."*

*"Superb, very friendly and welcoming."*

*"I'm glad I can keep in touch with my son and see him face to face."*

*"We would like to thank all the staff at Apex for their kindness, helpfulness and professionalism in the arranging of the virtual visits to a friend of ours in Perth Prison. We were made to feel very comfortable. A friend of ours from Belgium was also very appreciative of the service, as she was only in Aberdeen for a week. It is an excellent way of keeping family and friends in touch."*

## Scottish Mentoring Network Awards

Congratulations must also go to our Highland unit which was honoured twice at the Scottish Mentoring Network awards this year. The Highland team won the award for Employment Project of the Year and Grace Moir, an Apex Peer Mentor with the Highland team, received an award for Outstanding Contribution.



Peer Mentor Grace Moir and the Apex Highland team with Big Lottery Chair Maureen McGinn

## Scottish Youth Parliament

As mentioned separately in the report, our Apex Inclusion pupils won the We-CTV Literacy Prize created by the Scottish Youth Parliament.

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# Placements

Apex Grampian has been working in partnership with local colleges and universities in Aberdeen to host student placements who are working towards social care qualifications and social work degrees. Such has been the success of these placements that for the last two years, both Apex placements have won "Placement Award for Excellence".

This award is judged by North East Scotland College and students from placements all over the city submit applications to be assessed. Winning students are presented with certificates at an award ceremony. This year Marta Khan and Alan Chalmers were successful in winning this award for their time spent with Apex in Aberdeen.



Alan Chalmers with Apex Centre Co-ordinator, Gayle Kaufmann



Marta Khan with NE Scotland Curriculum Manager for Health and Social Care, Chantal Wood

# Rewarding Achievements

## Sam Dow and Betty Crawford Memorial Awards

Each year the Sam Dow and Betty Crawford memorial awards are presented to Apex staff teams for outstanding and innovative performance. As always, the commitment and drive of our staff to go the extra mile for our clients means choosing just one winner is a difficult decision.



The Grampian team receive their award from Alan Staff

This year the Sam Dow award was presented to the Grampian team for its Virtual Visits project. This unique service, in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service, is the only one of its kind in Scotland, facilitating almost 3,000 visits since it began in January 2014, including 462 child visits. Apex staff in Aberdeen manage the service to the same strict standards and protocols set out by SPS and are committed to working late into the evening and on weekends to accommodate visitors as well as liaising with four Scottish prisons, all of which mean there can be challenges to overcome. Not only do our staff provide a facility where family members can keep in touch with their loved ones, they use their expertise to offer additional support and guidance to those individuals who require assistance in other areas, providing a holistic service for families.



Linda and Alan with pupils Britney Bowden, Rachel Bowden and Teagan Brayley

The recipient of the Betty Crawford award is the Apex Inclusion service in Kirkland High School. The Inclusion worker within Kirkland, Linda Dunion, has a very proactive approach, using imaginative ways to engage Inclusion pupils in projects which encourage team working, responsibility and an increased level of confidence and purpose. Successful achievements this year have included participation in the We-CTV competition run by the Scottish Youth Parliament, involvement in the local foodbank and the Museum2Go project with the National Museum of Scotland.

Using these projects to engage pupils takes commitment and tenacity, building trust not only with the young people but with the school staff and the other organisations involved. In addition, Linda has made many links with agencies across statutory and voluntary agencies in the local area, working with them to ensure that the Inclusion pupils in the school are informed and educated about their lifestyle choices. We are aware that there are already great plans afoot for next year!

## Apex Self Development Award

The Apex Self Development Award is given to a pupil who has attended the Apex Inclusion service in Dunfermline High School over the past year whom the Inclusion team and wider school staff believe has made concerted efforts to change their behaviour patterns and attitude, and contribute to the success of their fellow pupils through peer mentoring.

This year's recipient is first year pupil, Kyle Anderson. Kyle started attending Apex Inclusion as part of 'alternative to exclusion' due to his behavior. This was difficult for him at the outset but he soon began to contribute positively and now accesses the Inclusion unit on a regular basis for ongoing support.

Kyle also participates in a lot of activities through the Inclusion unit such as; judo, litter picks, drop-ins and assisting staff with visits to Inclusion from external agencies. Apex workers, Kelly Owens and Rachael Ferrier said: *"Kyle is a pleasure to have in the Inclusion unit; he brings laughter and joy throughout and is a positive role model to others".*



Kyle Anderson from Dunfermline High School received Apex's Self Development Award



# Social Enterprise

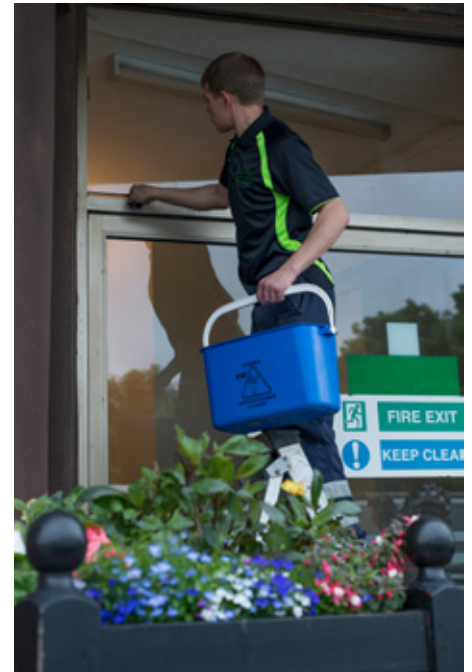
Over **600** work-related qualifications achieved

## All Cleaned Up

All Cleaned Up (Scotland) Ltd is Apex Scotland's social enterprise which aims to create real jobs for the people that Apex supports who are often deemed disadvantaged in the employment market. As well as offering real jobs to the technicians All Cleaned Up (ACU) employs, work placements are also provided to those who are long-term unemployed. Those on work placement and technicians are directly supervised by ACU's skilled tradespeople who act as supervisors and mentors.

This year has been very positive for All Cleaned Up. Our thanks go to Brian Robertson-Fern for his role in creating the social enterprise and moving it forward to the position it is in today. In August last year the company was awarded a grant from the Enterprise Ready Fund and a business loan from Social Investment Scotland to develop the business. The team took time to re-evaluate the company and think about the best way to move forward to achieve its objectives. New vans were purchased and we invested in personnel and equipment.

There has been an immense effort made by the ACU team this year, supported by key Apex staff, to win and sustain contracts and provide a high quality service to customers. Because of this determination, together with the grant and loan funding, ACU is now achieving sustainability in a shorter period of time than is usual for a new business. More importantly, the company can now consider expanding into more markets and services. In the three years since its creation, ACU has grown to a company with a turnover in excess of £250,000 with services in Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Forth Valley and Fife alongside one-off tender opportunities across the country.



One of the team at work

Currently the main activity continues to be stairwell cleaning although the business has recently expanded into commercial kitchen cleaning. ACU has now been approved by Building and Engineering Services (B&ES) and the Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS).

With these accreditations ACU is confident in securing more contracts, so increasing opportunities for people who are encountering barriers to employment.

We are proud that ACU is also an official UKCPAS training academy and works with Apex Scotland on the Secret Jobs programme.

The future of All Cleaned Up looks promising. With hard work and commitment from its staff the business will continue to build on its success and be an effective and innovative way of moving our client group into employment.



The ACU team



“To be so important to the company and for the staff and management team to see the potential in me was truly rewarding”

Patrick Nicol,  
ACU Operations Manager

## Patrick's Story

I started working at All Cleaned Up in January 2014. I progressed from volunteer, to consultant to Operations Manager within 18 months. My rise to the top has been inspiring, challenging and also a lot of hard work and long weeks.

Before volunteering at ACU, I had been seeking opportunities to work in a business environment. After years of studying, graduating from university with a First and applying for lots of jobs, I was dejected at getting nowhere. I knew why I was being rejected, sifted out, cast aside; it was due to my criminal conviction. I could accept that, but still yearned for an opportunity and it presented itself in a new year and what was ultimately a new start.

I had been tasked with supporting Brian Robertson-Fern, the Operations Manager of ACU, and attempting to manage all the accounting information that would

come into the business, making use of my university learning. I brought enthusiasm and vigour if also a little naivety to the role. I quickly found my feet with some great support from Brian and Sandra Smith, who was administrator at the time.

Volunteering allowed me to hone skills and experience and I ultimately became a consultant working on tenders and grant applications to allow ACU to develop into sustainability. Thereafter I worked on improving the information processes and reporting, and quickly found that the information was more than useful. As such, I was asked to present to the Board of Directors. A humbling thought after only 10 months into my career with ACU.

With ACU sustainable and in a position to expand, ACU increased the management team by directly employing me as the Operations Manager. I was responsible for staff and helping win new work and also

for ensuring that we completed work to our company standards and got paid for it. An inspiring challenge and one I relished.

To be so important to the company and for the staff and management team to see the potential in me was truly rewarding. I have seen the same satisfaction in other staff as they have been rewarded and recognised for the work they have done. Nothing can beat that feeling.

ACU in the next year will have more members of staff that feel exactly like I did. The business will continue to develop and grow stronger. The business is secure and stable and now it is time for the business to impact both in terms of commercial growth and human impact.

It's a great place to work and an excellent opportunity for those who are disadvantaged and know it. They just need the chance to show they have more to offer than what happened in their past.



# Training

Over **200** CSCS  
course participants

The criminal justice sector has seen many changes over the past couple of year and Apex has continued to adapt and remain flexible to accommodate the different demands that these changes require. In fact our staff's willingness to embrace this approach means that they are continually developing their skills and attributes to ensure that they can deliver the best possible service to our clients and our partners. Apex's dedicated training officer ensures that all staff are fully trained and confident in their knowledge to provide accurate and sensible guidance as part of our service delivery.

This year our staff have completed training in First Aid, Fire Safety, Health and Safety Levels 1 and 2, Working with Sex Offenders, Child Protection, Risk Assessment, Conflict Resolution, and Rehabilitation and Disclosure. Particular mention should go to David McNulty from our Highland unit who achieved his SCQF Level 6 First Aid & Defibrillation Instructor qualification.



HMP Grampian trainees with Apex PDM,  
Rioghnach Armstrong



David McNulty received his SQCF certificate from Apex  
Director of Operations, Gerard McEneaney

Apex's expertise in working with those who are hardest to reach means that we are often asked to deliver training to other organisations. This year we have delivered 37 specific training courses to over 160 external participants. Here are what some of the trainees had to say:

*"Brilliant course, very informative and relevant to our roles."*

*"Have a far greater understanding after one day."*

*"Relaxed, interesting, informative, thought provoking, specific detail on case study examples."*

*"It was very beneficial and I learnt a lot I did not know before."*

*"Really useful; good content."*

*"Trainer was great, discussed all aspects, answered questions and broke down things if people never understood."*

## CSCS

The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) has proven to be an extremely popular and successful course across the country with Apex staff delivering training and testing in local areas and also within HMP Grampian and HMP Perth. The course is open to anyone who is interested in a career in construction and Apex staff work with trainees with a view to them achieving an SQA in Health and Safety in a Construction Environment and their CSCS card; obtaining the certificate is the basic legal health and safety requirement necessary for all individuals who want to work on a building site.

Training sessions vary depending on the needs of the trainees and involve regular knowledge and understanding tests, leading up to the actual testing which is held under strict exam conditions.

This training has been particularly successful in HMP Grampian, with regular groups of up to 20 service users at a time and an ongoing waiting list. This will be the first meaningful qualification a number of our service users have ever achieved and they are keen to celebrate the success of passing. The initiative has recently started in HMP Perth and the first trainees have received their CSCS cards which will increase their employment prospects once liberated.

The CSCS training is a national initiative by Apex Scotland with high pass rates throughout the country. Various ILA-funded training available through Apex can be found on our website.



# Partnership

Apex has established and developed a number of successful partnerships, collaborating to ensure that our service users can access the best services to address any barriers and challenges which impact upon their quality of life. We work in partnership across the country with a range of funders, public and statutory bodies and third sector organisations to ensure that each individual who works with our staff receives a service that is personal and valuable, ultimately progressing them towards a positive future. Working together with these partners helps us to meet our own strategic objectives, allowing more effective or efficient use of resources as well as contribute to the national outcomes of the Scottish Government concerning a safer Scotland, employment opportunities, and support and nurturing of young people.

Apex is a strong partner which consistently meets, or exceeds, targets, achieving a healthy working relationship with our colleagues to accomplish positive outcomes for our services users and allowing us to achieve our Purpose. Our partners often comment on our positive co-operation, for example:

*"Lara and Alba maintained communication with my team through the whole process and we were really impressed with how regularly they kept in touch. Even when we faced the prospects of having no premises the girls worked with me to come up with a solution. This meant them having to re organise the whole of their course plan but it did not phase them or affect our working relationship in the slightest. It's been great to work with an organisation who delivers with passion and we are very grateful for how open you were to engaging with us from our very first meeting in Dundee."*

**DWP**

*"I love working in the Borders for this very reason, how well everyone works together. Great partnership working. Amazing for clients in the Borders. Hats off to criminal justice and yourself."*

**Venture Trust**

*"Maintaining family contact is a key area in the rehabilitation of those in our care and the facility at Apex in Aberdeen has enhanced the support we provide. This initiative is an excellent example of agencies working together for the benefit of the community."*

**Colin McConnell, SPS Chief Executive**

*"We have a good working relationship with Apex and we are able to work together for the best outcome of all our clients."*

**Kate's Kitchen, Annandale**

*"The Inclusion Unit at Dunfermline High School is award winning, and at the heart of this is our partnership with Apex Scotland. The quality of their staff, backed by the experience and expertise of Apex Scotland, combines with flexibility and a genuine desire to meet the needs of the young people and the wider school. Thus they form a vital and integral part of the highly commended support service we offer pupils to help them to meet their potential and to secure positive destinations."*

**Louise Ramsay, Depute Rector, Dunfermline High School**

Foodbank-  
related services  
to **451** people

## Our key partnerships this year include:

- **Scottish Government**
- **Local Authorities Criminal Justice Social Work and Education Departments**
- **Scottish Prison Service**
- **Community Justice Authorities**
- **Community Planning Partnerships**
- **Community Safety Partnerships**
- **Alcohol and Drug Partnerships**
- **The Robertson Trust**
- **The Big Lottery**
- **Apex Inclusion High Schools in Fife, Dundee, Moray and Aberdeen**
- **Inclusion Plus – Includem and Skillforce**
- **Shine (led by Sacro) – national PSP partners**
- **New Routes (led by Wise Group) – national PSP partners**
- **DWP**
- **SCVO**
- **Skills Development Scotland**
- **Work Programme Partners**
- **Celtic FC Foundation**
- **Poppy Scotland**
- **Care Farming Scotland**
- **Diageo**
- **Community Safety Glasgow**
- **Trussell Trust and C-Fine**
- **National Museums of Scotland**
- **NHS and Health Partners**

# Gateway to Employment

Gateway to Employment (GTE) is funded by Cashback for Communities – the funding model which reinvests the recovered proceeds of crime to benefit disadvantaged young people and communities.

The programme is led by the Celtic FC Foundation and supported by Apex Scotland. It is aimed at 16 – 25 year old disadvantaged young people deemed to be at risk of, or already, offending.

The main aim of the programme is employability, seeking to progress attendees towards, or into, positive destinations. In particular, Apex advises participants on their convictions past and pending and assists them in presenting this information to prospective employers, colleges and placement providers. Coupled with this we promote desistance, reinforcing the implications that offending has, particularly in the context of job seeking. Apex also supports the Foundation with employability interventions such as CV building, interview preparation, job/training searches as well as generally advocacy and inter-agency working to the best end for the client. A broad range of third parties from sections of the public, private and voluntary sectors can be invited to input their respective specialisms, exposing attendees to a rich mix of advice, guidance, education and resources to support their journey into a positive destination.

In addition, a significant component of the programme is committed to promoting healthy living, fitness and general wellbeing through physical activity & health awareness sessions delivered by the Celtic FC Foundation's sport coaches.

The course culminates in a celebration event which reflects on the successes of Gateway to Employment involving a presentation of certificates to those who completed the programme and thanks to those involved. The most recent celebration event took place in July with certificates presented by former Scottish football player and one of Celtic's Lisbon Lions, Bertie Auld.



Bertie Auld presents certificates at Gateway to Employment celebration

So far the programme has supported and progressed over 50 young people; upskilling through various funding streams into a variety of commercially offered training courses, sourced work tasters and voluntary experience, secured college places, progressed onto other pre-employment training programmes, and gained employment for a significant proportion of attendees.



James achieved his mini digger licence

Some examples of successes to date include:

*James M – age 23. James was recently liberated from prison but had previous construction experience in roofing and is a CSCS card holder. We assisted by helping James with a funding application to the Prince's Trust Development Award scheme. This was approved and £500 was awarded to pay for plant training for a 5 tonne mini digger licence course which James completed and passed. After arranging a group information day at South Lanarkshire College, James was offered a college place. However, shortly thereafter, the college linked him in with a roofing company who offered him full-time employment.*

*Jordan R – age 20. Jordan was a care leaver living in supported accommodation who had been disengaged from any positive activity and unoccupied since leaving school. On joining the programme, he expressed a desire to be a sports coach. We arranged for him to volunteer with one of the Celtic FC Foundation's sports coaches two days per week. He was subsequently offered a 9 months paid coaching role via Community Jobs Scotland within the Celtic FC Foundation.*

*Luca T – age 20. Luca lived with his parents but was disengaged and largely unoccupied since leaving school. He came to GTE unmotivated and directionless and his readiness for full-time employment was questioned. We subsequently negotiated a position for him within Celtic's retail outlet, working in the stock room to give him a gentle introduction to the labour market. After sustaining this for a period, he used this as a stepping stone to other opportunities.*



Jordan (2nd from left) coaches with Celtic FC Foundation



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# Conference Collaboration

It is our great pleasure to be asked to participate in a number of conferences and events throughout the year. Of particular note this year was workshops we delivered as part of the Poppy Scotland conference in Stirling in March 2015 and, more recently, the Social Work Scotland conference in Crieff Hydro.

## Poppy Scotland

Due to our existing partnership with Poppy Scotland we were invited to host a workshop on the existing work and range of services on offer to armed service veterans. Our Highland team devised the presentation with Nina Semple, Poppy Scotland Welfare Manager in the North of Scotland and Danny Maclean from HMP Porterfield. Our presentation outlined the effective referral routes through the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and Poppy Scotland to Apex Scotland, and explained the work carried out and the outcomes achieved. The workshop gave us the opportunity to inform conference delegates about our partnership work with Poppy Scotland and SPS and, in particular, the support and assistance that Apex Scotland can provide to ex-offenders. Apex's Veterans Service assists ex-service personnel who have a criminal conviction to compete more readily in the employment market and to try and reduce any risks associated with ex-offenders gaining employment. Personal Development Mentor, Scott Colgan, went on to explain the work he does personally with individuals around rehabilitation, disclosure and conviction relevance. Our positive engagement with clients often results in them choosing to continue to be involved in such activities as peer mentoring, employability work and the number of volunteering opportunities Apex provides. The workshop was well received by all who attended, many of whom commented that they were unaware of the range of services that Apex provides.



Contributors to the Poppy Scotland conference

## Time2Change

We assisted with the design and delivery of the Time2Change conference held in Edinburgh on 20 May. This was a conference by the Scottish Government and Scottish Prison Service to increase the number of employers recruiting ex-offenders. Sir Harry Burns and Sir Richard Branson were among those who spoke of the positive aspects of employing ex-offenders.

## Social Work Scotland

In June the Apex Youth Elite (A.Y.E) project and Apex Inclusion service worked together to deliver a workshop at the Social Work Scotland Conference. This multimedia workshop was entitled 'We're All Human, Right?' and endeavoured to spark discussion around the importance of Human Rights and convey the views of young people on this subject. Using a Cryptic Crime theme as our vehicle through a very serious topic, we were able to encourage engagement between the participants and create a forum where everyone felt comfortable expressing their views. As part of the workshop we involved our service users to show short videos of young people conveying their views and opinions on human rights. Filming this part of our workshop was an extremely rewarding and enlightening experience and gave us the opportunity to really listen to what young people had to say. The young people involved in the project were very enthusiastic and we were all humbled by the insightful words they had to share! The workshop was very well received by participants who commented afterwards on how much they enjoyed it. This was an amazing opportunity for collaboration between Apex services, which demonstrated the impact and value of our teams working together, which we hope to see many more examples of in the future.



Apex's workshop at the Social Work Scotland conference

This aspect of our work continues to evidence the positive regard in which Apex is held, by many, in that our view on a range of justice related matters is seen as credible and informed by significant experience. It also forms part of our policy influencing role which is an important element of the function of Apex in that, as an experienced service deliverer, we need to ensure that opportunities to inform public policy are taken at all levels in an effort to contribute to a fairer and more just society.

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# Policy and Influence

Embedded within the Apex Scotland Values and Statement of Purpose are the principles of creating and supporting improvements in opportunity for those who are offenders or at risk of offending, and contributing towards a safer and fairer society. To achieve this Apex, as a national organisation, is engaged in a range of influencing and advising activities ranging from Government advisory bodies to local support networks, and from policy formation to evidence gathering. In doing so we hope that we contribute to fairer and more effective community justice policies; improved opportunities for those who have offended or are at risk of offending to adopt a more positive lifestyle and a greater understanding of the drivers for crime, desistance and recovery. Apex Scotland also plays its part as a strong advocate for the use of the Third Sector across all aspects of Scottish Society and for clear links between the sector and academic research. In the past year we have participated in, and contributed to, a number of working groups and advisory bodies including, but not restricted to:

- Community Justice Redesign and Performance Board
- CJVSF Executive Committee
- SCVO Policy Committee
- ERSA
- DWP Scotland Group
- SHINE Project Board
- New Routes Project Board
- Scottish Futures Forum
- SWGWO
- SCCCJ
- Scottish Justice Matters Editorial Board
- SCDI
- IoD
- CJAs
- ACOSVO
- Integrated Children's Services Group
- Justice Leaders Group



Professor Lesley McAra delivered the 2014 Apex Lecture

## The Annual Lecture

Apex Scotland's Annual Lecture is a key date in the criminal justice calendar. It sets out to give a platform to those who are able to bring something current and new to the justice environment in Scotland. Previous speakers have contributed significantly to the debate over approaches to justice and criminology and their impacts on our society.

In September 2014 in the Signet Library, Edinburgh, Professor Lesley McAra from the University of Edinburgh spoke to a full house on the topic of Crime and Justice: A Vision for Modern Scotland. Presenting an argument for early intervention, including support for Apex's Inclusion service, she brought not only the conclusions on the latest set of results from the Edinburgh Youth Transitions Study but challenged the allocation of resources to high end reactive programmes rather than towards services which might reduce the number of people who could ultimately require them. It was an enjoyable and challenging evening which prompted much discussion at the reception afterwards. A video and transcription of the lecture can be viewed on our website.



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# Research

Apex has been involved in a number of research projects over its lifetime in partnership with organisations such as Glasgow University and IRISS. It is our intention to continue to pioneer in this area to bolster our knowledge and understanding and to give a solid foundation from which to base our services and lead in new initiatives.

This year Apex had the privilege of working with undergraduate Eilidh Quinn as our intern. Funded by the Scottish Funding Council through Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS), SCVO has been working in partnership with Universities in Scotland to create paid internships within third sector organisations for undergraduate and post graduate students studying at Scottish universities. We recruited Eilidh specifically to assist us in the development of our Apex Inclusion service, ensuring we had a firm understanding of the environment and a robust evidence base to support our belief that Apex Inclusion has much to offer to a large number of secondary schools within Scotland.

Eilidh was a welcome addition to the Apex team during her six-month placement and we are grateful for the information she gleaned and for her contribution to our ongoing strategy. We were happy to celebrate her success of graduating with a First degree and securing a full-time job in Glasgow and wish her all the best for the future.

In June this year we welcomed our second intern through the TSIS project. Jordan Ross is based in our Inverness office and over 12 weeks will be looking specifically at Apex's IT and social media and advising on a related strategy for the future.

Here, Eilidh explains what it was like to work as an intern with Apex Scotland.



**Eilidh Quinn**

*"I have been lucky enough to have had the opportunity to work as an intern for Apex Scotland for six months during my fourth year of university. My role has involved working towards creating a development strategy for the Apex Inclusion schools service which supports young people at risk of exclusion. Despite still being a University student, I have been treated as an equal at Apex Scotland and always feel that my opinion is being valued."*

*The Apex Scotland staff that I have met or worked alongside have been warm and welcoming, always happy to help when I have questions. The Apex Scotland head office, where I have been based, has a really positive, encouraging and non-judgemental working atmosphere which has made my work extremely enjoyable and rewarding. I have witnessed a real commitment to the cause across all Apex services, demonstrated in Apex Scotland's individual approach which centres on their clients' needs, supporting them to achieve their potential."*

*I have been lucky to have developed my knowledge of the crime and justice, education and the third sector in Scotland which will be of great value in my future career. I now feel confident in what path I hope to take after graduation and feel prepared with the relevant knowledge and skills to thrive in this. I have greatly valued my time with Apex Scotland and will strive to remain in touch and support their work in whatever capacity I am able to in the future."*

# Finance

Apex Scotland, similar to many other organisations in the Third Sector, has been impacted upon by year on year public sector funding cuts for our areas of work. This has undoubtedly reduced our ability to support as many people across Scotland as we would have liked, but we have tried to protect as many of our services as possible through utilisation of some of our reserves, built up over previous years.

At the same time we have restructured the organisation, introduced and developed our award winning social enterprise trading subsidiary, All Cleaned Up, and given increased focus to specific areas of work where we believe we will have the greatest impact.

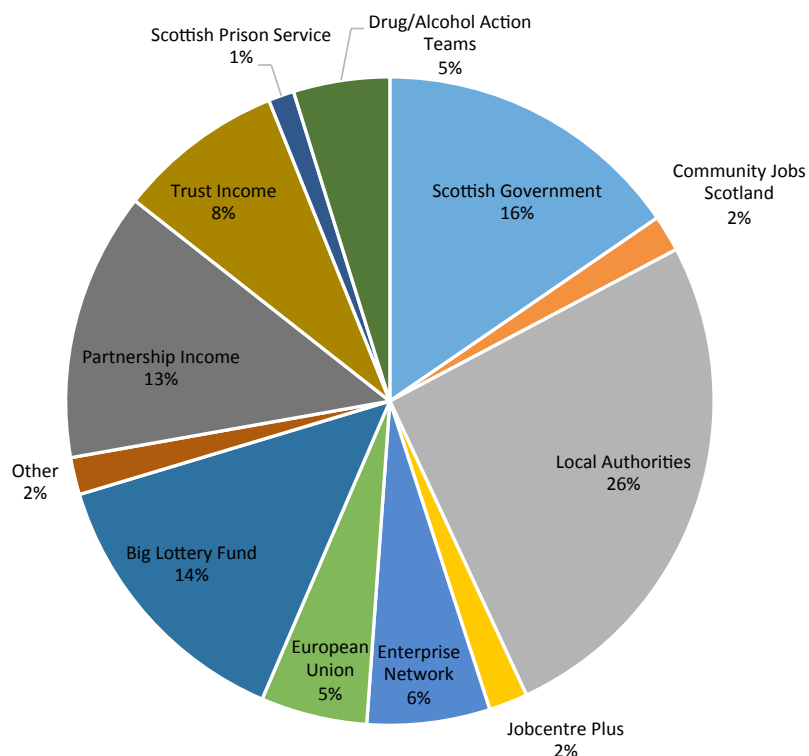
Income in 2014-15 for the charity stood at £2,773,069, an increase of £78,219 from the previous year, where income stood at £2,694,850. Given the comments above, this is testament to the efforts, professionalism and dedication of our staff around the country in convincing funders of the value of our services.

Expenditure for the year, for the charity, is shown as £2,902,998, a decrease of £90,312 from the previous year when expenditure stood at £2,993,310. It should be noted, however, that £43,581 of the expenditure is due to the decision to make provision for potential non-repayment of the loan we have made to our social enterprise trading subsidiary, All Cleaned Up. This does not indicate any intention to write off that loan, which we expect to be repaid from future profits, but reflects generally accepted accounting principles. Underlying charitable expenditure is therefore £2,859,417, an increase of £100,223 when compared to the previous year.

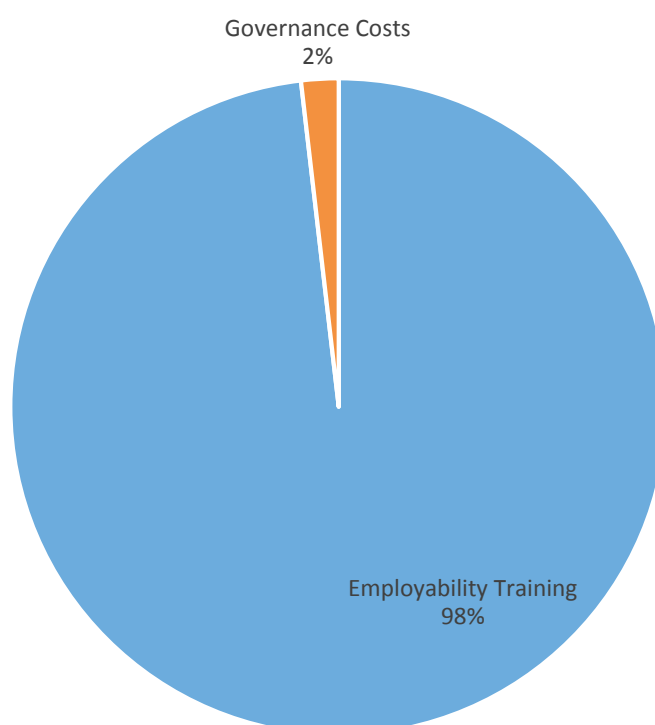
As such, we are confident that we are making headway in terms of securing a viable financial future for the organisation, both for the short term as well as the longer term. We will continue to ensure a robust approach to costs as well as increasing opportunities for us to deliver effective and much needed services to our client group in a financially viable manner through our focused and targeted approach.

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

## Income



## Expenditure





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# Chair's Report

**Over the past four years Apex has embarked on a series of changes, some to reflect the wish for the organisation to become leaner and fitter, and some to engage the financial challenges that being a charity brings, with less funding being available to us and increasingly complex contracts imposing more stringent governance requirements. Throughout this period of change Apex staff have remained focused and committed to their task in contributing to the sense of safer communities and reducing crime.**

Trustees engage with staff and service users through visits to our different units throughout Scotland and, of course, our annual staff conference. One of the most satisfying parts of being an Apex trustee is getting out and about and seeing and hearing, at first-hand, about our different partnerships, the involvement in developing new initiatives and the individual success stories which illustrate the achievements of our clients and the dedication of our staff.

As with so many of our statutory and third sector partners, we face the real challenges of financial limitations. To this end, to complement the staffing changes, we have begun to reposition the Board of Trustees to ensure it can make a more effective contribution to the work of the organisation. The Board has welcomed some new members this year who bring a wealth of experience and who are keen to contribute and work with their colleagues to take Apex forward. We have also embarked on a strategic response with a view to developing staff/trustee working by developing a thematic approach to our Board operation to make it more supportive and functional for the organisation.

Of course Apex is no longer purely an employability organisation; we have strengthened our community focus, volunteering and mentoring and are continuing to develop new initiatives and influence community justice policy. Undoubtedly our most far-reaching developments have been in the field and working with young people, particularly in school settings. My thanks must go to Apex management, all staff and volunteers for their energy, dedication and positivity in the face of challenges as we continue to take our clients forward to their own positive future and as we advance in our areas of expertise.

Eric Murch retired from our Board last year and my thanks and appreciation goes to him for his effort and contribution during his time as a trustee. I would like to thank my colleagues on the Board for their unfailing good humour and commitment as we move through this period of change and also for the investment of their time and creativity to ensure that, as we complete this journey, Apex is an even more relevant and successful contributor to Justice and justice matters.



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**BRIAN FEARON**  
CHAIR

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