

apex

scotland

25  
YEARS

of

prioritising prevention...  
...reducing re-offending

APEX SCOTLAND ANNUAL REPORT 2012

*'The consequences of late intervention have high human costs, including educational failure, anti-social behaviour, crime and violence. When preventative programmes are targeted at solving well-researched problems and are strategically led and delivered, they can have an enormous impact on service delivery, providing a cost-effective use of taxpayers' money.'*

*A recurring theme in the evidence presented to the Commission has been the importance in addressing inequalities of interventions that enhance the employability of individuals, and so improve their and their families' life chances. [...] assisting individuals to move into training and work delivers positive social and economic impacts and contributes significantly to ending cycles of inequality.'*

Report on the Future Delivery of Public Services by the Commission chaired by Dr Campbell Christie, June 2011

**Learn how Apex Scotland contributes to ending the cycles of inequality online at [www.apexscotland.org.uk](http://www.apexscotland.org.uk)**

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# Chief Executive's introduction

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For 25 years Apex Scotland has given ex-offenders and young people and adults at risk the chance to have positive futures. With a focus on preventative work with young people and interventions to improve employability, our approach is entirely consistent with the findings of the Christie Commission (June 2011) and the Scottish Government's review of what works to reduce re-offending.

This annual report highlights how our approach has evolved to respond to research and our own experience of what works. For example, our award-winning 'Inclusion model' works in schools with young people, at an impressionable age, to tackle the root causes of offending behaviour. Our social enterprise, All Cleaned Up, is a commercial success while providing work placements, training and jobs for ex-offenders in the cleaning and waste removal sector.



We take this approach because of the significant difference it makes, not only to the individuals and families involved but to society generally, through safer communities, greater economic prosperity and generational change.

This has been a difficult year again for everyone in a climate of financial restrictions, high unemployment and challenging political pressures. The trend away from specialist services for specific groups towards generic mainstreamed provision provided by large corporations is a significant concern because individualised solutions are the ones that work. For Apex Scotland, it has meant redundancies and difficult decisions.

Nevertheless, that is the environment we are in. Some areas where we have traditionally been strong, such as employability activity for those with criminal convictions, are no longer directly funded. There is greater interest in our work on desistance and reducing re-offending. This 'whole person' approach is exactly what we have always promoted, with employability one aspect of 'recovery' from offending behaviour. But there are challenges in how we demonstrate the effectiveness of this. We know that those with criminal records are an untapped source of talent and economic potential. Increasingly, industry is beginning to recognise this, and we are working actively with the private sector to develop services which will meet their needs as well as those of our clients.

This report gives a flavour of our work with service users, employers and others over the past 25 years, and some of the highlights from the year to 31 March 2012. Much of this has only flourished because of our collaboration with, and the contribution made by, our many partners.

We want communities to benefit from our work. We want individuals to avoid the drift into or back to offending behaviour. We think we do this well. I hope, when you read this, you will agree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Staff'.

Alan Staff  
Chief Executive



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'If we didn't have an Inclusion Unit in our school, we would have been excluded or expelled by now – every school should have one.'

This comment from a young person involved in the award-winning Apex Scotland Inclusion Unit based in Dunfermline High School typifies the strong connection that pupils have to the unit and its value in preventing the problems which lead to offending behaviour.

Pupils speak powerfully about how the unit has changed the way they feel about school and their behaviour.

'If we were excluded we would sit at home, lie in our beds, play the computer, watch TV, hang about the street and cause trouble and not do school work. If we are in the Inclusion Unit, we get a chance to look at our behaviour, talk about our problems and still do school work so we're not behind when we go back to class.'

'The stuff we do in the Inclusion Unit, doesn't just help us with life in school, it helps us when we're out at night and at the weekend, with our friends and families, helping us to make better choices.'

An independent evaluation of the unit also found that, at 72%, it is more effective in reducing school exclusions than other comparable interventions. It considerably boosted the academic attainment of those pupils who would otherwise have left with nothing.

It is a model which has already been replicated in 2 other schools in Fife following coverage on BBC's Reporting Scotland and the One Show and has generated a great deal of interest from schools and education departments across Scotland.

'Since being in the Inclusion Unit, we've had opportunities to change our behaviour and then help younger ones by telling them what they're doing is pointless and to not waste their chances in school.'

David Watt, HM inspector, Education Scotland, lead inspector for additional support needs, endorsed the unit's work when he launched the evaluation report this year, saying, 'The Dunfermline High School Inclusion Unit shows the outstanding effect that the right intervention at the right time can have on the learning, attendance and social and emotional well-being of young people.'

Read more about the ground-breaking work of the Apex Inclusion Unit at [www.apexscotland.org.uk](http://www.apexscotland.org.uk)







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All cleaned Up provides employment for individuals who may ordinarily struggle in the jobs market and generates income that allows the business to become more effective and to grow.

Apex Scotland has a track record in giving people the best chance possible of work and a positive future.



So, setting up our own social business, which would benefit ex-offenders, ourselves and the wider community seemed the logical next step. And it is one which has been widely endorsed, with Kenny MacAskill, Justice Secretary, wanting to see 'more of this type of work being replicated across Scotland.'

Now All Cleaned Up is trading in the commercial industrial cleaning and waste disposal sector while offering first-class work opportunities to ex-offenders.

All Cleaned Up employs ex-offenders leaving prison, who have gained the relevant cleaning qualifications inside, as technicians. It also offers placements to those on the Work Programme or a Community Payback Order. It is designed to provide employment for individuals who may ordinarily struggle in the jobs market but also to generate income to re-invest in the business.

According to Kyle, being employed as a technician at All Cleaned Up, has made a huge difference to his life; 'A tiler to trade, I was on the dole, my confidence was really low and I wasn't getting anywhere. There are a lot of people in that position, people who are really struggling.'

Now responsible for a team of trainees, he is showing them 'how jobs should be done'. He says that it is very different from his own experience. 'I hadn't been in prison but I had done several Community Service Orders and I didn't feel they had fulfilled much. I would go for an appointment and would just sit in the van. This is getting people's lives back on track, giving them confidence and treating ex-offenders like any other employees. It's also good for the community to see folk paying back for what they have done and not re-offending.'



# The story of 25 years

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Maintaining a significant presence for 25 years has required us to be pioneering, innovative and bold. Here are just some of our many achievements during this time:

Created the award-winning schools Inclusion model

Opened the first Jobclub in the UK targeted exclusively at individuals with a criminal record

Voted into the top 25 Best Places to Work Scotland 2011

Founding members of the Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice

Member of advisory group on the design and delivery of Supervised Attendance Orders

**Developed and operated Disclosure Helpline**

## Pioneered the use of Letters of Disclosure

Developed and launched cleaning and waste removal social enterprise All Cleaned Up

Founding members of the European Offender Employment Forum

Delivered the first vocational training services for ex-offenders with drug issues in Scotland

Developed and managed the first Throughcare Centre in HMP Edinburgh

First voluntary sector agency in Scotland to achieve Investors in People status

Received a recognition award from Jobcentre Plus for outstanding progress2work employment outcomes

# Staff make the difference

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Interventions can have a positive effect on re-offending only when they are delivered effectively by skilled practitioners and are tailored to offenders' needs.

Apex Scotland pays close attention to workforce development through training, support and mentoring. We asked Louise McEwan, Personal Development Mentor from Apex Forth Valley, to reflect on her work and the difference it makes to clients.

'I've been with Apex for five years. Staff have a lot of responsibility and a free rein to make things work and that gives an even bigger sense of achievement. You are developing clients' potential but you are also getting the chance to develop your own.

No two days are the same ... it depends what programme I am running. My work is very broad and I can be working with people of all ages and abilities, people with learning disabilities and mental health issues.

Criminal justice clients need help to develop a routine. Our support used to be directly focused on employment but now we are working much more on helping people find a sense of purpose, which will ultimately lead to further education and work. I support clients from both criminal justice and adult day services who are on placement in one of the council staff cafés. I help them develop skills in food hygiene and preparation, cash handling and dealing with the public.

I also run the 'life skills' programme with young people aged 16-19. This may be to do with their family situation, addictions, offending, anger management, confidence building and time keeping. I am about to lead a pilot programme working with women (identified in partnership with Apex and NHS Forth Valley 'Keep Well') who are isolated and lack confidence and would benefit from involvement in the community.

You need to be able to relate to people, to listen and not be judgemental. Above all, you need to be a people person. An ability to build trust and rapport and give people a sense of boundaries is a must. You need to be able to see the bigger picture.

The best thing about the work is seeing the difference it makes to clients. For example someone who hasn't worked for a number of years - the look of pride on their face when they get a job or placement is amazing. We are also working with people who are at an early stage of anti-social behaviour (young people who are not chaotic, but may be facing some issues) and preventing them from going down a hard route.'



Whatever the programme or order and in whatever part of the country, we use the same high quality approach to assess and work with service users.

### Our approach

Using the positive future wheel we work jointly with service users to look at the interlinked elements of their lives and then plan accordingly. It is a flexible and clear way of working with individuals on the aspects of their lives which need the greatest attention.

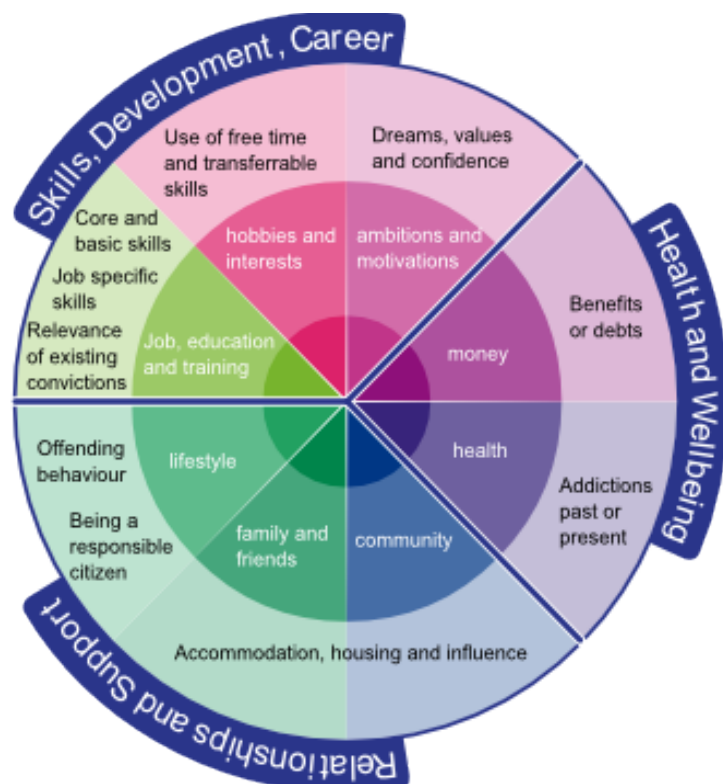
Our track record in encouraging service users to aspire to a positive future remains impressive. During 2011/12 our staff worked with 2,314 clients across Scotland. Of these, 740 individuals achieved a positive outcome:

Jobs = 186 people  
Further education = 42 people  
Work-related training = 379 people  
Voluntary work = 133 people

The Apex approach is tried and tested. It works because we recognise that everyone is different, people's needs change and they need different support at different times. That is why we use a range of interventions to prevent offending or reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

### Preventing problems and making choices

Our prevention projects encourage people to look at their potential. For example, 25 young people identified as 'at risk of offending' successfully completed the PX2 programme delivered by our staff in Lanarkshire and all went on to further training, an option that had not been considered a possibility before the course. Meantime, in Edinburgh, 10 Apex service users completed the fourth GOALS (Getting On After Leaving School) course, run in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council, and all moved on to college or further training.



### Learning new skills while working with others

We encourage clients towards work whilst also supporting others in the community. For example, our 'Moving In' project in Stranraer fundraised to provide packs of essential basic items for setting up a home which it distributed to people taking on their first tenancies.

It not only demonstrates an active community involvement but it also confirms for our service users that they are very much part of that community and this can have a very positive effect on them.



Our many environmental projects help ex-offenders give back to communities, sustainably, while developing new skills and positive experiences of work.

### Learning skills and improving environments

Service users taking part in Apex Dumfries U Turn project, delivered in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage, learned about and then used ancient wattle and daub techniques to build a children's outside classroom in the grounds of Allanton House world peace sanctuary.



### Dedication and team work improve visitor access

Large areas of the beautiful Solway coast around the Caeleverock area of Dumfries used to be inaccessible because of boggy wetland. That is until Apex's U Turn service users set to work. The team, working in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage, endured ice-cold temperatures, snow, rain, high winds and pretty much everything the Scottish weather could throw at them to complete the 100 metre long access walkway. In a bleak and unforgiving environment, without even a tree to shelter behind, this was true dedication with the team refusing to give up and working as one tight unit to keep the job going.

### Upgrading pathways on the way to achieving a John Muir Award

The Highland project, in partnership with Abriachan Forest Trust, has upgraded paths and set up information points, developing a 'literacy trail' which encourages people of all ages to enjoy the local environment and learn about



its habitat, folklore and history. On their way to achieving a John Muir Award, service users have had to learn path building techniques and familiarise themselves with new tools and materials to keep the natural habitat and environment as pollutant-free as possible.



By creatively tackling the issues that affect the lives of our service users, we support them to move away from offending behaviour and move towards securing a positive future.

### Widening access to education

In Edinburgh, our popular Think Again initiative delivered more excellent results for the women who took part. The programme, which was funded by Lothian and Borders Community Justice Authority and run in partnership with Napier University and Jewel and Esk Valley College, offered participants the opportunity to sample tasters of further and higher education. 75% of those who took part progressed onto college courses.



### Working in partnership and making a difference

The Scottish Government's Permanent Secretary, Sir Peter Housden, joined Apex staff and service users at Clackmannanshire Council's Greenfield Café in Alloa to see first hand how this successful



partnership is making a significant difference to the lives of the Apex clients and the service users from the Council's Adult Day Services who work there. The initiative focuses on developing sector-specific skills such as food hygiene, food preparation, customer service and money handling and is an excellent example of how Apex and Council service users can integrate and support each other while improving their employability.

### Improving chances and reducing exclusion

With the support of Lloyds Banking Group, staff in Dumfries have been able to develop and deliver Financial Capability training to the young people on their Get Ready for Work programme. Financial Capability is increasingly seen as an essential life skill and the course, which uses quizzes, role playing and group work, covered a range of areas including personal budgeting, debt management and understanding financial products.



# Annual lecture

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According to Tam Baillie, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, something is very wrong with a criminal justice system in which so many children leaving care end up prison.

Speaking at our Annual Lecture on the topic 'Storing up trouble: children in the justice system, are we making things worse?' he suggested that if we are to make any real impact on offending and re-offending numbers in Scotland, then the evidence points overwhelmingly to the need to address the numbers of young people starting out on an offending pathway. He cited research linking school exclusion with later life offending and advised we should be specifically targeting these young lives to challenge behaviour patterns which lead to crime.

It was fitting that Tam's lecture was introduced by young people from our award winning Dunfermline High School Inclusion Unit. These pupils are an example of what the right interventions at the right time can do to divert young people from destructive behaviour patterns to become achievers with high aspirations and the ability to lead and mentor other students.

For those young people who become ensnared in criminal activity however, there remains the need for justice and corrective interventions. Scotland has a less than enviable reputation for having one of the lowest ages of criminal responsibility in Europe as well as disappointingly high numbers in custody and very worrying re-offending rates. In his lecture, Tam spoke

passionately about the need for reform of children's justice systems in Scotland and the tragic consequences of failing to listen to the voices and opinions of young people when considering what will work and what will not. He presented a coherent and personal overview of some of the areas which most require change and, as always, Apex Scotland will look to this as a springboard for influencing opinion and helping to improve the lives of young people in the system.

Tam acknowledged the significance of the Apex Lecture and the chance to speak to its influential audience because 'I believe that you share my ambitions to improve the lives of children and young people in Scotland, and many of you are in positions of influence to contribute to that process of change.'

Read or watch the lecture online at [www.apexscotland.org.uk](http://www.apexscotland.org.uk)



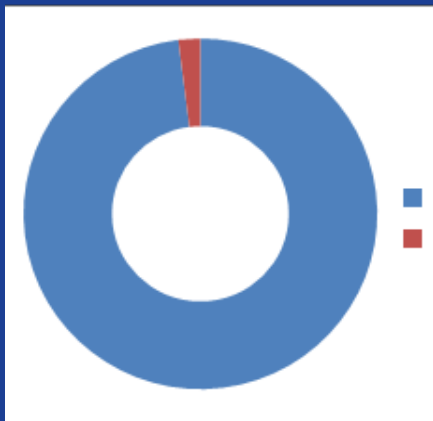
# Looking ahead

Over the year ahead we will use our wealth of experience to compete vigorously as a credible, cost-effective partner best placed to help individuals with an offending background to secure a positive future.

We will build on our experience and achievements by:

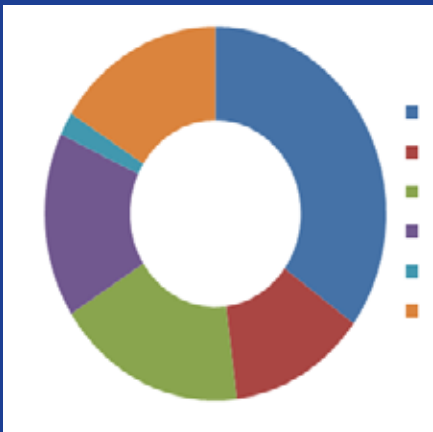
- Introducing our Inclusion Unit model into more schools
- Strengthening our involvement in the Work Programme
- Continuing our participation in Community Jobs Scotland
- Exploring alternative funding models such as Social Impact Bonds
- Growing our social enterprise business All Cleaned Up
- Developing our diversion from prosecution and women offender services
- Fully engaging with public sector partners involved in the Reducing Re-offending Change Fund
- Promoting the benefits of strengthening community sentences with employability skills training

## Finances: 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012



### 2011/12 Expenditure £3,580,237

Employability training 98%  
Governance costs 2%



### 2011/12 Income £2,891,908

Local authority 35%  
Scottish Government 13%  
Enterprise Network 18%  
Jobcentre Plus 16%  
Big Lottery Fund 2%  
Other 16%

Auditor: Henderson Loggie

Full audited accounts available from Apex Scotland.



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