



2024 / 2025

Active Fusion

Annual Report

activefusion.org.uk





Foreword

**By Lindsay James,
Founder & Director**

Dear Friends and Partners

Since 2011, Active Fusion has championed inclusive sport, physical activity, and employment pathways for children, young people, and adults with additional support needs across South Yorkshire and surrounding areas. From modest beginnings, we've grown into a team of 18 expert staff and over 100 dedicated volunteers, united in breaking down barriers and creating life-changing opportunities.

In the wake of the pandemic, many children face disrupted routines, isolation, and declining wellbeing. Each year, we maximise our efforts to help them stay connected, engaged in education, and active in body and mind. Yet the challenges remain stark:

- Nearly 1 in 8 young people aged 16–24 are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Only 48% of children meet the Chief Medical Officer's daily activity target - lowest among girls, those with SEND, and disadvantaged communities.
- 1 in 5 young people now live with a probable mental health disorder.

These aren't just statistics - they reflect real lives and futures at risk. With schools stretched and safe youth spaces shrinking, those with SEND or protected characteristics face even greater barriers.

That's why Active Fusion has empowered over 100,000 individuals, since we established, to engage in sport, physical activity, and apprenticeships, steering them away from harmful distractions and towards brighter futures. Our team of specialists and volunteers deliver programmes that spark confidence, foster inclusion, and unlock potential including:

- School PE and Sports Camps
- High-quality physical education and immersive holiday activities that build skills and self-belief.
- Community Sessions
- Free, safe, local opportunities that transform parks and halls into hubs of positive energy.
- Inclusive Design
- Every session is tailored - equipment, coaching, and structure - to ensure full participation for those with SEND and complex needs.
- Youth Leadership and Employment
- Our apprenticeship and volunteer pathways equip 16–24-year-olds with the skills, networks, and confidence to thrive in coaching, community development, and wellbeing support.

Despite adversity, this generation of children and young people are not cynical. They've witnessed kindness, resilience, and the power of community. But many still need extra support and we believe every child deserves the chance to grow up happy, healthy and active.

Foreword continued

**By Lindsay James,
Founder & Director**



In a region where poverty, isolation, and poor mental health persist, we offer inspiring, affordable solutions - from curriculum innovation to community-led programmes that spark self-discovery and reveal hidden strengths.

Our work is guided by four strategic pillars:

- Education - Embedding high-quality PE and leadership in schools to build resilience and curiosity.
- Communities - Creating safe, free sessions that offer alternatives to isolation and anti-social behaviour.
- Inclusion - Ensuring every activity is accessible, empowering those those facing protective characteristics and SEND to thrive.
- Futures - Developing youth leadership and volunteering into apprenticeships and sustained employment.

Active Fusion has earned national recognition, including the 2024 King's Award for Voluntary Service and designation as a Centre of Excellence by the Leadership Skills Foundation. These honours reflect the courage of the young people we serve and the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners.

But our mission is far from complete. As mental health challenges rise and inequalities deepen, our work has never been more urgent. We will continue to build inclusive spaces, forge strong partnerships, and ensure every child - regardless of background or ability - can thrive physically, mentally, socially, and in their future opportunities.

To our team, volunteers, funders, partners and above all, the young people who inspire us: thank you. Your energy and belief fuel the change we strive for every day.

Together, we're building a future where every child can truly be the best they can be.

**Lindsay James, Founder & Director
Active Fusion**



Our vision

All young people to be the best they can be.

Our mission

We will help every child to develop a love for being active by creating positive habits that last a lifetime.

Our ambition

Our ambition is to create a world where all children are healthy, happy, and active whilst prioritising services for young people facing the highest levels of inequality and expanding our reach to achieve over 75,000 attendances across all provisions each year.

Our values



joyful

We feel inner
personal
satisfaction.



passionate

We care about
you.



nurturing

We help others to
grow.



Welcome

Thank you for joining us as we reflect on another year of transformation at Active Fusion. This report celebrates the collective efforts of our staff, volunteers, partners, and the young people whose courage drives everything we do.

We believe every child deserves to grow up healthy, happy, and active. Our mission is to ignite a life long love of physical activity - unlocking potential, building confidence, and forging positive habits that last a lifetime.

This year, over 113,568 attendance of young people accessed our programmes - each figure a story of resilience, hope, and possibility. In collaboration with schools, communities, and funders, we're forging a world where every child can be the best they can be.

Inside this report, you'll find:

- A snapshot of our 2024-25 impact and key milestones.
- Highlights from our four strategic pillars: Education, Communities, Inclusion, Futures.
- Personal narratives from participants and volunteers that bring our work to life.
- A financial overview and investments in growth.
- Our strategic roadmap for 2025-26.

More than an annual review, this report embodies resilience, collaboration, and our belief that where inequality exists, opportunity must follow. We hope these pages inspire you as much as the young lives they represent.

This is not just our mission. It's our promise. It's our movement.



Get to know more about Active Fusion [here](#)

2024 – 2025

A Year in Numbers



1,469 community hours delivered in wards with the highest anti-social behaviour



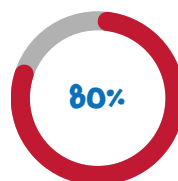
51% of participants boosted their confidence



82% of young people reported improvements in mental and/or physical health



Fusion Camps earned a perfect **10 / 10** rating from young people



80% of attendees live in South Yorkshire's most deprived neighbourhoods.



113,568 attendances across all charitable programmes



Daily 60+ minutes of activity rose **36%** over the baseline.



49% of young people reported gains in life skills and independence.



1,835 volunteering hours



£3.1 million of social return on investment



Fusion Camps scored **100 %** for staff professionalism and friendliness



1,729 participants from minority communities, care backgrounds, SEND and asylum-seeking young people supported



20,500 young people engaged in tailored sport and leadership programmes



Fusion Education

At a time with reported levels of curriculum Physical Education dropping in schools, 4,000 hours of PE lost nationally last academic year. Our education support programmes reached 3,000 young people accessing 5,400 hours, embedding physical literacy into daily school life and nurturing essential life skills.

Through team teaching, staff training, curriculum and leadership development, we've helped schools deliver high quality Physical Education and the positive habits of young people to be physically active every day.

Our work has led to:

- A 36 percentage-point surge in daily activity - climbing from 33 % to 45 % of children achieving 60 active minutes.
- 82% of participants experiencing a clear boost in mental wellbeing.
- 95% of young people reporting a deeper sense of connection.

We believe Physical Education is important because it develops the whole child, not just physical fitness, but also mental health, social skills, and life readiness. By equipping educators and empowering pupils, we're building healthier, happier school communities.

Active Fusion is proud to host Doncaster's two School Games Organisers, part of a national government funded network supporting all schools to develop their pupils by providing positive experiences of physical activity, school sport and leadership, this year Doncaster's School Games offer provided additional opportunities for nearly 5,000 young people to engage in physical activity, school sport, competition and leadership with 57 schools gaining their School Games Mark recognising their commitments to offering a wide range of opportunities through the School Games to all pupils.



Wren's Story –

This story highlights the transformative impact of Active Fusion's education support offerings, which supports education providers in delivering high-quality PE. Through engaging, structured sessions, Wren developed confidence, physical skills, and a love of activity while also growing her leadership and teamwork abilities. Beyond improving pupils' wellbeing and enthusiasm for sport, the programme equips teachers with coaching support, resources and professional development, creating a school-wide culture where physical activity is prioritised. Active Fusion's education support clearly benefits pupils, teachers, and schools alike, fostering lasting skills, confidence, and engagement. Read Wren's full story [here](#).

“Active Fusion's expert staff go above and beyond to create an environment where our students can not only learn a variety of sports, but also develop important leadership and communication skills. Their staff have the ability to engage with students, offering them support, encouragement and guidance.”

Mr McDonald, Principal at Sir Thomas Wharton Academy



Fusion Communities

Fusion Communities is a movement for grassroots change focused on creating safe, engaging spaces that offer positive alternatives to inactivity and anti-social behaviour. Across South Yorkshire, we work in collaboration with young people and local communities to create safe, inclusive spaces where sport becomes a catalyst for transformation.

This year, we delivered targeted activity in areas facing the highest levels of deprivation and anti-social behaviour. These sessions supported 1,729 young people from minority groups, care backgrounds and those with special educational needs.

Our approach is built on trust relationships, consistency, and catering to needs and interests of young people. Through initiatives like Fusion Streets, we tackle the root causes of youth disengagement, boredom, disconnection, and lack of opportunity. By bringing sport directly into familiar community settings, we help young people redirect energy, build positive behaviours, and develop leadership skills.

We also run Fusion Youth and Fusion Camps, which keep children fit, fed, safe, and active during school holidays. These programmes offer structure and mentorship, helping young people build confidence and resilience.

Our Community Leaders initiative trains young people to lead local projects, unlocking their potential and creating lasting impact. These young leaders become role models in their communities, inspiring others to follow positive paths.

Key achievements include:

- 80% of participants came from the most deprived wards in South Yorkshire.
- 1469 hours of community hours delivered creating reductions in negative behaviours through consistent, positive engagement.
- 95% of young people reporting feeling more connected after our interventions.

Fusion Communities is not just about sport, it's about helping young people to feel like they belong, to create a safe space for them to have fun and develop friendships. Together with our partners, coaches, and volunteers, we're building stronger, safer communities.



"My son had a great time at Fusion Camp and I found the organisation of the camp excellent. It is a wonderful camp and I'm really grateful that there is this kind of provision in our village during school holidays."

Jackie, Parent of Fusion Camp attendee
Thurnscoe Fusion Camp, Easter 2025



Fusion Inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. We're on a mission to ensure that every child can participate fully, regardless of ability or background. This year, we supported 1,717 young people with special educational needs, ethnic minority backgrounds and looked after young people.

We expanded our Fusion Transitions programme, supporting young people with additional needs both within education and in our local communities to prepare for life beyond school and into further education, training or employment using the power of sport and physical activity as a catalyst.

These sessions helped children build confidence, reduce anxiety, and feel more prepared for the change ahead. Teachers reported improved emotional resilience and stronger peer relationships.

Young People also gained recognised qualifications including the "I Can Lead Award" - giving young people the chance to develop leadership skills in a safe and supportive environment. Participants gained confidence, communication skills, and a sense of pride in their achievements.

Our inclusive camps and programmes are designed to be adaptive, welcoming, and empowering. Feedback from parents and professionals highlighted the exceptional care and flexibility of our coaches, with 100% of parents saying they would recommend and their children would attend again.

We believe that disability or disadvantage should never be a barrier. Through tailored support and inclusive delivery, we're helping every child discover their strengths and thrive and live an independent life.



Check out our All 4 Sports event [here](#).



Stone Hill's Story –

At Stone Hill School, three students took part in a four-week placement that pushed them out of their comfort zones and into real responsibility. By leading sports sessions and supporting younger pupils, they developed confidence, teamwork, and communication skills. The experience also opened their eyes to new opportunities in coaching, education, and youth work. By the end of the placement, hesitation had turned into pride and motivation, leaving the students with a renewed sense of purpose and belief in their own potential.





Fusion Futures

Fusion Futures is about raising aspirations and unlocking potential by preparing young people for tomorrow through leadership, volunteering, and employment pathways. Through partnerships with schools, colleges, and employers, we've created meaningful pathways into employment.

This year, we delivered:

- 3442 hours of leadership and work experience
- 1835 hours of volunteering
- 504 hours of accredited training delivered

Our programmes focus on real-world skills, communication, organisation, problem-solving, and provide young people with the confidence to pursue their ambitions. With 49% reporting improved life skills, we're helping shape a generation that's ready to lead, work, and thrive.



Ben's Story –

Ben's apprenticeship with Active Fusion has transformed his passion for sport into a real career pathway while making a positive difference for young people. Based at Auckley Primary School, he works closely with pupils of all ages, including those with SEND, supporting learning in the classroom, leading PE lessons, and running after-school sports clubs.

Through these responsibilities, Ben has developed confidence, leadership, and communication skills, while creating safe, engaging spaces where pupils can learn, play, and thrive. Guided by a dedicated mentor and supported through college-based learning, Ben has combined practical experience with theoretical knowledge, gaining the skills and confidence to pursue a long-term career in sports coaching.

His apprenticeship has not only prepared him for future professional opportunities but has also allowed him to have a meaningful impact on the children he works with every day, inspiring them through sport and building their confidence, teamwork, and enjoyment of physical activity.



Partnerships with Purpose

In a year where the charity sector has faced unprecedented financial pressures, Active Fusion has continued to adapt and diversify, ensuring that no child or young person is left behind.

At the heart of this success lies the power of partnership. We have strategically strengthened our connections with the business community, uniting around a shared vision: creating the change that children and young people deserve in the very places they live, learn, and grow.

Our Fusion Performance Club has grown into a thriving network of purpose-driven businesses, each committed to using their influence as a force for good. Together, these partners have not only supported but actively championed opportunities for young people. This year, we are proud to be working with our largest-ever number of business partners, 30 in total.

Through innovative collaborations, businesses have sponsored community provision, helping us extend our reach into areas of greatest need. Our fundraising campaigns, including The Big Give and When You Tri, have been a testament to what can be achieved when communities and businesses come together, generating vital funds to sustain our inclusion services and community outreach programmes.

Alongside corporate partnerships, grants, trusts, and foundations remain the lifeblood of our work, enabling us to both attract new, trusted funders and nurture long-standing relationships. Their support ensures we can continue delivering our charitable mission with confidence, stability, and lasting impact.

Together, these purposeful partnerships are not just funding projects, they are investing in futures.



Hear from one of our key corporate partners, Verdion, [here](#).



Tomorrow Starts Here - Plans for 25/26

Confronting The Challenge

Young people across South Yorkshire face serious and growing barriers. Tens of thousands are on mental-health waiting lists and many pupils missed education on census day in 2024/25. A significant number of young people are neither in work nor in education or training, often because of mental-health problems, skill gaps, or limited local opportunities. Rising rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm, loneliness, eating disorders and suicidal ideation make this an urgent and real life crisis for young people whose futures are at risk.

Proven Approach

Physical activity, social connection, and positive role models are not optional extras; they are clinically proven to boost mental wellbeing, self-esteem, and life outcomes. Our sport and structured programmes teach essential life skills, deepen engagement with education, and build the confidence young people need to move into independent lives. We turn passion into purpose by combining fun, routine, and mentorship so every young person can access the stabilising and aspirational power of physical activity.

Strategic Priorities

- **Partnerships and income:** Expand collaborations with employers, local authorities, health services, and schools; diversify funding to secure long-term growth.
- **Inclusive programmes:** Scale up accessible physical-activity initiatives and events that remove barriers and ignite leadership.
- **Mentorship and wellbeing:** Strengthen peer-mentoring networks and launch targeted mental-health workshops, combining sport with professional support.
- **Impact and innovation:** Enhance data-driven evaluation and share our four-pillar model as a replicable toolkit for peer organisations.

Why This Matters

The data shows the scale of the problem and our experience shows the solution. By investing in inclusive physical activity, safe social spaces, and mentoring, we address immediate wellbeing needs while equipping young people with the skills, resilience, and networks to thrive. Tomorrow starts here - by acting now to improve health, build skills, and lift aspirations, we help create stronger, healthier communities for the long term.

Thank You to our Funders & Partners

We sincerely thank our funders and partners for their generous support and unwavering commitment; your contribution has made it possible for us to positively impact the lives of thousands of young people.





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Active Fusion

Financial Accounts

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