



Mid Argyll Youth Development Services

Registered Charity: SC022931
MAYDS Ltd Company number: 396832
50a Union Street
Lochgilphead
Argyll
PA31 8JS

Robertson Trust, Year 3 Final Report. February 2025 to February 2026.

We want to take this opportunity to thank The Robertson Trust for their continued and ongoing support of our Services. Your funding of £22,000 towards running costs this year has helped us make both big and small changes in the lives of children, young people and their families locally by enabling us to run a robust program of activities and support services, as outlined below.

Our Tailor Support Services continued to offer and provide holistic support to children, young people and their families throughout the year. This included helping those in need access relevant resources, offering tailored guidance, and signposting and liaising with other community organisations and agencies to ensure needs are met. The service continued to focus on building children and young people's confidence, self-esteem, and resilience, while also supporting transitions and pathways to positive destinations and independence. In addition, we continued to support reducing barriers for the most marginalised groups, such as young carers, Young People with Additional Support Needs (ASN) and their families, young people suffering poor mental health and wellbeing, and families in crisis.

Our Tailor Support Services included:

Pre-Employability and Employability Support.

Pre-Employability Support services were delivered to help young people prepare for entering the workforce or further education, mainly supporting those with more complex needs and barriers, such as non-school-engagers. The program offered a range of support, from practical workshops on CV writing, interview skills, and job searching to access to certified training programs, college courses, and volunteering opportunities. We were also able to provide funding for those struggling financially to purchase items such as laptops, PPE, and Interview clothing. These services aimed to improve young people's opportunities to enter positive destinations by boosting their self-esteem and bridging gaps in skills or experience that might hinder their prospects. 32 individuals accessed pre-employability support this year. In addition, we run a 6-week pre-employability class with a group of 5 non-school attenders aged 15. This group came to the MAYDS centre every week and, in addition to covering

topics related to leaving school and employment, they also received some certified training, such as first aid.



Anthony is being awarded his Health and Safety in Construction Certificate.

Our Employability program offered a range of services, resources, and support designed to help individuals gain, retain, and progress in employment, with a particular focus on supporting those with barriers. In addition to considering career options and applying for jobs, the majority entered our Work-Based Placements. Here, individuals were matched with a local employer for up to 24 weeks, receiving work experience while getting a training allowance. At the end of the time, it is hoped the young person will get a job or apprenticeship, but at the very minimum, they will have built up skills and a reference for the future. 17 accessed Employability support over the year, including five young people undertaking Lifeguard Training and then entering jobs at the pool, one entering employment with CalMac, 7 on Work Based Placements, with 2 gaining an apprenticeship in construction, 1 gaining employment at a museum, 2 still on placement and 2 gaining work experience.

Within this program, we also supported 3 young people with business start-up ventures. This included writing business plans, securing funding for equipment, training, and other expenses. We had one young person open a nail salon, one started a barbering business, and one started an eco-friendly bin-cleaning service locally.



Amy at work in her Nail Salon (Beauty by Amy).

Free Counselling for young people, parents and families.

In 2025, our free counselling services continued to provide young people, parents, and families with access to professional mental health or emotional support at no cost. The counsellor worked with 32 people addressing a variety of issues, such as stress, anxiety, depression, family relationship problems, grief, self-harm, eating disorders, etc. The aim is to help individuals improve their well-being, cope with challenges, and develop effective self-help techniques, all without financial barriers. This year we saw an increase in parents accessing counselling support, these were parents in crisis struggling to cope with issues such as children being non-school attenders, children with complex needs and behavioural problems and children with no positive destinations.

In 2025, we also continued our Long-Term Therapy Program on Islay. Funded by the Mactaggart Family, we continued working with six individuals in need of intensive long-term support. This is a vital program for the island, where services are limited, and getting off the island is costly. Through this program, our counsellor supported people suffering a range of issues, including eating disorders, family breakdown, agoraphobia and depression. Whether minor or significant, all individuals reported progress over the year that allowed them to make changes in their lives.

Our contract with Health is One Limited meant our counsellor continued to deliver school counselling service on Islay and in Tarbert Academy. Each school was allocated one day per week when our counsellor worked with children aged 10 years and over.

Young Carers Respite/Support.

Our young carers services provide support and resources to children and young people who care for a family member with an illness, disability, mental health condition, or substance dependency. These services are designed to: 1) Offer breaks from caring responsibilities, giving young carers time to rest, relax, and pursue their own interests; 2) Provide emotional, practical, and social assistance. This may involve counselling, peer support groups, advocacy, information about carers' rights, and help with managing education or employment alongside caring duties.

In 2025, we continued to run the commissioned services for young carers on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council. We covered the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay area (MAKI), where we currently have 133 young carers with a statement and registered with us. The services and support we provided varied from individual to individual but included counselling, respite through attending the young carers festival, time to live grants for holidays, weekly young carers drop-in sessions at school and at the MAYDS centre, care packages and food parcels, support to access the young carers grant, driving lessons, etc. This year, we also took 18 young people from across MAKI, ages 8 to 12 years, to the annual young carers festival. This was a 3-day, two-night camping event with young carers from all over Scotland. Our young carers loved the event, it gave them time to get away and participate in activities such as cake decorating, inflatables, silent disco, movies, petting zoo, science centre and lots more.



Young Carers Festival 2025

Support and respite for young people with ASD and their families.

In 2025, support and services for those with Additional and complex needs increased significantly. We are now working with more families to help provide respite and resources for individuals who require extra assistance due to physical, learning and sensory challenges. We do this through offering weekly youth clubs for those with complex needs. This allows young people who cannot access generic groups and clubs to participate in activities and other activities in an environment where staff are fully trained and can meet individual needs. In addition, it provides parents and families with regular respite, allowing them to go shopping, meet friends, etc. Due to demand, we have increased the weekly sessions from 2 to 3. We are currently working with 28 families.



Fun at ASD Youth Drop-In



Detached and Outreach Programs.

Through our STREET MAYDS program, our trained Youth staff continue to engage with individuals in their own environments rather than expecting them to come to a fixed location. This work is carried out at high-risk times such as weekends, school holidays and at events where underage drinking is prevalent. The aim is to build positive relationships, offer support and advice, and provide activities that bring people together. Often, staff on duty will encourage young people to go to the MAYDS centre to chill or have pizza, which is open on a Friday and Saturday evening, rather than hang about the Streets. In the last year, the number of individuals attending weekend drop-ins has significantly increased, reaching 35 to 40. We believe this is due to our STREET MAYDS program.



STREETMAYDS staff on duty, helping with a litter pick.

Drug and Alcohol Education in the Schools.

This year, we continued to run the drug and Alcohol Education in Tarbert, Lochgilphead and Islay High schools on behalf of the Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drug Partnership. This year, in addition to programs and lessons for students to increase their awareness and understanding of the risks and consequences of substance use, we also held information sessions during parents' evenings. We distributed monthly newsletters to parents through schools. This allowed the parents to see what we were teaching their children and local trends in the areas where they live. The main goals of this program are to: Provide accurate information about drugs, alcohol, and their effects on the body and mind, develop students' decision-making, critical thinking, and refusal skills, encourage healthy

attitudes and behaviours regarding substance use, promote awareness of peer pressure and strategies to resist, and inform students about where to seek help and support if needed.



P7 transition parents' evening at Lochgilphead Joint Campus.

Agency Working and Community Organisation partnerships.

We continue to work with and build positive relationships with local statutory agencies, including social work, education, police and health. This year, we received more input from agencies like CHAMS and community policing, both to support individuals and to deliver education sessions. More support for individual children and young people with additional needs and complex needs meant we had more input and attended more children's plan meetings this year.

Our links with community organisations remain positive. The Dementia Choir, Heads Up Mental Health support Group, Job Centre and Community learning all use our building to run their groups free of charge every week. In addition, the Foodbank continues to have unrestricted use of a building on our premises for its foodbank shop. We work closely with MOMA, which runs the FoodShare shop, to deliver food parcels to those most in need. We often provide or arrange parcels for our service users and their families. This year, some of our young volunteers joined in to give their time at the Dementia Choir; this was a real example of intergenerational working.

Our Diversionary Services.

In 2025, we delivered a robust program of diversionary services. These programs or events were designed to engage children and young people in positive, purposeful activities as an alternative to potentially risky or antisocial behaviours. Through these diversionary activities, we helped provide safe, supervised environments for recreation and socialisation, offer sessions in music, sports, drama, etc., offer volunteering opportunities, foster a sense of community and belonging, and help children and young people build confidence and self-esteem. At any given session, up to 40 young people may attend.

Our weekly diversionary program this year consisted of:

- Girls and Boys free Swimming.
- The JAM music group.
- Ardrishaig Youth Drop-In.
- Kilmartin Youth Drop-In.
- Senior Youth Club on Fridays and Saturdays.
- 5 to 8's Action.
- P5, 6, and 7 activities.
- ASN club.
- Young Carers club.



Fun times at 6 to 8's In Action.

Community Garden and Wheel Park.

We are delighted to say, thanks to funding from Awards for All, this year we were able to complete our community garden and wheel park viewing area. With the fencing, block walls, and paving completed in 2024, all we needed was the garden design, planting, and sensory equipment, which we are now thankful has been completed. Our final phase of this long process is the installation and completion of the Wheel park. This year, we have been working with Edinburgh Wheels and local contractors Balfour Beatty to get the design and plans for the works underway. Edinburgh Wheels will build and project-manage the development, and also provide job opportunities and training during this period to local young people aged 16-25 who are not in employment, education or training. Balfour Beatty is offering in-kind support through machinery, materials, PPE, and local contractors giving their time. This will significantly reduce the project's costs and pave the way for local young people to enter the workforce and pursue apprenticeships. We are hoping work will start in mid-2026.

