

"I can do anything if I put my mind to it - through all the opportunities I have been given... We should all be given opportunities, no matter who we are or our disabilities."

- Kayleigh Ptak
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Gold holder
via The Starfish Way



Strategy
2023-2028

"Taking Our Story Forward"



PERTH & KINROSS
ASSOCIATION SCIO

INTRODUCTION

Since it was formed in 1991, the Perth and Kinross Association of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (PKDofE for short) has been helping young people (aged 14-25) to build confidence and the skills needed to succeed in life.

From humble beginnings offering resource assistance to groups and individuals undertaking the world renowned Duke of Edinburgh's Award across the region, the Association has grown in both remit and reach whilst also discovering a specific calling.

Over the past decade the efforts of the Association have broadened from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award - the cornerstone of our programmes - to also supporting achievement across First Aid certification, local authority achievement standards, the Saltire Award, National Navigation Award and the John Muir Award. A year prior to becoming the new patron of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Prince Edward made a promise in memory of his father. He said that the award scheme Prince Phillip had founded should always be there to support young people with difficulties who face growing up in a modern and complicated world. We are committed to helping fulfil that promise, one young person at a time.

In 2018 the Association recognised an acute needs gap for bespoke, close support services and turned its attention to nurturing the development of young people with additional support needs. Our unique and dedicated programme The Starfish Way was born.





Most recently, the Coronavirus pandemic has led to increased digital provision which has enabled the Association to extend a helping hand, our innovative Distance Learning Hub, to Award participants living throughout the UK. The Association's reconstitution as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2022 reflects the charity's dynamic development over this time as well as our desire to lay a strong footing on which further growth can be solidly built.

This document outlines the strategic aspirations of PKDofE as it looks towards the next 5 years of helping young people realise their potential.



▲ A Young Person using the Distance Learning Hub



We are excited about the future of PKDofE and are confident that our 2023-2028 approach will help us to realise our vision of supporting young people, particularly those with additional support needs, to feel happy, be safe, experience achievement, and believe in themselves.

A PLAN FOR UNLOCKING POSITIVE FUTURES



▲ Young Carers Group Expedition

Our Ambition is to help as many young people as we can to discover who they are and to realise what they can be. We strongly believe that achievement schemes such as the highly regarded Duke of Edinburgh's Award can help facilitate this process. We are especially committed to removing barriers to participation that exist for those with additional support needs, offering opportunities and challenge for young people to become their best selves in a safe environment.

Our People are our most valued resource: the delivery team who accompany young people as they unlock their potential; the support team who sustain and maintain their self-discovery environment; and the Board of Trustees who ensure that the framework holds firm and continues to meet their needs. All our people have a vital role to play in shaping the Association and keeping the support it offers relevant to young people in a fast moving world.

Our Approach is simple - The Starfish Way. Addressing our priority requires effective deployment of our people and The Starfish Way provides a unique pathway developed specifically by PKDofE which does just that. We have witnessed incredible transformations in the lives of young people over the past five years as they have achieved through this programme. We intend to build on this success with The Starfish Way fully underpinning our future work.

Building our Strategy

The past few years have seen many transformations, as a growing organisation but also in the wake of a global health emergency, an escalating climate emergency, societal change, and armed conflict.

Those we work for and who work for us are experiencing the impacts of these changes and so it has been important to allow ourselves time to carefully consider the relative impact of these factors on the direction of the Association. By constructing a strategy for the next 5 years in this way we've endeavoured to ensure that we are focused on achievable goals, invest in the right areas, remain relevant and ultimately thrive and grow as an organisation.

We began the process in June 2022 with a four-month phase of stakeholder engagement which included a range of opportunities to enquire, consult and collate input from our young people, staff, trustees, partners and wider stakeholders.



THIS INCLUDED:

- **Our Story Going Forward 'Stakeholder' Strategy Day:** A face-to-face day of discussion, inspiration gathering and idea capturing attended by young people, volunteers, partners and charity trustees
- **Our Story Going Forward 'Staff' Strategy Day:** A dedicated day of discussion to capture the views and ideas of our staff
- **Open mural wall:** Targeting charity trustees and stakeholders including funders, referral agencies, and key partners
- **Online questionnaire:** Available to charity trustees and stakeholders including funders, referral agencies, and key partners



Shaping our vision, mission, values and strategy has been a collaborative and informative process and through the approach we have taken we are confident that our strategy reflects the joint vision of the Board of Trustees, is a plan that our staff can deliver, will excite our stakeholders, and most importantly will benefit the young people who take part in our activities. The Board of Trustees is **committed to delivering on our strategic objectives over the next 5 years** and will ensure that the outlined ambitions are supported by correctly scaled and resourced operational plans.

Like our Association, **our strategy will remain dynamic with regular review** and revision. This will enable progress to be measured against objectives and to allow adaptation in light of operational, economic and societal developments. Input from young people, staff, partners and key stakeholders will remain central to the review process and any significant changes in scale or direction.



Our Vision

'To support young people, particularly those with additional support needs, to feel happy, be safe, experience achievement, and believe in themselves.'

'To bring passion, joy and encouragement to the support of young people as they discover their abilities and become their best selves.'

Our Mission

- To support young people by listening actively and learning from what they tell us
- To place kindness and the wellbeing of individuals at the centre of all our work
- To be inclusive and equal
- To value relationships
- To continuously improve
- To be sustainable

Our Values

Our Strategy

'The Starfish Way'



Jacob growing vegetables at Megginch Garden ◀

OUR VISION

‘To support young people, particularly those with additional support needs, to feel happy, be safe, experience achievement, and believe in themselves.’

Stemming from a core priority of making a real difference to the lives of young people through helping them discover who they are and to realise what they can be, we have constructed our vision. We wish to empower young people who may otherwise struggle to find their way without the right environment and support network around them. We wish to nurture character and skills development, encourage self-motivation, promote values, and enhance physical and mental health through helping young people experience achievement through schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

CASA (Children Alone and Seeking Asylum) Group ▶



OUR MISSION

‘To bring passion, joy and encouragement to the support of young people as they discover their abilities and become their best selves.’

Kindness, compassion and care for the wellbeing of others is at the heart of what we do and how we operate as an Association. This is an organisational culture that we endeavour to foster from the strategic levels of the Board of Trustees, through the management staff to the team members who work directly with young people. This ethos guides our working practices, how we design and deliver our support services. In practice, our mission involves providing a safe and nurturing environment for young people with additional support needs to be at ease and to flourish. Every young star is unique and so we provide tailored support to mesh with each young person’s particular needs. In doing so we create opportunities for young people to believe in themselves, to find hope, and to feel supported as they become the best they can be.



^ Summer Activity Day with Perth Autism Support in the grounds of Megginch Castle





OUR VALUES

Our mission and our values are very closely linked; in many ways our values form essential ingredients to the effective design and successful execution of our mission. Our values, therefore, represent foundational principles that we aim to apply consistently across all our professional activities and practices.



To support young people by listening actively and learning from what they tell us:

Practicing this value ensures that we understand and can meet the needs of each individual appropriately. The young people participating in our programmes must feel truly listened to so they feel their opinions are valued and know that they have a voice in guiding the work we do with them.

To continuously improve: Through regular monitoring and evaluation we gather performance and experience data to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our service users (including young people, their families, staff, volunteers, partner agencies, and funders). Through this process we remain open to fresh ideas and best practice examples from other organisations where appropriate so as to continually improvement and enhance our services.

To be sustainable: Maintaining delivery without interruption is critical to the positive outcomes of our services on the lives of young people. We strive to exercise robust financial planning with a broad income base, disciplined expenditure and strong reserves to ensure our services are sustainably financed. We are also an environmentally aware organisation, seeking to demonstrate good stewardship through minimising our waste, carbon footprint and energy use where we can.

To value: We believe high quality relationships will promote the kindness, trust, understanding, belief and commitment that will lead to positive experiences for everyone. We strive to foster these between young people; between ourselves and young people; between ourselves and parents/carers; within the Association; and between PKDoFE, our partners and the wider community.

To place kindness and the wellbeing of individuals at the centre of all our work:

Enhancing and maintaining wellbeing is a key outcome in our work and we believe a kind, understanding approach is essential to achieving this. It also helps create a calm, happy environment for our staff to work in and so these values should be evident in all aspects of our face-to-face work with young people and inter-staff interactions.

To be inclusive and equal: Our activities are available to all young people and through being adaptable we try to ensure that there are no barriers to participation. We shall endeavor to make our services accessible to all and ensure that our communication is clear at all times.

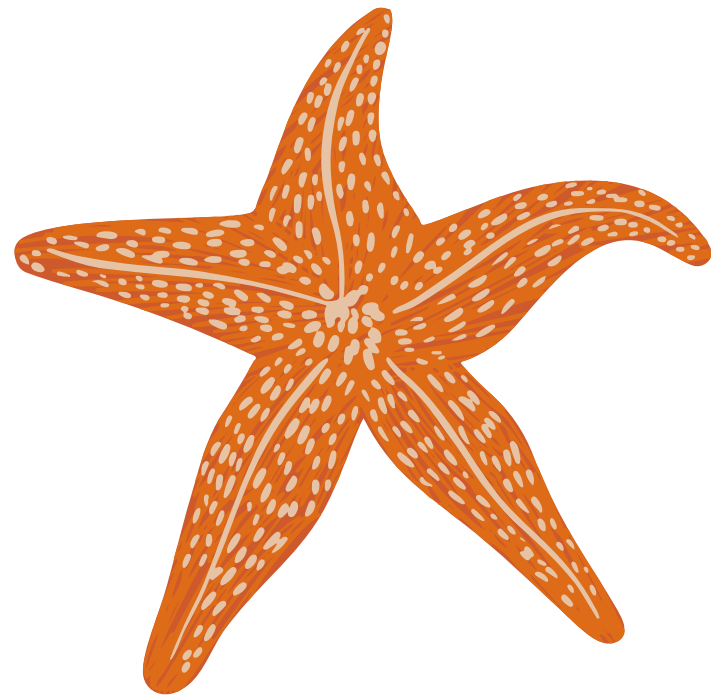


▲ Paddleboarding with a Starfish Way group

OUR STRATEGY

The Starfish Way: “You do not need to be helping everyone all of the time, even if helping only a small number you are still making a difference.”

- adapted from The Star Thrower by
Loren Eiseley (1907-1977)



OUR VISION FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE, TOGETHER WITH THE MISSION WE UNDERTAKE TO ACHIEVE IT AND OUR PRINCIPLE VALUES, ARE ALL UNDERPINNED BY OUR STRATEGY - THE STARFISH WAY.

Until now The Starfish Way has represented just one of the Association's pathways to achievement, designed and built by us specifically for supporting young people with additional support needs through their Duke of Edinburgh's Award journey. We have seen such incredible transformations in the young people engaged in this programme and we've been greatly inspired by their determination and success.

As we've been considering the future direction of PKDofE we've realised the potential for The Starfish Way, with its underlying ethos, delivery mechanics, and support framework, to become our overarching focus and strategy for achieving our vision over the next 5 years. The Starfish Way provides a robust but flexible model that can be applied across work streams and locations, both physical and digital.

It can be distilled into a 5-point strategic toolkit which will give our charitable work a clear focus, cohesion and consistency as we embark on our mission and reach towards our vision.





WHAT IS THE STARFISH WAY?



Inspired by the words of Loren Eiseley, The Starfish Way isn't about numbers, it's about individuals. It recognises that every star is valuable and worth helping, that there are many needing a hand to reach out and guide them back to the sea, and that we can make a world of difference one star at a time.

Our unique programme of close-support work with young people, their families and wider support networks began in August 2018 through a wonderful partnership with the Drummond family who made the grounds of their beautiful home, Megginch Castle near Errol, available to us. The space and tranquillity of the walled garden, orchard, and wilder spaces of the estate form a safe, therapeutic and naturally nurturing learning environment in which the young people can work towards certificated Awards.

Setting is an essential ingredient in the magic of The Starfish Way. Into the mix we add our dedicated team of compassionate development workers who come alongside the young people, carve the big challenges of undertaking an Award into smaller bitesize chunks, and guide them through their sectional activities in small peer groups or individually.

As they work towards their Awards participants have adventures, learn new skills (physical, mental and social) and develop coping mechanisms that they can apply to their everyday lives. The result is a learning space where there's room to breathe, where they can feel secure, find hope, grow in confidence and ultimately, thrive and achieve.

The Starfish Way is already expanding beyond the bounds of Megginch. When the Coronavirus pandemic hit in 2019 we launched our Distance Learning Hub which delivers the same level of staff support and supervision but remotely via a combination of digital and physical resources. It has proven so successful that demand for the Hub continues to grow long after social-distancing restrictions have lifted.

Building on our knowledge and experience at Megginch and responding to demand, new physical locations to undertake Awards through The Starfish Way are also coming on stream with exciting developments at Cultybraggan near Comrie making our work more accessible to young people living in north western Perth and Kinross.

Entrance to grounds of Megginch Castle



Cultybraggan Aerial view (VisitsScotland)



Hut 47 being readied for use at Cultybraggan

THE STARFISH WAY TOOLKIT

Inclusive and Adaptable Learning Environments:

Delivery of a broad, flexible and relevant range of activities that cater for specific needs, are engaging and are accessible for any young person facing challenge.



A Plan for Every Young Person:

Everyone has a unique set of circumstances, challenges and differences. Support and activity plans will be tailored to each individual to help them be the best they can be. Plans will factor both physical and mental health and involve engagement with family and other support networks.

Informed and Inspired by Young Voices:

The work and direction of the Association will be guided by the needs and interests of young people through participant feedback, a young ambassador and a young Charity Trustee directly inputting into strategic and operational planning.

Close Support for All:

Each individual enrolled will receive the level of support they need to achieve. Our staff and volunteers will also have access to networks of support to ensure that their workplace is a safe and nurturing environment so they too can be their best selves.

Responsive to a Dynamic Earth:

As needs, individuals, environment, society and culture changes, so too will we. Communicating with our young people, partners and funders we will exercise dynamic strategic and operational planning to ensure we deliver services that are supported by effective staffing, financing, logistics, IT and communications.



OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVES

Improving
Confidence and
Self Worth

Supporting the
Health and
Wellbeing of
Young People

Supporting
Achievement and
Closing the
Attainment Gap

Recruiting, Valuing
and Retaining
Staff and
Volunteers

Strengthening
Partnerships,
promoting our
Services, ensuring
organisational
sustainability

Over the course of the next 5 years we have ambitious aspirations for the Association, building on our successes in supporting young people since our formation over 30 years ago.

In particular, we are excited to focus our work more fully on removing barriers for young people with additional support needs so they can experience achievement through Award schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. To support our Strategy we have set out 5 strategic objectives which will be employed as key performance indicators against which we can track our progress.



Volunteering at Auchingarrich Wildlife Park

SUPPORTING ACHIEVEMENT AND CLOSE THE ATTAINMENT GAP



Help young people to secure a positive post-secondary school destination



Help more young people facing challenges to achieve a range of awards, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the John Muir Award, the Saltire Award, Heritage Hero Award, NNAS, Outdoor Achievement Awards



Provide locations that offer progressive experiences and increasingly independent living skills (e.g. Cultybraggan)

IMPROVING CONFIDENCE AND SELF WORTH



Ensure all participants are well supported and have a positive experience.



Remove participation barriers for young people with additional support needs through effective individual plans.



Develop a wider range of activities that will inspire and engage young people.

RECRUITING, VALUING AND RETAINING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



Further develop a support and nurture infrastructure for our staff and volunteers



Increase the number of volunteer workers, charity trustees and include young people in these roles



Develop Young Ambassador and apprentice programmes

SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE



Provide high nurture experiences



Provide experiences designed to promote mental and physical health and wellbeing



Engage with families and wider support networks



Provide a high quality, free and relevant distance learning environment of Starfish standards



Provide safe, therapeutic direct learning environments that are accessible to young people across a wider geography



Gold Award Celebration at Holyrood Palace ^

▼ 'Cooking for Fun' module in the Distance Learning Hub



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS, PROMOTING OUR SERVICES, ENSURING ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY



Collaborate and innovate with new and existing partners/funders, maintaining vision alignment and mutually beneficial working relationships



Develop an effective communication and promotion plan that celebrates the achievements of the young people we're working with and offers opportunities for other organisations, funders, potential service users and volunteers to engage with us



Establish a broad and stable income base and grow our unrestricted reserves to achieve and maintain organisational financial sustainability



Improve our environmental sustainability reducing waste, carbon footprint and excessive energy consumption

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING

The Board of Trustees is committed to delivering our strategic objectives through sound and careful oversight of the charity's affairs.

Within the first year, we will increase the number of charity trustees and broaden the skill set of the Board, filling gaps in expertise to match our objectives. We will operate robust strategic risk assessment procedures with a dynamic register informed and updated by our staff and reviewed quarterly by our Board. Our strategy must be informed by our young people to remain relevant. We will recruit a young person to the Board of Trustees and appoint a young person as an ambassador. These roles will provide a voice for young people inside the organisation as well as points of peer-peer contact for service users. Their experiences and advocacy will be beneficial internally for measuring performance relative to our strategic objectives which will in turn help us to focus our efforts on areas in need of development.

Externally, their advocacy will help to promote the work of the Association to new audiences with the ambassador demonstrating through example how barriers to participation and achievement can be overcome.

Operational plans will be directly informed by our strategy document with appropriate scaling and resourcing applied to enable our strategic objectives to be achieved.



^ Litter picking for volunteering



^ Paddleboarding with a Starfish Way group

LOOKING TOWARDS 2028

**In five years' time, we want to
be able to say...**

- We are reaching more young people with support needs and have a growing number of participants
- We are fully inclusive and young people see no barriers to connecting with us
- We have achieved good working relationships with schools and colleges and partners in the community
- We are providing a wider range of activities in multiple high-quality environments
- We can demonstrate that we are supporting young people to develop the confidence and skills that they need for everyday life
- We are increasing our volunteers and retaining experienced staff who feel rewarded and valued
- We are supporting young people further afield through a distance learning resource that offers choice, progression and accessibility through high quality experiential learning
- We will have a strong and sustainable financial base with more self-generated income to support long term staff retention, operational delivery and organisational growth



^ CASA group First Aid training



PERTH & KINROSS
ASSOCIATION SCIO

Scottish Charity SC051572

The Award Office,
Kincarrathie House Drive,
Perth PH2 7HX

T: 01738 627455

E: admin@pkdofe.com

www.pkdofe.com