

# Funding for Action for Children from Cashback For Communities



Young people in Scotland seeking employment are set to benefit from £500,000 seized from criminals, in the third phase of funding from CashBack for Communities.

The first ever CashBack funding award to Action for Children will enable the Scottish charity to extend its work with unemployed young people and develop a new program called Positive Choices. The project will improve the skills of around approximately 160 young people across Scotland to prepare them for a career in the construction industry. It will also offer opportunities in sports coaching, social care and the oil and gas industries over the next three years.

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill said: "I am delighted to award Action for Children this money through the newest phase of the hugely successful Cashback for Communities scheme.

"The organisation plays a vital role in improving the lives of children throughout Scotland and, by using cash seized from criminals will improve the futures of generations of Scots to come.

"The £500,000 funding will provide vital training and additional skills to not only benefit individuals, but also their communities around them, and I am delighted that these ill-gotten gains can now be used for genuine good."

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The announcement comes as the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service confirmed that a further £8 million had been recovered through the Proceeds of Crime Act over the last year, adding to the £80 million already seized since 2003.

Over £74 million of money seized through the Proceeds of Crime Act has been put to excellent use through CashBack for Communities, funding around 1.2 million activities and opportunities for young people since 2007.

Solicitor General, Lesley Thomson, said: "The Crown Office figures released this week show that we have disrupted the illegal activities of hundreds of criminals in Scotland during the last year.

"By continuing to outsmart organised criminals we have identified a further eight million pounds from criminal ventures which will be used to help build strong communities and provide valuable opportunities for young people such as the Positive Choices programme for young people."

The announcement was made at a visit to Youthbuild, an Edinburgh project that aims to give unemployed young people the opportunity to gain the skills and certificates they need to work in construction. The young people involved were on hand to demonstrate their newly acquired skills in tiling.

Paul Carberry, Director of Service Development at Action for Children Scotland, said: "We work with some of the most vulnerable young people in society – young people who have left school with no qualifications, are unemployed, and who lack the confidence and motivation to find work.

"As well as offering industry-recognised accreditations and paid work experience, we also provide wraparound support to help them succeed in, and maintain, employment. The CashBack for Communities funding will enable us to work with larger numbers, giving young people the tools to build a better future and helping to tackle youth unemployment in this

country.”

Photos by Jane Barlow