



**Extract, Trustees' Report 2023**

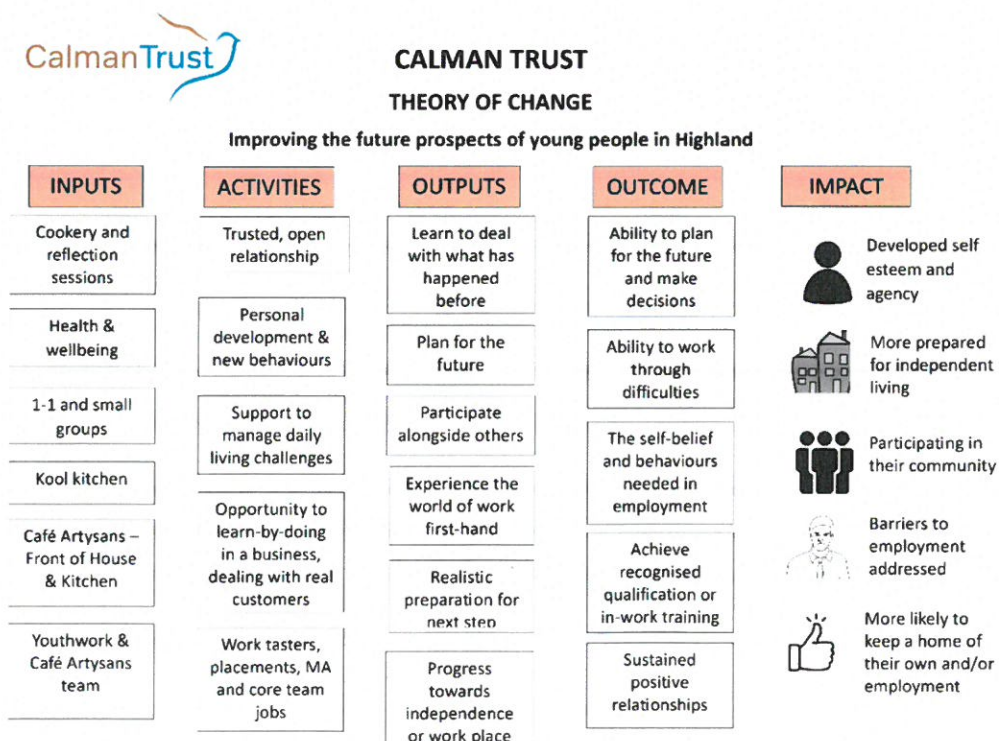
**Objectives and Activities**

The Calman Trust vision is a society where all young people are valued and are empowered to achieve their full potential. Our mission is to improve the future prospects of those we work with by providing appropriate support, training and work opportunities so that they can become resilient, healthy, contributing and independent adults. Since formed in 1998, Calman has provided support and/or learning opportunities to young people across the Inner Moray Firth area of Highland, working with more than 6,000 in this time.

Young people are referred to Calman services by public sector agencies, including Community Mental Health teams, GP Links, Skills Development Scotland, DWP, Council Social Work, Housing, Education, Community Justice and Employability teams, also voluntary youth services, and increasingly by their family.

These are young people aged 14-25 who experience difficulties in the transition towards independent living or employment, currently or in anticipation of future vulnerability. Typically, they have limited family support, have not attended, been excluded from school, or have left without a plan; they have poor self-expectations and find themselves predisposed to homelessness, unemployment, and long-term poverty. A high proportion experience poor mental health, complex family background and negative childhood experiences or learning difference/disability.

The ability to talk, to voice their interests as well as their concerns, is something that few young people show at the outset. Most lack a sense of personal agency, and expect that they will be told what to do with next steps decided for them, but with little expectation of personal buy-in. The ability to communicate, to express choices and needs, to decide and follow through on action to address these, is crucial to an independent future. Enabling, listening and responding to the young person's voice is therefore fundamental to all the organisation's services. The following diagram sets out our approach, reflected in the range of activity offered.



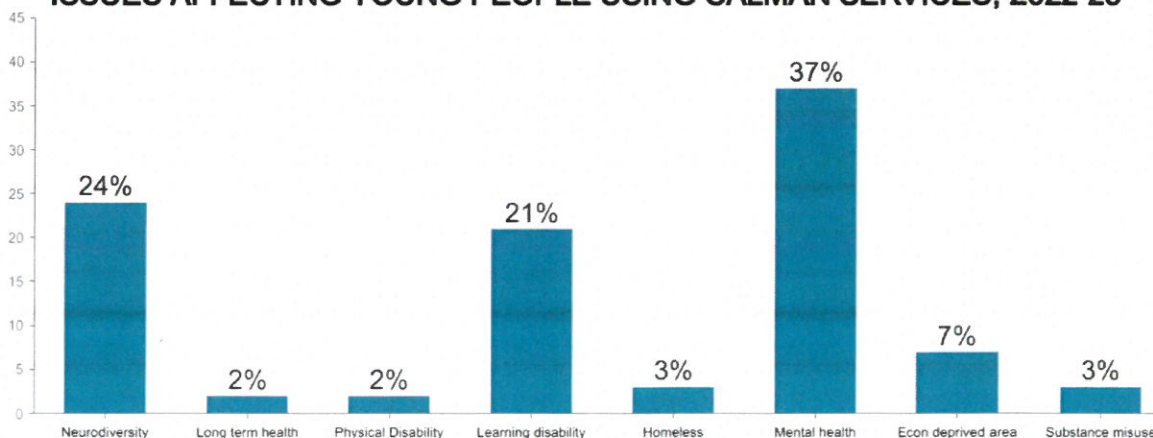
At the outset, the young person is introduced to a member of the Calman team who will take a trauma informed approach to build a relationship of mutual understanding, learning what concerns the young person and what they like, enabling them to understand what Calman can offer, the difference this can make for them and together identifying immediate next steps. Progress is measured in terms of the behaviours the young person wants to change and the steps that take them towards their personal goal; it is therefore personally meaningful and owned. All is tailored to the individual and described in a simple plan that is led and held by the young person.

Young people join at the stage that matches their needs and abilities. Informal cookery, gym or art sessions, combined with reflection, benefit those who are most disengaged at referral or lacking in confidence and people skills. Here, they see themselves making things happen and making social connections. They begin to make decisions. They see that by their actions they can influence what happens - not waiting passively for things to happen, as if nothing they do will make any difference, which is so very common for young people who have experienced difficulty in or out of school. Those able to work alongside others, to communicate and participate consistently and feeling ready, are offered work-based learning in our Café Artysans social enterprise or alternative of their choice. Here, they can undertake work experience, placements or job roles, and develop workplace skills honed in a busy real business, with real customers, and they can work towards qualifications.

This combined offer helps build a strong foundation of essential soft skills required in everyday living and the work skills that prepare the young person for future employment. Depending on their needs, individuals can progress through these as in a pipeline, or they can engage in a tailored combination to develop both interpersonal skills and workplace capability. Each is supported to progress at a pace they can sustain, the duration derived from their progress, not a set programme length; the focus is always on sustained change. When ready to progress beyond Calman services, the young person is offered continuing support to sustain their next step.

This year, 120 young people have come through Calman services (118 in 2021-22). The need to develop readiness for employment has been the prime reason for referral (62%), of a cohort identified as facing a range of personal challenges – see figure below. For more than one-third of participants (37%) issues with their mental health, principally diagnosed anxiety or depression, is the main barrier to progression. Approaching another quarter are disadvantaged through neurodiversity and learning disability (24% and 21% respectively).

### ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE USING CALMAN SERVICES, 2022-23



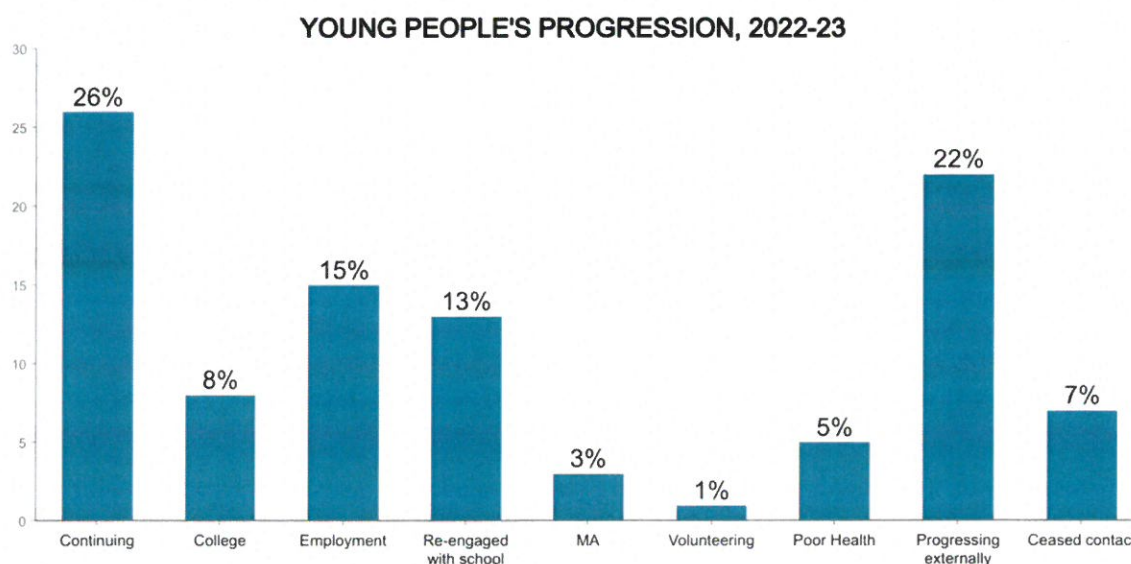
Post-Covid, we see young people more isolated, more alienated, more anxious, and lower in self-belief and motivation. It is not uncommon for individuals referred to have not attended School for years, for much or all of the week. Most are not involved in any activity outside the family home; many don't leave their home and show real nervousness at the prospect of engaging in something new, which they might not be able to control completely. They have not learned to engage with peers



or adults outside the family, and the prospect causes huge stress. It's easier to opt out. Evidence from the year's activity indicates that this anxiety is exacerbated by the young person's interaction with social media and technology, principally their phone and/or gaming.

For those taking initial steps towards engagement, one-to-one participation is usually the norm, continuing for some time; regular attendance develops only gradually as they build a working relationship with Calman staff and/or other participants. Yet, once engaged in this 'learn by doing' environment, young people can see themselves doing things they didn't think possible, beginning to feel different, taking confidence from this and moving forwards with a goal in mind.

Progress of those participating across the year is described in the figure below. Reflecting the higher levels of anxiety and disengagement of young people now coming through the organisation, individual progress is generally slower, with slightly more than one-quarter (26%) still working towards their plan. Meanwhile, 40% of participants have progressed to identified destinations in employment, including MA positions, a College place, returned to school more able to engage, or took up volunteering. Ill health has interrupted participation for 5%, and 22% have moved on, managing life without need or desire for further support at this stage. Wherever possible, connection with these is maintained so that the young person can return if/when their circumstances change. Not all young people in this cohort wish to keep this connection, and during the year 7% have withdrawn from contact.



#### One young person's experience of using the Calman service

*In November of 2022 a young person was referred to Calman Trust having been identified as extremely isolated and suffering from significant mental health issues. The young man had been so filled with anxiety when starting on a College place that he had attempted to take his own life and was now feeling alone, lacking confidence and unsure how to progress in life.*

*Following conversations with this young person, a plan focused fully on his health and wellbeing was agreed, with long term goals set aside. The aim at this stage was for him to leave the house, take part in wellbeing activities and get to know his Calman youth worker, learning what they could offer.*

*This plan focused on wellbeing walks and sessions designed to support the young person to do something active, get out of the house and begin to talk through his feelings and concerns. As a trusting relationship developed, he began to talk to the youth worker about his feelings and his hopes*

*and fears about the future. At this point he agreed that his learning plan should be adjusted to include "future plans."*

*One thing he had always struggled with was making decisions and being assertive, which had led in the past to situations where he felt trapped, seeing no way out. Being at the centre of his own plan, encouraged to choose his own direction, he began to voice his opinion. At one point his Mum told the youth worker that it was the first time she had seen him say "no" to doing something. This suggested growth in confidence and assertiveness, and further conversation confirmed that he was on a path that felt right for him.*

*After 6 weeks of working with the youth worker, participating in regular health and fitness sessions combined with times of reflection, the young person began to look forward more confidently and positively, showing marked increase in motivation and overall health and wellbeing. Such was his progress that he now expressed interest in meeting with another Calman staff member to find out about work experience in our social enterprise Café Artysans and moved soon to undertake induction and begin to work through an employability plan. From this point he completed work experience in the non-customer-facing section of the café and progressed to a customer-facing role. He has worked with different members of staff and participated alongside other young people in taking customer orders.*

*In September he progressed to a six-month paid placement position in Café Artysans, where he covers all day-to-day job roles as part of the staff team. Having now indicated that he wants to find a job locally, he will be supported towards the external work of his choice, while continuing to receive support from his Calman youth worker until he feels settled.*

#### **Calman Trust Values, Vision and Mission**

*See Annex*

# Annex - Calman Trust Values, Vision and Mission

