

# Season 2023-24 Annual Report



# SPFL Trust

## Football Fans in Training



[spfltrust.org.uk/FFIT](http://spfltrust.org.uk/FFIT)

HOW SOON IS...





## What is FFIT?

Football Fans in Training is one of Europe's leading health intervention programmes.

FFIT was created by the University of Glasgow and helped to create a positive, long-term impact on the lives of over 13,000 people in Scotland.

The programme has been running for over 14 years and is the SPFL Trust's flagship health and wellbeing programme.

Supported and funded by the Scottish Government, FFIT helps to tackle health inequalities of people aged 35-65. These inequalities often lead to obesity within this age group.

Participants must be over the age of 35 and overweight or obese. Men must have a BMI of 28 and women 26.

The programme is supported by our network of community trusts and clubs (ATCs) and takes place in football stadiums across the country. These stadiums are places where people feel at home, welcome and importantly, inspired.

The programme also gives participants access to knowledgeable and compassionate staff, who are all trained in FFIT delivery.

Running for 13 weeks, it's set up much like the beautiful game we all know and love - two 45 minute sessions. One half focuses on diet, providing advice

13 weeks



on alcohol, portion control and nutrition.

The other gets people active in an enjoyable way. Sessions involve light exercise within the stadium grounds, providing participants with access to onsite equipment and helping them to increase their step count.

In partnership with Prostate Scotland, we also run Prostate FFIT, a programme for men living with Prostate cancer to become fitter, happier and healthier.

With Football Fans in Training, participants help themselves lower their risk of obesity linked conditions such as Type 2 Diabetes, as well as improve their overall health and wellbeing.





# Continued success

## 2023-2024 has been another good year for Football Fans in Training.

ATCs have continued to rise to the challenge, delivering successful programmes and transforming the health and wellbeing of so many.

We are grateful to our network for their continued support, as this year has presented some challenges.

Following a cyber resilience test, the University of Glasgow took the decision to take the FFIT portal offline.

Whilst we appreciate they were not content in their systems, the decision made it difficult to allocate funding for extra programme spaces, as we were unable to confirm exact numbers on each course.

We were unable to collect some of the vital data which would have enabled us to make decisions to pivot funding, ensuring all programme spaces were filled.

However, the programme has still met its intended outcome of helping people to become fitter, happier and healthier, with over 750 people taking part throughout 2023-2024.

Since the reporting period, the SPFL Trust has invested in a new portal system which is now up and running.



## Reported improvement in mental health

Male  
**44.04%**

Female  
**55.65%**

## High risk of Diabetes before FFIT

Male  
**14.04%**

Female  
**31.02%**

## Found out risk of Diabetes through FFIT

Male  
**26.19%**

Female  
**27.02%**

We continue to look at innovative ways to take FFIT to the next level. In February 2024 we piloted Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids at Kilmarnock and Falkirk.

Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids engages fathers in positive lifestyle, role modelling and parenting strategies.

The following goals were set for the programme:

Build positive father-child bonding

Positive communication and relationship building

Build men's motivation to maintain positive habits

Enhanced self confidence

By the end, men and their children should feel confident and motivated to support each other to lead healthier lifestyles

# Collaborative working

Following the successful launch of Prostate Football Fans in Training last year, the programme has extended to work with more community trusts within our network.

Throughout 2023-24, The Killie Community, Aberdeen FC Community Trust and Saints in the Community have commenced delivery, alongside existing partners at Heart of Midlothian and Rangers Charity Foundation.

Prostate FFIT has been specifically designed for men living with prostate cancer. The SPFL Trust team has used the knowledge and experience gained from the FFIT programme to provide significant help to this particular group of participants.

The programme has been built with the aim of giving these men a safe space to connect with others who are also living with cancer, build their knowledge of exercise, diet and nutrition as well as giving them access to videos and other information to help them exercise at home.



**The course helped me in so many ways, physically and mentally. Being in amongst the other gentlemen at the course and telling them your problems helped in so many ways.**



- Ken Moir, Prostate FFIT participant at Rangers Charity Foundation



# The numbers behind FFIT

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Participation</b>			
Starters	406	349	755
Completers	263	222	485
Retention	65%	64%	
<b>Losing weight</b>			
Total weight lost	2392.7kg	2553.05kg	4945.75kg
Average weight lost	9.09kg	11.5kg	10.3kg
<b>Building healthier habits</b>			
Reduction in fizzy drinks	68%	39%	
Reduction in chocolate	46%	38%	
Reduction in alcohol units	22%	27%	
Increased fruit consumption	54%	28%	
Increased veg consumption	42%	22%	
Reduction in takeaways	43%	42%	
<b>Being active</b>			
Reduction in sedentary minutes	16%	22%	
Increase in physical activity	42%	25%	



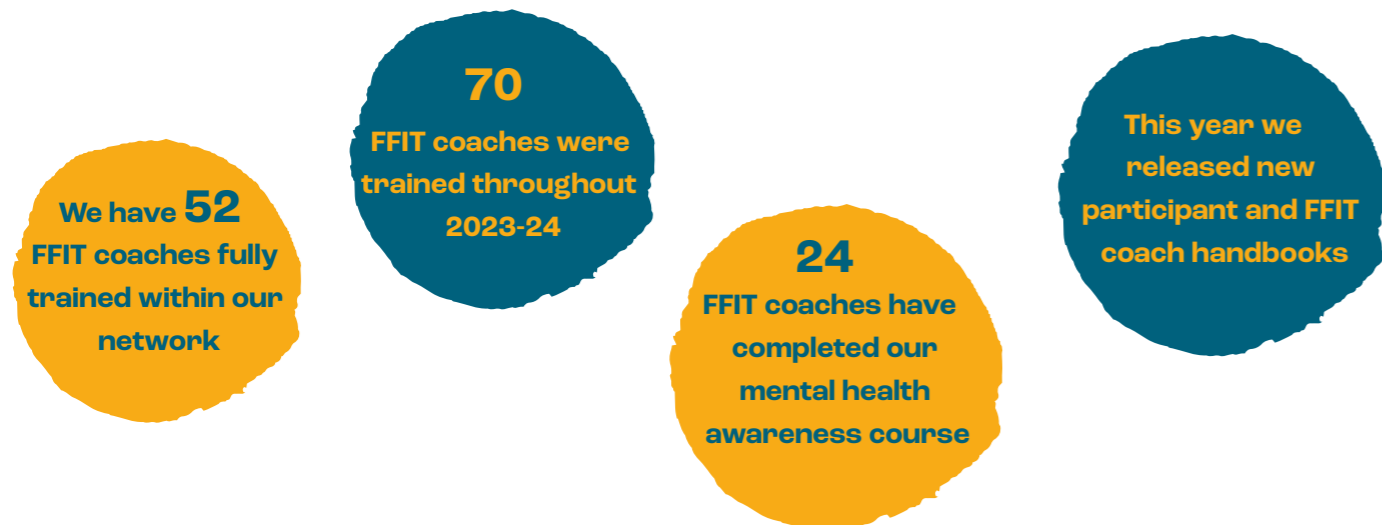


# Who delivered FFIT throughout 2023-24



It is important for us to ensure that every person delivering FFIT has the relevant training and experience. Throughout 2023-24 year, we have delivered refresher training three times to keep our coaches on the ball.

Our training covers a range of health conditions such as bowel cancer, diabetes and asthma. It is also compulsory for FFIT coaches to take part in our Mental Health Awareness Course.



# Success stories



## Staying FFIT in Aberdeen

Having recently discovered a health complication John\* had already embarked on a health journey. Football Fans in Training strengthened his desire to continue with his new healthy lifestyle.

“There has been a significant change to my physical appearance,” he said.

“I feel the fittest I have been for many years.

I was 106 kg when I stood on the scales at the end of January - this now sits around 83kg - a 23 kg loss over the period!”

John has changed his outlook on life, transforming his mental health alongside his fitness. He has less anxiety, better relationships with others and an improved overall mood.

*\*Not the real name of the participant*



## FFIT Buddies at St Mirren

Before finding FFIT, Susan\* struggled with any form of exercise, and was desperate to get fitter for an upcoming holiday with her family.

She was encouraged to join the programme after her friend mentioned that she was joining, and decided she had nothing to lose.

“FFIT has impacted my life a great deal”, she said.

“Something clicked for me during my time here, and I realised how important it is to live a healthy lifestyle.

“I loved how good I was feeling. I was sad my time with FFIT was coming to an end, but I knew I wanted to continue this journey beyond this, so I started exploring different options and trying classes and gym-free trials to see what suited me best.

“I found a small ladies-only gym whose programme is very similar to what we were doing already and decided to sign up for that.

“Since leaving FFIT, I have been going to the gym four or five times a week. I never thought I would be a gym goer, but now I can’t imagine my life without it!

“I am now 35lbs down and about to go on the holiday that initially motivated me to get moving. I cannot recommend it enough.”



## Alexander's FFIT journey

Alexander Sneddon showed his commitment to becoming fitter, happier and healthier by making a three hour round trip from Auchterarder to take part in the programme at his beloved Easter Road.

“He said “After 30 years of a rewarding but sedentary career spent largely behind a consultancy desk, my general body shape and fitness is poor.

FFIT provided the impetus I needed to sign up to a gym and become a regular visitor there, developing my own programme largely built around previous FFIT exercise patterns.

I measured myself up before the course started and I noticed that one of my belts was on its last notch. I have since made another two holes in my belt!”

Alexander has noticed a huge difference in his self-esteem since participating in the programme, boosted by his weight loss and improved fitness.



## Catherine and Lori's story

Catherine and Lori are two remarkable women whose experiences with Football Fans in Training embody resilience and hope.

Lori joined the programme after enduring multiple ectopic pregnancies and having her fallopian tubes removed. At Football Fans in Training, she found connection and strength through shared experiences while improving her fitness.

The programme has supported her on her path to motherhood, and has given her optimism for the future.

“It's definitely helped me in ways I thought weren't possible,” Lori said.

“I feel this is what I need to give me the encouragement to look to my future.”

Catherine faced a different challenge. She was diagnosed with lymphoma, and Football Fans in Training became a cornerstone of her recovery. The programme offered not only physical activity, but a network of encouragement.

“I really enjoyed Football Fans in Training,” she said.

“You get to meet other people the same as yourself, and we've ended up staying friends.”

Both women discovered a sense of belonging that turned the programme into their vital support group.

Watch Catherine and Lori's story



Some FFIT participants have participated in our Football Powered films series



Watch Ray's story



Watch Jim's story



Watch Gary's story

## The future of FFIT

Over the years we have seen many friendships develop through FFIT, as men and women become fitter, happier and healthier together.

We will continue to explore opportunities for us to use the power of football to help people become fitter, happier and healthier through Football Fans in Training.

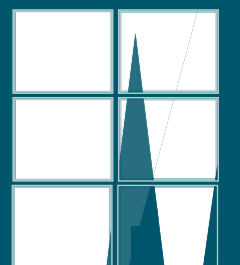
The success of our Prostate FFIT programme has been fantastic, as we have supported men living with Prostate cancer through specifically developed support.

The programme has helped build knowledge of exercise and nutrition, while allowing men to meet people and share experiences with those in a similar situation.

We want to build on the success of Prostate FFIT by supporting other groups who may be at risk of obesity, such as those with diabetes.

We launched targeting messaging to those living with diabetes in Tayside to encourage them to join the programme.

The programme continues to evolve, and we're hopeful that we can continue reaching more groups of people in the future.



To find out more about the flagship health and wellbeing programme,  
contact our Football Fans in Training Programme Lead **Craig Joyce** on:

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