

Season 2024-25 Annual Report

SPFL Trust

Football Fans *in Training*



spfltrust.org.uk/FFIT





Welcome to **FFIT**

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

Developed and optimised by the University of Glasgow's research team in partnership with the SPFL Trust, and drawing on source material from the Nutrient and Dietetic Department at NHS Forth Valley and the Men's Health Clinic in Camelon, Falkirk, the programme has made a lasting, positive difference to the lives of more than 14,000 people across Scotland.

Now in its fifteenth year, FFIT is the SPFL Trust's flagship health and wellbeing initiative, supported and funded by the Scottish Government. It tackles health inequalities among adults aged 35 to 65 – a group at increased risk of obesity and related conditions.

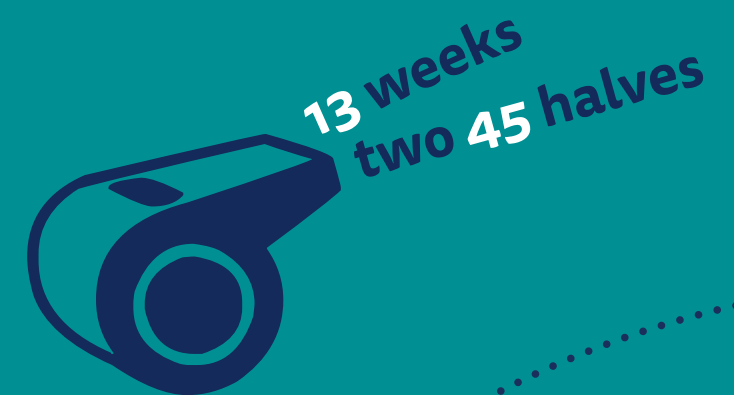
To take part, participants must be aged over 35 and overweight or obese, with men requiring a BMI of 28 or above and women 26 or above.

Delivered through our network of community trusts and clubs (ATCs), sessions take place in football stadiums across the country; venues where people feel at home, welcome and inspired.

Participants benefit from the support of trained, compassionate staff who deliver the programme with care and expertise. Running for 13 weeks, FFIT mirrors the structure of the beautiful game; two 45-minute halves.

The first focuses on healthy eating, offering practical advice on portion control, alcohol intake and nutrition. The second half gets participants moving through light physical activity within the stadium, helping them boost their fitness and increase their step count in an enjoyable, sustainable way.

Through Football Fans in Training, participants reduce their risk of obesity-related conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, while improving their overall health and wellbeing.



Fifteen years of *Impact*

2024-2025 marks the fifteenth anniversary of Football Fans in Training (FFIT), and the programme continues to make a real and lasting difference to people across Scotland.

Over the past year, FFIT has continued to strengthen communities by helping people to lead healthier, more active lives and by creating supportive networks that extend far beyond the stadium. Many participants speak of the sense of belonging and encouragement they find through the programme, which in turn drives lasting attitude and lifestyle change.

ATCs have once again delivered outstanding programmes, helping to transform the health and wellbeing of participants across Scotland. Through their dedication and expertise, participants are supported to make meaningful improvements to both their health.

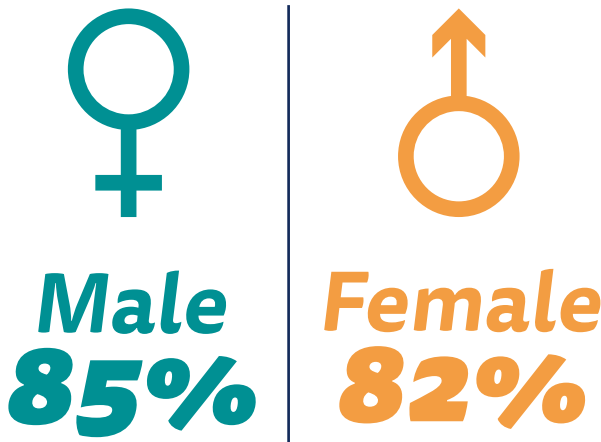
This year marked an important milestone, with more women than men taking part for the first time in FFIT's history. A total of 777 participants joined in the programme in 2024-2025, including 399 women and 378 men.

Dundee also became the first location to deliver FFIT outside a football stadium, hosting sessions on campus at Gardyne College, which serves as home to Dundee Football Club outside of match days.

We are grateful to our network for their continued commitment and partnership. Their ongoing efforts ensure that FFIT continues to grow and evolve, reaching more people and creating lasting impact in communities across the country.

Fifteen years on, Football Fans in Training continues to show how football can bring people together, improve health and wellbeing and help communities thrive.

High risk of Diabetes before FFIT



Innovation continues to be at the heart of Football Fans in Training, as we look for new ways to build on the programme's success and reach even more people.

Following last year's successful pilot of Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids at Kilmarnock and Falkirk, the initiative has continued to build momentum. The programme engages fathers in positive lifestyle habits, role modelling and parenting strategies, helping them improve their own health while encouraging active, healthy behaviours within their families.

We are also collaborating with Breast Cancer Now to develop a bespoke FFIT programme designed to support women affected by breast cancer through physical activity, nutrition and community connection.

399 female participants

14% increase in female participants from previous year

surpassing male participation for the first time

Beyond Scotland, FFIT continues to grow its impact across the UK, with five Welsh EFL clubs now delivering the programme – including Wrexham.

Through these exciting developments, FFIT continues to evolve, creating new opportunities to use the power of football to improve lives, strengthen communities and inspire lasting change.



Collaborative working

In partnership with Prostate Scotland, who fund the programme, the SPFL Trust continues to deliver Prostate Football Fans in Training (Prostate FFIT), a programme designed specifically for men living with prostate cancer, helping them to become fitter, healthier and happier.

Prostate FFIT has continued to grow across our network of community trusts. In 2024–25, Aberdeen FC Community Trust, Kilmarnock Community Trust and St Johnstone’s Saints in the Community continued delivering the programme, with Dundee joining for the first time. Additional delivery sites are being developed, with further expansion planned for the coming year.

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 programme has been life changing for me. The specialist training and nutrition advice helped me regain mobility and feel like myself again. Just as important were the friendships I built with the other guys, and the confidence we found in being able to talk openly about our treatments and experiences. We all benefited in different ways and looked forward to meeting up each week.

“A year on, I’m still in a good place, enjoying time with my family and taking part in local community groups and activities I never thought I’d manage again.”

Owen Neil,
Prostate FFIT participant at The Killie Community



The numbers behind FFIT

	Male	Female	Total
Participation			
Starters	378	399	777
Completers	244	256	500
Retention	65%	64%	
Losing weight			
Total weight lost	6,776kg	10,138kg	16,914kg
Average weight lost	17.9kg	25.4kg	21.8kg
Building healthier habits			
Reduction in fizzy drinks	35%	31%	
Reduction in chocolate	37%	35%	
Reduction in alcohol units	14%	34%	
Increased fruit consumption	48%	36%	
Increased veg consumption	48%	36%	
Reduction in takeaways	43%	42%	
Being Active			
Reduction in sedentary minutes	48%	36%	
Increase in physical activity	48%	36%	

Who delivered **FFIT** throughout 2024-25

It is important to ensure that everyone delivering FFIT has the right training and experience to support participants effectively. Throughout 2024-25, we continued to deliver refresher training to keep our coaches engaged and up to date.

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.

This year also saw the first FFIT Development Day take place at Hampden Park, bringing together more than 27 coaches to share best practice, explore new marketing ideas, discuss recruitment challenges and identify ways to support participant retention.



82
FFIT coaches
fully trained within
our network

30
new FFIT coaches
were trained
throughout 2024-25

13
FFIT coaches have
completed our **mental**
health awareness course



Success **stories**

Case Study 1 **Fiona finds her stride**

At 63, **Fiona Cruickshank** joined Football Fans in Training at Montrose FC looking for a fresh start. After retiring three years earlier, her weight had gradually increased, and she wanted to feel healthier and more active again.

"I came into the FFIT programme overweight and totally unfit," she said. "I saw FFIT advertised at Montrose Community Trust and thought I'd join to see if it would help kickstart me into getting healthier and fitter. I loved it from day one."

Fiona found the welcoming atmosphere and encouragement from the course leaders made all the difference. "The leaders were brilliant, making every participant feel

welcome, putting us all at ease, and giving clear information and direction."

Each week brought something new, with Fiona discovering unexpected enjoyment in activities like walking football and boxing. Over the course of the programme, she lost more weight than she expected and felt fitter, healthier and more relaxed.

"Some of us have continued to meet up weekly for a walk and a blether, keeping the fitness and social interaction going," she said. "I didn't realise the positive impact this course would have on my mental health - it really is priceless. I'd advise anyone to take part. It can change your life."



Case study 2 **Mark's fresh start**

Mark* joined Football Fans in Training in Aberdeen after experiencing a few recent health scares, which gave him the push he needed to make lasting changes to his lifestyle.

"Joining FFIT has helped provide me with the knowledge and skills to live a healthier lifestyle," he said. "I now look at food labels before I buy shopping and always plate my vegetables first. Overall, I feel fitter, have more energy, and my confidence has increased."

Since taking part, Mark has lost over 5kg and dropped two clothing sizes. "I feel better overall, and people I work with have commented that I am looking much healthier," he said. "I am in a much better place than I was five months ago, my mental health has vastly improved, and I now believe I can change. I am determined to keep on this journey – this is only the start."

*Not the participant's real name



Case study 3

Geraldine steps forward

Living with scoliosis, **Geraldine** faced ongoing back pain that limited her favourite activities, including dog agility. She also wanted to break habits picked up during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as late-night snacking and wine.

FFIT at Dundee West FC helped her discover new ways to stay active while managing her back. She used smart goals to make healthier choices and introduced a walking pad at home to increase her step count. The programme boosted her confidence, enabling her to return to dog agility and enter more competitions than she thought possible.

She also took up walking football and joined the Dundee West women's wellbeing group to maintain weekly catch-ups with the ladies, keeping both her fitness and social connections strong.

"I'm so grateful for all the support and encouragement I received during the course. It has inspired me to keep going, helped me gain confidence, and allowed me to make new friends. I feel happier and healthier, and I'm enjoying keeping up with the ladies' wellbeing group and taking part in walking football."



Case study 4

Lynne conquers new heights

Lynne Cameron joined FFIT at Hearts to improve her fitness and learn more about healthy eating. "I wanted to be a bit fitter and learn more about what to eat and what not to eat," she said.

With support from coaches Gregor, Louise and Ryan, Lynne made steady progress, losing weight and maintaining it by making simple, sustainable changes. "I even started cooking more rather than relying on the microwave," she said.

During the course, Lynne also overcame a personal challenge - her fear of heights. "One of our exercises was to reach the top of the stand," she explained. "I was afraid at

first, but with encouragement from Gregor, Louise and the other girls on the course, we made it one of my goals. The following week I reached the top and was so pleased. The view from there was lovely."

Lynne says she's gained lasting knowledge, confidence and friendships from her time with FFIT. "I would highly recommend this course," she said. "It's well supported, and the coaches know what they're doing. I've made new friends and achieved more than I thought I could. Many thanks for the course and the knowledge I've gained."



FFIT for the future

Over the years, FFIT has achieved great success in helping people improve their health and wellbeing while creating lasting friendships and connections. The programme has strengthened communities, inspired positive lifestyle changes and supported thousands to lead fitter, happier and healthier lives.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to harnessing the power of football to inspire change and reach even more people. Programmes such as Prostate FFIT have shown how this approach can make a real difference, helping men living with prostate cancer and others who may feel isolated to build confidence, share experiences and gain the knowledge to live well. New delivery sites are being developed for Prostate FFIT, with further expansion planned for the coming year.

Innovation continues to drive FFIT forward. We are now including Social Health within FFIT, Stirling University will be undertaking this research with clubs based in Forth

Valley (Alloa, Falkirk and Stenhousemuir) from January 2026. Over the course of the year, Stirling University will also analyse data from the past 15 years to better understand the long-term impact of the FFIT programme. We are now capturing additional data on smoking cessation, vaping and weight loss medication to inform future delivery.

We are also expanding Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids following last year's successful pilot and working with Breast Cancer Now to develop a bespoke FFIT programme to support women affected by breast cancer.

By broadening the scope of FFIT and continuing to develop the skills of our staff, we can support new groups, strengthen our impact and continue helping communities across Scotland to thrive. The programme continues to evolve, and we are confident that we will keep reaching more people and inspiring positive change in the years ahead.



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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 SPFL Trust

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