



Friday Family Fun Evaluation Report

Afterschool activities in Sandness

August 2025 to March 2026

This report outlines the Friday Family Fun pilot project for children and parents in Sandness. It provides a brief evaluation of the afterschool activities and the outcomes for families.

Background

Sandness Community Development (SCD) works with, and on behalf of, the community to maintain and improve service provision; encourage and support participation in decision making; create and deliver projects that improves quality of life in our remote rural community.

Sandness is situated on the far west mainland of Shetland with a population of 160 residing in 75 households, dispersed across an area of approximately 1.6 square miles. More than half the populace is of working age, 32 are under the age of eighteen, 17 of whom are primary school age or under; 20% over retirement age, 5 individuals identify as disabled and a further 3% of households are considered low income.

SCD has provided a bus service to take children from Sandness and Happyhansel primary schools to afterschool activities at the Westside Leisure Centre on Mondays and Wednesdays, since November 2024. Evaluation of the bus service emphasised positive impact of accessible afterschool activity for families. In addition, parents indicated a need for reliable, regular activities which helps them plan their work lives. The early finish for schools on a Friday and negative consequence of 'empty' afternoons for families was also highlighted.

Friday Family Fun Project

Early Adopter Communities awarded £3,330 to Sandness Community Development in July 2025, to set up and run the Friday Family Fun project.

Aim

To enhance provision and family choices for childcare in a remote rural community

Objectives

- To increase afterschool childcare options in a remote rural community
- To increase opportunity for children to socialise and try new learning experiences
- To increase opportunity for children to be physically active
- To create opportunity for inter-generational interaction within the community

The project supported a part time Project Coordinator role for 4 hours per session, to oversee the organising and practical running of the activity sessions. Parents or carers were required to attend with to supervise children and help with the running of activities. Provision of childcare, without parental supervision, was not possible due to statutory registration and legal compliance requirements.

Sandness Community Development received support from Shetland Islands Council Community Development, Adult Learning and Active Schools to provide a wider range of learning activities, for both parents and children. Older members of the community have been involved with activities strengthening the intergenerational bond.

Sessions

Afterschool activity sessions began in late August 2025 and ran on a Friday afternoon 2-4.30pm every fortnight during term time. The sessions provided physical, craft and cooking activities for all ages.

Older members of the community have attended to share their skills with the children through baking, crafting or storytelling. Snacks were available and the cooking activity provided additional opportunity for eating together in a social setting.

Evaluation

At the beginning of the project the evaluation approach was agreed with the funder. Basic quantitative data would be collected, and include participation numbers and records of activities at each session. The Coordinator would also observe and record the level of engagement and enthusiasm for each activity.

Further external evaluation was undertaken by the Early Adopters Communities team using an online questionnaire to assess outcomes for families, with responses being returned directly to the Scottish Government.

Findings

Overall, a total of 7 families with 13 children have participated in the afterschool activity sessions. The average attendance throughout the project of 6 families with 11 children. During the January to March 2026 term, numbers were lower due to the older primary children attending a drama project at another school. Average numbers for this term were 3 families with 5 children.

Activities offered during the project:

<u>Physical</u>	<u>Craft</u>	<u>Cooking</u>	<u>Other</u>
• Table tennis • Boccia • Adapted sports • RSPB pollen & bee hunt • Yoga • Scavenger hunt	• Peerie maakers • Stitching/cross-stich • Clay • Net mending • Scratch art • Colouring • Pom-pom making • Electric circuit kits • Christmas crafts • Loom bands	• Wrap pizzas • Fruit kebabs • Pancakes • Bonfire biscuits, baking & decorating • Ice cream making & toppings • Christmas baking • Baked potatoes in the fire pit	• History of fishing & whaling • First aid • Electricity & plug wiring • Kit for All sports clothing

Engagement

Both parents and children engaged well with most activities. Some were more popular than others, as would be expected, and when the weather was good the young people preferred to be outside.

The majority of older children engaged well with the physical activities, particularly when the weather was poor. On better days, outside activities had appeal and invented games held attention for longer than the planned physical activities. Table tennis was popular with both adults and children, however, yoga proved too slow to occupy the children for long.

A number of the activities were repeated throughout the programme which reinforced skills development. The children also showed interest in trying activities that were new to them, such as adapted sports using bells and blindfolds.

All craft and cooking activities were popular with both adults and children. The young people particularly liked to pop in and out of crafts as they took turns in the cooking activities, played with activity sets or invented games of their own. Net mending proved engaging for parents, learning a lost skill used in fishing by past generations.

The eating of the cooked food was a social opportunity with parents and carers building relationships as part of a group. A number of the recipes were taken home to be repeated, or added to the household repertoire when the children expressed a liking for the new dish.

Both First Aid and plug wiring engaged adults and children, with excitement being shown when the bandage was tied correctly, or the circuit lit up. These activities promoted discussion about safety, and improving access to emergency care in the local community.

Outcomes

Both parents and children have had the opportunity to socialise and learn, which they have found enriching:

"It's good to have somewhere to meet up, and the kids get a chance to let off steam"
"You can catch up with community things, speak to different folk who you might not usually see"

Whilst parents have attended the sessions to meet with others, their children have had a chance to engage in new activities:

"The first aid was interesting. Tying bandages really got the children engaged"
"The older boys loved the plug wiring and making circuits. They learnt something new"

Parents of younger children, pre-school and lower primary, have found the activity sessions particularly useful to fill a Friday afternoon:

"My son loves coming into the school, he can't wait to start properly and this gives him a chance to 'be in school'"
"They are glad to be with their friends, it makes it lightsome for me"

Activities starting up for older children elsewhere, which did not require parental supervision, reduced participation in Sandness during the January to March term. Working parents struggle for childcare and although there has been possibility of shared childcare, this has not been used to the extent expected:

"I can't come along, I work. It might work if the older ones could look after the younger ones"

Parents have not been forthcoming as to why they are not sharing childcare at the sessions. However, their children are upper primary and the young people themselves, might be choosing not to participate in the afterschool activities.

Summary

Parents and children have found the afterschool activities sessions a positive experience. It has supported social engagement, community intergenerational interaction, provided opportunities be physically active and

try new sporting activities. Both adults and children have gained knowledge of crafts, cooking and other life skills.

Opportunities for childcare have been less used by working parents. However, it has not been possible to offer childcare without parental involvement due to necessary legal compliance obligations, which are out-with the scope and timeframe of the project.

Financial information

August 2025 to March 2026

Income	£
Early Adopter Communities	3,330.00
Total Income	3,330.00
Expenditure	
Coordinator hours	864.00
Insurance	331.12
Snacks and cooking ingredients	165.60
Materials	163.40
Activities	420.00
Total Expenditure	1967.77
Underspend	1362.23

To date there are five outstanding claims for physical activity provision (£350). Shetland Island Council Adult Learning and Community Development have provided some snack and cooking items reducing our food costs.

We have secured £1,000 from the Scottish Children's Lottery to cover Coordinator costs for the summer term (April to end of June). The underspend will help support ongoing food, materials and physical activity costs.

28th April 2026