



NEWBOLD LEGACY TRUST
Enriching and Improving Lives

SwimABLE Scotland Interim Report Aug-Dec 2025 (Forres ASG)

Interim Report produced for
Newbold Legacy Trust

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Overview

SwimABLE Scotland, delivered by **Friendly Access** in partnership with **Active Schools (Moray)**, kindly funded by **The Newbold Legacy Trust**, provides inclusive swimming lessons and water-confidence development for children and young people with disabilities and/or additional support needs (ASN).

The programme delivers **three weekly, free sessions** during term time, supported by trained instructors and volunteers. Children who cannot access mainstream lessons due to communication, sensory, physical, or learning needs are able to participate safely, confidently, and consistently.

Children Engaged (Unique Participants)

Across Aug-Dec 2025:

- **40 active participants** attended sessions in the pool
- **18 Children** were on the waiting list at some point during this academic year
- **7 Schools Represented, plus home-schooled**, including:
 - Applegrove (n=9)
 - Anderson's (n=2)
 - Dallas (n=2)
 - Dyke (n=8)
 - Forres Academy (n=15)
 - Kinloss (n=2)
 - Pilmuir (n=1)
 - Home-Educated learners (n=1)

Waiting List & Evidence of Demand

Demand for SwimABLE Scotland's inclusive swimming provision continues to exceed current capacity. During the August–December 2025 reporting period, **40 children were enrolled across three weekly sessions**, with a further **18 children recorded on the waiting list**.

This waiting list includes both primary and secondary aged children with additional support needs, many of whom have limited or no access to appropriate mainstream swimming provision. With all three sessions operating at capacity, the waiting list, equivalent to **almost half of current enrolment**, provides clear evidence of ongoing unmet need.

Feedback from parents, carers, and education staff further reinforces this demand, highlighting the programme's inclusive approach and the absence of comparable local provision.

In response, **SwimABLE has recruited an additional fully qualified swim teacher with ASN experience**, increasing staffing capacity and enabling the programme to **offer more places and progressively reduce the waiting list** over the coming term.

Participant Needs Profile

Participants attending SwimABLE Scotland continue to present with a wide range of additional support needs, requiring a highly individualised and flexible approach to delivery. Children and young people supported during the August–December 2025 reporting period include those with **autism, ADHD, sensory processing differences, anxiety, communication needs, physical and mobility impairments, and children awaiting formal diagnosis**.

Many participants experience **multiple overlapping needs**, which can impact confidence, emotional regulation, communication, and engagement in group physical activity. For some children, water-based activity presents additional challenges related to sensory sensitivities, transitions (including changing facilities), and anxiety around unfamiliar environments.

SwimABLE's delivery model is designed to respond to this complexity through **small group sizes, consistent staffing, and tailored one-to-one or small-group support**. Sessions are structured yet adaptable, allowing instructors to respond to individual regulation, communication, and learning needs while maintaining a safe and positive environment.

Parents, carers, and education staff consistently report that SwimABLE meets needs that cannot be accommodated within mainstream swimming provision. For many participants, SwimABLE represents the **only accessible swimming opportunity** available, providing not only physical skill development but also wider benefits to confidence, wellbeing, and engagement beyond the pool.

Programme Impact

As outlined in our 2024-25 Final Report, SwimABLE Scotland's core impact lies not only in developing swimming skills, but in providing a **safe, inclusive and consistent environment**. Evidence from the August–December 2025 reporting period demonstrates that these impacts are being **sustained and strengthened**.

Questionnaire feedback from children, parents/carers and education staff during this period reflects the same key outcomes identified in the previous year. **Confidence in the water continues to improve across both primary and secondary aged participants**, with children reporting new skills such as swimming independently, using deeper water, front crawl, backstroke and diving. Importantly, children consistently describe high levels of enjoyment and motivation, with all responding primary-aged participants indicating they wish to continue attending sessions.

As highlighted in the 2024–25 Final Report, improvements extend well beyond swimming technique. Parents and carers report **significant gains in confidence, emotional regulation, and independence**, alongside reductions in anxiety and avoidance behaviours associated with water and new environments. These outcomes remain evident in the current reporting period, with multiple respondents describing SwimABLE as transformational and as the highlight of the child's week.

Education staff feedback continues to reinforce the wider impact on learning and wellbeing. Teachers report that pupils return from sessions **happier, calmer, and more settled**, with improved confidence, social interaction and engagement. This aligns closely with previous findings that consistent, positive physical activity contributes to improved readiness for learning and emotional resilience.

The inclusive delivery model identified as a strength in the 2024–25 Final Report remains central to current impact. Families and staff repeatedly emphasise the value of **patient, skilled instructors**, consistent staffing, and the ability to adapt sessions to individual needs.

Overall, evidence from the current interim period confirms that SwimABLE is **maintaining and building upon the outcomes achieved in 2024–25**, delivering sustained benefits in confidence, wellbeing and physical skills for children and young people with additional support needs across the Forres ASG.

Full questionnaire methodology and verbatim responses are provided in Appendix 1.

Meeting Local Needs

The programme continues to meet local need by offering **consistent, inclusive sessions delivered by staff experienced in supporting ASN**, enabling children to participate safely and meaningfully in aquatic activity. For many families, SwimABLE remains the **only accessible swimming provision** available locally, a point repeatedly reinforced through parent, carer, and education staff feedback.

In response to this need, SwimABLE has strengthened local capacity through the recruitment of an additional qualified swim teacher with ASN experience. This development supports the

programme's ability to increase participation safely, reduce the waiting list over time, and continue responding effectively to the needs of children and families across the Forres ASG.

Overall, SwimABLE continues to address a **critical local need**, providing an inclusive, specialist service that enables children and young people with additional support needs to access swimming, build confidence, and experience positive outcomes that extend beyond the pool.

Workforce Development & Sustainability

Progress toward qualifying the programme's Lead Swimming Instructor continues, with the intention of achieving formal qualification and tutor status. However, as noted previously, external factors and training pathway delays have resulted in this milestone being deferred. At the time of reporting, qualification is now anticipated within the **2026 academic year**. While this delay is ongoing, SwimABLE remains committed to this pathway, recognising its importance in developing in-house training capacity and reducing long-term reliance on external providers.

Alongside this longer-term objective, tangible progress has been made during the current reporting period through the **recruitment of an additional qualified swim teacher with experience supporting children and young people with additional support needs**, who is currently contributing in a **voluntary capacity**. This recruitment strengthens the delivery team, increases resilience within the programme, and provides immediate benefits in terms of session capacity, consistency, and participant support.

This combination of continued commitment to instructor qualification and the successful recruitment of experienced volunteer staff demonstrates a balanced approach to workforce development: maintaining a clear long-term sustainability strategy while making practical, short-term improvements to delivery capacity. Together, these developments support SwimABLE's ability to respond to demand, reduce the waiting list over time, and ensure high-quality inclusive provision continues across the Forres ASG.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to the remainder of the 2025–26 academic year, SwimABLE Scotland will continue to prioritise **safe, inclusive delivery** while responding to sustained demand for specialist swimming provision across the Forres ASG.

A key focus will be the **progressive reduction of the waiting list**. The recent recruitment of an additional qualified swim teacher with experience supporting children and young people with additional support needs provides increased staffing capacity, enabling the programme to offer additional places within existing sessions and improve resilience across delivery. Further capacity growth will remain dependent on staffing and funding levels.

SwimABLE remains actively engaged in progressing the Lead Swimming Instructor toward formal qualification, with completion now anticipated during the **2026 academic year**.

Achieving this milestone will support in-house skills development, strengthen consistency of practice, and reduce reliance on external training pathways over time.

The programme will also maintain its focus on **person-centred, needs-led delivery**, ensuring that children with complex and overlapping additional support needs continue to receive appropriate support. Consistency of staff, small group sizes, and flexible session planning will remain central to maintaining positive outcomes in confidence, wellbeing, and engagement.

Finally, SwimABLE will continue to strengthen relationships with families, schools, and local partners, using ongoing feedback and data collection to inform delivery and support future planning. Continued investment will enable the programme to build on established impact, respond effectively to local need, and ensure inclusive swimming remains accessible to children and young people who would otherwise be excluded.



Images: Paddleboard fun during a recent secondary school session.

Financial Statements

To be submitted separately.

Appendix 1.

This annex presents the **full verbatim written feedback** collected through SwimABLE Scotland’s impact questionnaires during the August–December 2025 reporting period.

Responses are drawn from a total of 21 responses received:

- (A) Primary school aged children (n=4)
- (B) Secondary school aged children and young people (n=1)
- (C) Parents, carers, teachers and education staff (n=16)

All responses are reproduced **word for word**, without interpretation or paraphrasing. All identifying information has been removed to ensure responses are **fully anonymised**, and content has been reviewed to ensure it is **appropriate for funder reporting**.

The format and presentation are consistent with questionnaire annexes included in previous SwimABLE interim and final reports. The inclusion of full responses is intended to provide transparency and to allow the voices of participants and stakeholders to be heard directly, alongside the quantitative data and summary analysis presented elsewhere in this report.

A. Primary School Aged Children – Verbatim Responses

1. What new thing have you learned?

- “Backstroke.”
 - “I have learnt to do front stroke and back stroke”
 - “How to swim , and I can now swim and jump in the pool”
 - “Being safe and respectful in the pool. Using a surfboard.”
-

2. What’s your favourite thing about SwimABLE?

- *(no response)*
 - “Going under water! I like playing hide and seek”
 - “All of it , it's my favourite day”
 - “All of it. I love it. I love swimming and I've learned so much.”
-

3. Do you feel happy and safe in your swimming sessions?

- “Sometimes”
- “Yes”
- “Yes”
- “Yes”

4. Is there anything that makes swimming hard sometimes?

- “Hard to touch the bottom when others can.”
 - “Not sure. I enjoy it all and love to learn”
 - “No”
 - “No”
-

Parent / Carer additional comments (from primary questionnaire)

- “Such valuable sessions. The best part of the school week.”
- “[Name redacted] absolutely loves her swim sessions. She is building confidence in the water and learning new skills every week.”
- “My son absolutely loves his swimming and he has learned so much. He is becoming more confident and loves coming every week.”
- “This has been such a positive experience for [Name redacted]. His confidence has grown so much and he looks forward to swimming every week.”

B. Secondary School Aged Children & Young People – Verbatim Responses

1. How has your confidence in the water changed since starting SwimABLE?

- “I’m much more confident”
-

2. What new swimming skills have you learned or improved?

- “front crawl”
-

3. Have the sessions helped with anything else?

- “Yes”

If yes, how?

- “Less anxiety”
-

4. Do you feel respected and supported by the instructors?

- “Yes”
-

5. What part of the sessions do you enjoy the most?

- “Swimming”
-

6. Would you like to continue with SwimABLE?

- “Yes”

C. Parents / Carers / Teachers – Verbatim Responses

2. Have you observed any improvements in the child or young person since attending SwimABLE?

- “Yes he is doing better at swimming, his focus is better and listening skills.”
 - “Yes, my child was scared of the pool. Wouldn’t put her head under water and now she is swimming confidently.”
 - “Yes confidence, listening skills, respect, resilience.”
 - “So much he is so much more confident, he swims independently and can jump in.”
 - “Yes they have thrived and come across so much more confident.”
 - “Yes, bigger confidence and enjoyment.”
 - “My daughter has come from being a tiny little girl terrified of water to a young confident swimmer.”
 - “Water confidence, social confidence, competence.”
 - “Yes - previously was scared of swimming and going under water.”
 - “Yes, confidence in water and swimming ability has improved greatly.”
 - “The young person who accesses it from my class has shown increased confidence.”
 - “Big increase in confidence”
 - “[Name redacted] confidence has sky rocketed since swimable.”
 - “She looks forward to the lesson and comes back happy.”
 - “I am filling this in on behalf of two children. Both have gained confidence in the water and developed their skills.”
 - “Yes- confidence, resilience, ability to follow instructions and enjoyment.”
-

3. Have pupils shared their SwimABLE experiences with you?

- “No he wouldn't discuss it, but he loved the certificate.”
- “My child can’t communicate very well due to his additional needs but I can see how much he enjoys it.”

- “Yes through conversations at home. And I have heard from school.”
- “Yeah some in my son's class and they all absolutely love it.”
- “Yes they talk about using learnt to new things at home and being more confident.”
- “Yes, she is very proud of her swimming achievements.”
- “Absolutely. It’s her favourite day of the week.”
- “The children are supported and challenged in the sessions.”
- “Yes - we go along every week and watch how he has progressed.”
- “Yes every week I hear about what they have been learning.”
- “He comes into class after every session and looks happy and proud.”
- “Yes he really enjoys it and tells us about it”
- “We get a lowdown every week on what he has learned.”
- “Yes, she frequently shares what she has done.”
- “They both share their experiences weekly. It is a real highlight.”
- “Yes- they are all very keen to tell me about it.”

4. Do you think SwimABLE has positively impacted the child or young person’s wellbeing?

- “Yes it absolutely has a positive impact!”
- “Absolutely, my child has come on so much since starting SwimABLE.”
- “Yes, my child has grown in confidence and social skills.”
- “Oh definitely, my son has grown so much thanks to SwimAble.”
- “Yes she was so scared of water and had swimming anxiety.”
- “Definitely. The instructors are so positive and encouraging.”
- “100%.
She was absolutely petrified of being in the water.”
- “The learning and personal development that occurs is amazing.”
- “Yes - although there are still struggles with anxiety.”
- “Yes definitely”
- “Oh absolutely! He is engaging with another pupil.”
- “he is more confident in general”
- “Yes. Again, he has grown in confidence and independence.”
- “Yes.”

- “Swim ABLE is a fantastic opportunity for our learners.”
 - “Yes. It has been extremely valuable for their wellbeing.”
-

5. Are there any additional skills you would like SwimABLE to focus on?

- “I would like them to try a session wearing clothes.”
 - “I think what they are doing is enough. I never imagined my child would be swimming.”
 - “Achieving goals and working towards a certificate.”
 - “No”
 - “No”
 - “No, happy as my granddaughter is happy and loving it.”
 - “The only part we struggle with is the changing rooms.”
 - “We trust the instincts and expertise of the team.”
 - “Anxiety around deep end”
 - “Just keep doing what you're doing!”
 - “No”
-

7. Do you think SwimABLE should continue? Why?

- “It's a fantastic program that helps children with additional needs access swimming.”
- “100% as if it wasn't for the fantastic team my child wouldn't be swimming.”
- “It has been an invaluable resource to my child.”
- “It is a absolute amazing program, my son couldn't swim without it.”
- “Yes of course because without it children wouldn't have the opportunity.”
- “Because it's important for development for children.”
- “100% yes. We couldn't shout loud enough why we think this is so important.”
- “The impact of this work is life changing for these children.”
- “Yes it has been a valuable programme to increase confidence.”
- “It is giving this young man something to be successful in.”
- “It has really helped his confidence and will be beneficial long term.”
- “It helps children, like my son, who is on the spectrum.”
- “This is a valuable opportunity for young people.”
- “100%, our learners need places to shine and gain confidence.”