



CANTRAYBRIDGE ANNUAL REPORT

June 2024 – June 2025

*Celebrating growth, deepening impact,
and setting a bold path ahead*

Presented by:
Dr. Clare Daly
Chief Executive Officer
June 2025



Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the dedication of our Operations and Business Support teams throughout the year. Miriam, our Operations Manager, continues to work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of our essential systems. Our Finance Manager, Catharine, and the wider Business Support team have played a vital role in keeping us on track through periods of transition and growth. Combined, their contribution underpins so much of what we do.

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| CEO Introduction | 1 |
| Our Approach | 3 |
| Year at a Glance | 4 |
| Student Voice..... | 8 |
| Department Highlights | 9 |
| Horticulture – Annual Summary | 9 |
| Key Highlights | 9 |
| Café – Annual Summary | 10 |
| Key Highlights | 10 |
| Animal Care – Annual Summary..... | 11 |
| Key Highlights: | 11 |
| Creative Arts – Annual Summary | 11 |
| Wood Skills – Annual Summary..... | 12 |
| Key Highlights | 13 |
| Transitions – Annual Summary | 13 |
| Highlights: | 13 |
| College-Wide Overview | 14 |
| Key Highlights | 14 |
| Independent Living – Annual Summary..... | 15 |
| Key Highlights | 15 |
| Community Support – Annual Summary | 15 |
| Key Highlights | 16 |
| Regulatory Compliance & Quality Framework – Annual Summary | 16 |
| Key Highlights | 16 |
| Grant Funding – Annual Summary..... | 17 |
| Key Highlights | 17 |
| Conclusion - Looking Ahead..... | 18 |

CEO Introduction

It is with deep pride and a clear sense of purpose that I share Cantraybridge's first-ever annual report. As the newly appointed CEO, stepping into post in April 2025, I have been struck by the heart of this organisation—the dedication of our staff, the resilience of our students and those we support in the community, and the quiet strength that runs through everything we do. This report is more than a summary of activity; it marks the beginning of a new chapter—one rooted in clarity and a shared vision. For the first time, we are drawing together the threads of a full year: celebrating progress and acknowledging challenge, but also setting our sights on what comes next.

Though I joined partway through the reporting year, I have taken time to listen carefully and reflect on the work already in motion: from our Care Inspectorate registration journey to the rise of student-led initiatives, from improved internal systems to a renewed focus on staff development - this has been a year of foundational change.

In the face of financial pressures and sector-wide recruitment challenges, Cantraybridge has remained steadfast. We have joined forces with other third sector providers, strengthened partnerships and continued to champion fairer funding and greater transparency across the system. At the same time, we have expanded opportunities for our students to grow, lead and belong.

My vision is for Cantraybridge to be known not only as a place of exceptional support, but also of transformational learning and opportunity—where young people with learning disabilities are seen, celebrated and equipped to thrive in a changing world. I want us to become a leading learning centre for young people with learning disabilities—a national example of excellence rooted in humanity. That means stronger systems and sustainable funding to deliver on that vision, alongside a renewed focus on purpose and unlocking the full potential of those we support, underpinned by a steadfast commitment to the people at the core of our mission. Cantraybridge has always been a place where person-centred learning and community come together to create something unique. My role now is to help it stand out even more—to amplify its voice and deepen its impact within the learning disabilities landscape to ensure we thrive for years to come.

Together we are shaping a future full of possibility.

Dr Clare Daly

Chief Executive Officer

June 2025



Who We Are

Founded in 1994, Cantraybridge has been a place of learning and growth for over three decades. Nestled in the Highlands of Scotland, we support young people with learning disabilities to live fuller lives through hands-on training and through supported living.

What began as a small initiative has grown into a vibrant blend of college and our social enterprise café, on-site residential support, and community support. Today, our students learn practical skills in horticulture, animal care, creative arts, woodworking, hospitality, and more - all while building confidence and taking real steps toward adulthood.

We believe that everyone deserves the chance to thrive, and that the right support and environment can unlock that potential. Cantraybridge is more than a service - it is a place of belonging and growth. It is a place that honours the unique journey of each person who comes through its doors.

We also work with individuals living independently across the wider community. This part of our work focuses on building life skills and confidence with our clients, whilst helping them to connect within their communities as part of daily life. In this way, our community work extends the values of Cantraybridge beyond the main site and into the homes and lives of those we support.

As we look to the future, our aim is to become a leading learning centre for young people with disabilities—offering excellence and person-centred care in all we do.

Our Approach

At the heart of Cantraybridge's work is a person-centred model rooted in dignity and empowerment, creating a space for each person's journey to unfold. We believe that meaningful outcomes are achieved when young people are supported not just to attend but to grow. We are values-driven and our approach blends care with creativity, ensuring consistent structured support while nurturing each person's unique journey toward independence and connection.

This commitment to individualised, relational support underpins everything we do. By approaching support in this way, we create an environment filled with both safety and potential – a place where young people are valued and championed.

With this in mind, we invite families, funders and professionals to consider an important question:

Is Cantraybridge the Right Fit?

✓ We're designed for:

- ✓ Young people with learning disabilities and neurodevelopmental conditions who want to grow their independence
- ✓ Those able to engage in group activities and skills development
- ✓ Students who benefit from gentle routine and meaningful learning
- ✓ People who want to build confidence in real-world settings (e.g., horticulture, wood skills, cooking, animal care)
- ✓ Families open to partnership and shared planning

✗ We may not be the right fit if:

- ✗ There are significant 1:1 care or support needs beyond our provision
- ✗ The environment needed is highly clinical or medically supervised
- ✗ There are regular behaviours that pose a high risk to others or self, requiring specialist interventions
- ✗ The young person struggles to manage in small group settings even with support
- ✗ Families require crisis response or emergency placements



Year at a Glance

The 2024–2025 period has been one of steady progress and emerging transformation at Cantraybridge. Across our core areas (college provision, supported living, and community support) services have remained consistent and person-centred, with those we support continuing to build confidence, skills and greater independence.

Throughout the year, departments have responded flexibly to external pressures, including sector-wide recruitment challenges, funding uncertainty, and rising operational costs. However, despite these pressures student engagement was high, and staff continued to deliver with exceptional commitment and care.



Visit from MP Graham Leadbitter

A significant development this year was the transition in leadership. From April 2025, the organisation began a new strategic phase focused on strategic planning, deepening quality, strengthening governance, and investing in staff and student voice. Early steps have included revised HR processes, the development of a staff well-being hub, the development of a SharePoint-based resource platform, and improving our internal reporting systems.



Home Energy Scotland

A major milestone was the submission of our application to the Care Inspectorate to register the college as a Day Service. This is a key step towards securing a more sustainable funding model and increasing sector recognition.

We also strengthened key partnerships this year, forming new relationships with organisations such as Home Energy Scotland (HES), Inspiring Young Voices (IYV), and Ross-shire Engineering (RSE). We also enjoyed a visit from MP Graham Leadbitter. These alliances are helping to advance our wider vision of positioning Cantraybridge as a leading learning centre for young people with learning disabilities.

Overall, this has been a year of steady consolidation and intentional planning, framed by a growing clarity that is laying the groundwork for Cantraybridge's next phase of growth.

A Year of Impact

(June 2024 – June 2025)

People and Reach



People Supported

100 people were supported through Individual Service Funds (ISF), including 46 directly with support plans by our team.



Residential Living

19 students are living on site in our supported accommodation, with transitions into new placements underway.



College Students

55 students attended Cantraybridge this year—39 as day students and 16 as residential.



Staff Growth

18 new staff joined the organisation, and 1 **internal promotion** was made—bringing fresh energy and rewarding dedication.

Skills and Learning



Progression in SVQ Level 1 Horticulture, Grow and Learn Award, and Health and Safety all ongoing



Launch of a new **Student Committee** structure to strengthen student voice and engagement



Pilot courses with **Enable** and **Inspiring Young Voices** focused on mindset, digital confidence, and advocacy



High engagement in Creative Arts, Woodwork, Animal Care, and volunteering placements



Clocktower Café

Our on-site café continues to thrive as a vibrant learning space. Students gain practical experience in food preparation, customer service, till operation, and hospitality. The café not only builds essential life and work skills, but also serves as a warm, welcoming hub for the community—fostering confidence and real-world impact.

Strategy and Systems



Care Inspectorate registration application submitted for College



Organisation-wide **SharePoint** roll-out underway to centralise documents and training



New three-year strategy and business development plan underway, setting out a clear path for organisational growth and sustainability.

Partnerships and Finance



Strengthened collaboration with partners including Home Energy Scotland (HES), Ross-shire Engineering (RSE), Lifescan and The Buzz Hub



New vehicle **fully funded by Highland Cross** to support student transport and community access







£69,854 awarded from The Big Lottery Fund



A **£20,000 donation** is expected and will support the creation of a **Transitions Out Worker** to secure employment placements and post-college pathways

Seasonal Timeline

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>Summer 2024 (June – August)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New raised beds completed and planted in the market garden. • Successful lambing season • Students support Open Day prep and community visits. <p>Visit from Professor Tansey and Dr Emily Brinck of the University of Wisconsin to explore student exchange workplaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highland Cross confirms donation of a brand new bus. |  <p>Autumn 2024 (September – November)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gym relocated to North Wing. • Work on Café walls underway to create space for displaying mosaic tiles made by students • Staff wage uplift implemented. • Partnership building with Home Energy Scotland and Inspiring Young Voices. • First formal meetings with Scottish Government Ethical Procurement Subgroup. |
|  <p>Winter 2024–25 (December – February)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First full audit with new auditors completed successfully. • Cantraybridge radio project planning begins. • Community support caseload continues to grow. • Recruitment campaign launched. • Student Committee merged with Residential Committee. |  <p>Spring 2025 (March – May)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application to Care Inspectorate to register college submitted. • £20k donation secured to support Transitions Out Worker. • New three-year strategy and business plan underway. • Creative and vocational projects flourish across departments. |

Student Voice



Cantraybridge Student Committee

Over the past year we have taken meaningful steps to embed student voice at the heart of Cantraybridge's decision-making. We recognise that our students are not just recipients of support — they are contributors and experts in their own experience.

In late 2024, a new Student Committee was launched, bringing together representatives from across college and residential services. The committee now meets regularly and feeds directly into areas of improvement, helping shape initiatives from café 'meal deals' to exercise ideas. In early 2025, the committee was formally integrated with the existing Residential Committee, strengthening the consistency and visibility of student feedback across all areas of the organisation.

Student representatives have also begun attending parts of internal management meetings and contributing to our developing Student Service Improvement Plan (SSIP), in line with the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework. Their insights have been particularly valuable in highlighting areas for improvement around team building, independence and communication.

In addition to formal structures, we have supported informal opportunities for students to lead and shape their experience. These have included student-led exhibitions, peer mentoring in Independent Living, and participation in external networks like Inspiring Young Voices (IYV).

As we move forward, capturing the student voice will continue to be a key area of investment. Plans are already under way to develop a training package for those students who participate in recruitment. We also want to ensure improved accessibility of governance documents and also to create a feedback loop that ensures every student knows their voice matters.

'Cantraybridge is amazing. The committee talks about the role of 'the college' and also gives the students a voice' (Adam, Student Committee Member)

'Cantraybridge is great, and it is like a family. Cantraybridge is caring and supports everyone' (Rosie, Student Committee Member)

Department Highlights

Horticulture – Annual Summary

The Horticulture Department has offered students a rich, hands-on learning experience throughout the year, with active involvement in sowing, planting, propagation, and site maintenance. Despite challenges with the weather, students have grown a wide variety of produce for the café and plant shop, while developing their understanding of crop rotation and seasonal care. The department now benefits from the use of a new greenhouse next to the potting shed, while the foundations for a second greenhouse have now been completed. Qualifications have been integrated across the year, with students pursuing SVQ Level 1 units and buggy training. With a focus on both enterprise and environmental care, the team continues to build confidence and skill, whilst encouraging students to have connection to the land.



Key Highlights

- ❖ New greenhouse in full use; foundations laid for a second greenhouse next to the potting shed.
 - ❖ Wide range of produce grown and supplied to the café, including lettuce, tomatoes, and courgettes.
 - ❖ Students engaged in SVQ Level 1 Horticulture, Grow and Learn Awards, and buggy training.
 - ❖ Café garden and site improved with seasonal displays, planters, and spring bulb planting.
 - ❖ Plant shop opened and restocked throughout the season, promoting enterprise and customer service skills.
-

Café – Annual Summary



Clocktower Café has remained a lively and supportive learning environment, giving students the chance to build skills in hospitality, food preparation, customer service, and enterprise. Students took part in baking using fresh produce and eggs from the Animal Care and Horticulture departments, supporting a closed loop learning model. The café also served as a hub for selling handmade soaps, crafts, and seasonal goods created by other departments. New staffing has strengthened the team, with a dedicated Café Enabler joining in May. Partnerships have been developed to explore external placements for students, and the café has continued to receive strong feedback from visitors, including funders, local organisations, numerous charities, and also overseas visitors.

Key Highlights

- ❖ Students contributed to baking, food prep, customer service, and hygiene practices.
 - ❖ Café used fresh eggs and produce from Animal Care and Horticulture—linking departments.
 - ❖ Seasonal items (soaps, cards, crafts) sold through the café as part of enterprise education.
 - ❖ New Café Enabler appointed in May 2025 to further strengthen hospitality learning.
 - ❖ External placements explored with the Haven Centre and local supported employment partners.
-

Animal Care – Annual Summary

The Animal Care Department has had a steady and productive year, balancing core farming activities with the care of small and exotic animals. The spring lambing season was successful (31 lambs born) with students participating in their care. The department maintained a regular supply of eggs to the café and local customers, with hens and ducks continuing to thrive. While cattle over-wintering did not proceed this year, the silage from 2023 was preserved, saving operational costs. Students have been actively engaged in estate maintenance and supported other departments, reflecting strong interdepartmental collaboration. Exotics care expanded with new animals, and students continue to build confidence through direct animal care and farming responsibilities.



Key Highlights:

- ❖ 31 lambs successfully born in spring 2025, including two bottle-fed triplets.
- ❖ 17 eggs/day produced and used in café or sold locally.
- ❖ No silage costs were incurred this year, saving around £1,600.
- ❖ Estate tasks included fencing, hedge trimming, and installing irrigation in a horticulture polytunnel.
- ❖ New exotic animals introduced (iguana, snakes), cared for by students under supervision.

Creative Arts – Annual Summary

The Creative Arts Department flourished this year, offering students the opportunity to develop practical, expressive and enterprise skills through a diverse range of projects. From seasonal product creation to collaborative community art, the students have engaged meaningfully in both individual and group work. Highlights include successful collaborations with Team Hamish, contributions to major events like the Cantraybridge Open Day and the Christmas



season, and the production of a beautifully illustrated Cantraybridge calendar. The department also embraced creative exploration through screen printing, loom work, and themed exhibitions. With support from staff, students have grown in confidence and creativity, helping them to feel pride in their achievements.

Key highlights

- ❖ Two student bench designs selected by Team Hamish for a public redevelopment project in Nairn.
 - ❖ Student-led enterprise activity included soaps, candles, upcycled bags, and holiday gift items sold in the café
 - ❖ Collaborative loom project created a scarf as a leaving gift and inspired new café table coverings
 - ❖ Cantraybridge calendar printed and sold locally, showcasing 12 original student artworks
 - ❖ Project with Inverness Museum and Art Gallery led to a 'spoon' themed exhibition.
-

Wood Skills – Annual Summary

The Wood Skills Department has delivered a rich year of enterprise, and skill building. Students took on both personal and public-facing projects – from bespoke furniture to imaginative models – while learning key technical skills including engraving, and collaborative design. Larger projects like garden benches and a play shed supported confidence and practical ability. Off-site installation also offered our students valuable real-world experience, and the Open Day event gave students the opportunity to showcase their achievements. The team also contributed widely to site needs – from planter construction to structural support for other departments – demonstrating adaptability and community spirit.



Key Highlights

- ❖ Custom built and installed a child's play shed, constructed multiple benches and planters for clients.
 - ❖ Students developed skills in wood routing and laser engraving, with further joinery skills developed by creating a range of items, including handcrafted gifts.
 - ❖ Personal projects included a Polar Express model, Lego puppet, ukulele, and spice rack.
 - ❖ Off-sire cycling and sailing trips supported student wellbeing and interdepartmental integration.
 - ❖ Preparing Jack & Jill bench set as major Open Day prize to showcase team's enterprise work.
-

Transitions – Annual Summary

The Transitions Service has played a vital role in welcoming and supporting prospective students throughout the year. With a mix of taster days and group visits, the service has ensured that young people are introduced to the college in a warm and supportive way. Staff have also built links with other services to share best practice and develop referral pathways. Despite reaching capacity in the spring term, the department continued to process applications and offer tailored entry routes (including trials and staged integration). This personalised approach has helped young people feel more confident and ready to join Cantraybridge.

Highlights:

- ❖ 3 taster days, 13 individual visits, and 42 group visits delivered during the autumn term.
 - ❖ One new student confirmed, with others accessing tailored trial placements (e.g. Wood Skills).
 - ❖ 8 active applications being processed as of March 2025.
 - ❖ Close collaboration with local schools and services, including Glachbeg and Drummond School.
-

College-Wide Overview

Across the year, Cantraybridge has provided a vibrant and person-centred learning environment, blending creativity and enterprise with personal growth. Students have engaged in qualifications such as SVQs and Grow and Learn Awards, while contributing meaningfully to college life through hands-on projects and public-facing roles. The café continued to be a thriving hub for learning, with students supporting food preparation and customer care, whilst supplying produce grown onsite. The plant shop and craft stalls also reinforce real-world enterprise experience. A new, unified Student Committee gave young people a stronger voice, feeding into service planning and board updates. SharePoint has enhanced access to



Student Training

learning tools and training materials, supporting digital inclusion and staff development. Partnerships with external organisations have further expanded opportunity and ambition.

Key Highlights:

- ❖ Students supported the café through food preparation/service and use of produce from Animal Care and Horticulture.
 - ❖ SVQ Level 1 Horticulture units, Grow and Learn Awards and buggy training embedded across the year.
 - ❖ New single Student Committee established and co-produced a Student Service Improvement Plan (SSIP).
 - ❖ Enterprise initiatives included the Café, plant shop, craft stalls and calendar sales.
 - ❖ External partnerships explored with Haven Centre, Highland Council, and Inspiring Young Voices.
-

Independent Living – Annual Summary

The Independent Living (IL) department has offered a rich, empowering environment for young people to build life skills and personal independence. Over the past year, residents have taken part in a wide variety of activities—from fitness classes and social nights to independent travel, volunteering, and even international trips. The team has focused on wellbeing through themed cooking, spa evenings and health initiatives. Transitions into and out of IL have been well-supported, with cross-department collaboration ensuring smooth pathways. Housing improvements continued throughout the year, and recruitment strategies are being refined to better meet service needs. Staff and residents have worked together to co-create plans for improvement, reinforcing IL as a caring and person-led environment.

Key Highlights

- ❖ Residents travelled independently across the UK and abroad; several began driving lessons.
 - ❖ Activities included go-karting, fitness classes, spa evenings and themed cooking nights.
 - ❖ Cross-department collaboration supported transitions and training access.
 - ❖ Two new residents moved in; housing upgrades and planned bathroom refurbishments underway.
-

Community Support – Annual Summary

The Community Support service has grown steadily over the year, with staff supporting 100 ISF clients and approximately half receiving direct support from Cantraybridge. Recruitment has been a persistent challenge, leading to capacity being reached mid-year. Despite this, the team maintained quality through regular support plan reviews and collaborative work with the Independent Living team. Training and supervision remained a priority, with staff development days planned to enhance cohesion. Managers are now trialing more flexible staffing models to attract and retain support workers while maintaining continuity for clients.

Key Highlights

- ❖ Support provided to 100 ISF clients, with 46 supported directly by Cantraybridge.
 - ❖ Team completed three full rounds of support and supervisions across the year.
 - ❖ Joint rota training and planning introduced with Independent Living team.
 - ❖ Recruitment challenges addressed through flexible job design and shared staffing across services.
 - ❖ Ongoing staff development planned
-

Regulatory Compliance & Quality Framework – Annual Summary

Cantraybridge has remained proactive in aligning its governance and improvement processes with the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework. A structured approach to self-evaluation is now embedded, with a Microsoft list tracking the four key CI questions and surveys collected from students, staff, families and professionals. Continuous Improvement Group (CIG) meetings are held regularly to reflect on findings. The College applied for official Care Inspectorate registration in March 2025 and has progressed to Stage 2. Meanwhile, an easy-read version of the audit tool was developed for the Student Committee, embedding inclusion in quality processes. Site-wide risk management has also been enhanced through partnership with Ethos Safety.

Key Highlights

- ❖ Self-assessment tool and Microsoft List structured around CI's four key questions.
 - ❖ Student Committee now contributes via an easy-read version of the CI framework.
 - ❖ Ongoing surveys gathered from all stakeholder groups and reviewed biannually.
 - ❖ Applied for Care Inspectorate registration in March 2025—now at Stage 2.
 - ❖ New partnership with Ethos Safety to enhance site-wide risk management.
-

Grant Funding – Annual Summary



Our new bus from Highland Cross

Cantraybridge has taken a proactive and strategic approach to grant funding this year, successfully securing several key awards while building strong relationships with funders and local businesses. A new bus donated from Highland Cross ensured we can continue to provide student transport to Cantraybridge, and new income streams have supported both the Café and the development of Cantraybridge Radio. The Big Lottery Fund awarded a three-year grant to support salaried café staff, strengthening the college's enterprise offer.

Key Highlights

- ❖ A brand new bus from Highland Cross
- ❖ £69,854 over 3 years from Big Lottery Fund to support Café staffing.
- ❖ £2,000 each from Collette Davis and Richard Davies Trusts to fund Cantraybridge Radio setup.
- ❖ Stronger relationships with funders and local partners like Ross-shire Engineering, Lifescan, Home Energy Scotland, Inspiring Young Voices and Adopt a Child charity.



Ross-Shire Engineering

Conclusion - Looking Ahead

The past year at Cantraybridge has been one of renewal and steady resilience. Across every department the staff and students have worked together to build confidence, develop real-world skills, but also to maintain the strong sense of community that defines our organisation. From the growth of enterprise initiatives in the café and plant shop, to the relaunch of our Student Committee and the application for Care Inspectorate registration, this has been a year of laying both practical and strategic foundations for the future.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on delivering excellence in all that we do. This is underpinned by high-quality practice and clear strategic planning, with an emphasis on strengthening our relationships with funders, partners and families. We are committed to continuing to raise the profile of Cantraybridge as a leading learning centre for young people with disabilities, ensuring our voice is heard locally and nationally.

Above all, we will stay aligned to our mission—keeping those we support at the very centre of all we do. We remain guided by their growth and dignity and will always work to unlock what's possible for each individual.