



April 2024 - 2025

HEART SPACE
Community &
Outreach
Report



HEART SPACE
YOGA & BODYWORKS

NHS Tayside
Charitable
Foundation
Empowering Health & Wellbeing in Tayside



Heart Space is a registered Scottish Charity Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SC043257

Page 1



Table of Contents

- 3** Who We Are
- 4** Year In Review
- 5** Chief Executive's Statement
- 6** Community Officer's Report
- 7** Our Impact In Numbers
- 8** Heart Breaks Study
- 9** Brain Breaks Study
- 10** Testimonials
- 11** Acknowledgements



Resilient People

Supporting people to become resilient both physically and mentally through yoga practices.

Mindful Motion – Teaching in Schools

Developing teamwork, communication and listening skills and introducing self-regulation and mindfulness techniques.



HEART SPACE YOGA & BODYWORKS

Healthy Communities

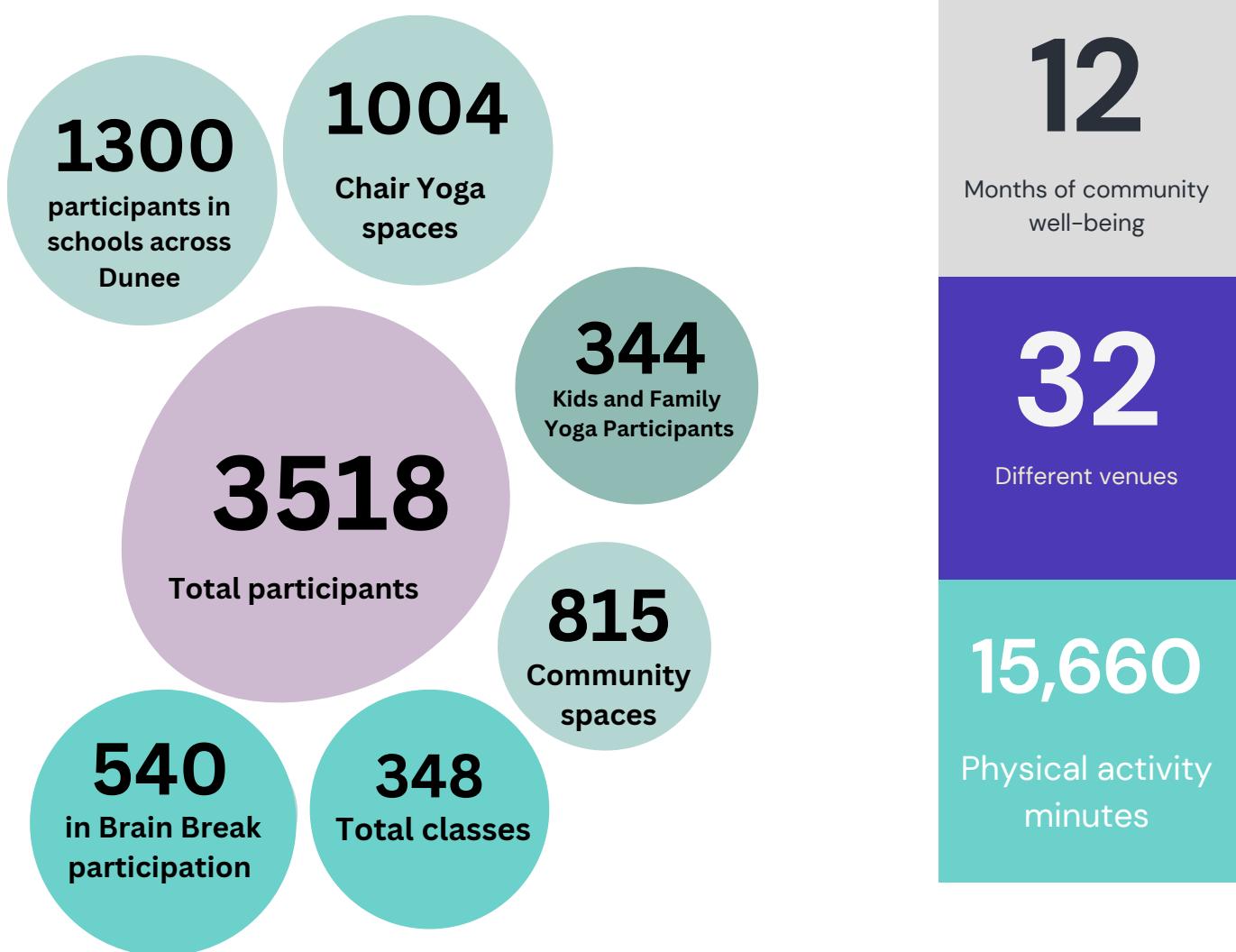
Tackling inequalities through a wide geographical spread across Dundee. Linking with community groups and organisations for new partnerships.

Integrated Families

Supporting women through pregnancy, post-natal, and families with young children by delivering sessions aimed at multi-children families.



Heart Space – Year In Review



From April 2024 to the end of March 2025, Heart Space took its classes and well-being expertise out into the wider community. With support from the NHS Tayside Foundation we were able to employ Rachel Smith to our Community Outreach and Engagement Officer, supported by resources and an electric van through the Northwood Foundation.

Over the year we have engaged people all over Dundee in community centres, schools, in-patient services, and with partner charity organisations building relationships and networks all over Tayside.

Chief Executive's Statement

This has been a year of surprises. When we began with Rachel in the post, we had some initial partnerships lined up with organisations that had reached out to us at Heart Space over the years. What we didn't anticipate is that as word got out about the menu of sessions we were offering from chair-based to family-centred sessions, we would end up with a 6-month waitlist.

We cultivated relationships by having meetings with organisations and possible partners to talk about what their community was looking for with the aim of clearly managing expectations from the outset. In this process, we explored more flexible options like stretching Honeygreen's partnership to every two weeks due to the availability of space.

With our commitment to community outreach, these solutions could have been easily remedied by housing at the studio in the West End but we are passionate about removing the geographical barriers in Dundee.

Throughout the year we have been able to link organisations together to share the resources we have offered and moving forward working with organisations collaboratively will be vital for sustainability.

Our work in-house of having permanent chair yoga classes has gone from strength to strength. With attendance at the start of the term being on average 8 we are now averaging 20 participants per class with waitlists for sessions 3 times a week.

Working with carers groups and schools has allowed us to measure and evaluate the work that we do and create prototypes for the future that we can take into other settings around heart health, general well-being, and self-regulation.

Seeing Rachel thrive in this role, and the enthusiasm she has been met with has shown us the need that there is to share all that we do and the hope of developing the role further in the future. We are both immensely proud of the figures we can share with you here.

Finlay Wilson
CEO Heart Space



Outreach & Community Engagement Officer – Rachel Smith

Since April 2024, I have been delivering community-based yoga sessions, collaborating with schools, local organisations, and community centres. The goal has been to make yoga more accessible, helping people of all ages build physical and mental resilience, stay active, and connect with each other.

Bringing yoga into new communities has been an exciting journey, and while there have been some challenges, they have also presented valuable learning opportunities. One of the main hurdles has been encouraging consistent participation, particularly in communities where yoga is less familiar. However, by tailoring sessions to meet the needs of each group and creating a welcoming atmosphere, participants have become more engaged over time.

Finding suitable spaces has sometimes required flexibility, but this has also encouraged creative solutions, such as incorporating chair yoga and breathwork, ensuring that sessions remain accessible to all. Balancing multiple locations and varying participant needs have required thoughtful planning, yet this has ultimately strengthened the reach of the program and provided opportunities to engage with a diverse range of people.

Despite these challenges, significant progress has been made in integrating yoga into community settings. Sessions at places like Dens Road, Ballumbie, and Rosebank Primary schools have helped introduce yoga to people who might not otherwise have had access to it. Through breathwork, mindfulness, and movement, participants have developed ways to manage stress and build resilience.

The sessions have also encouraged more movement in both adults and children, improving flexibility and strength in a way that feels accessible and enjoyable.

A particularly rewarding aspect has been facilitating family participation, and fostering shared experiences that strengthen relationships. By taking yoga directly into schools and community spaces, I've helped reduce the need for travel and financial barriers that might otherwise prevent people from participating. In schools, the focus on self-regulation, teamwork, and communication has been particularly beneficial for young participants. To ensure inclusivity, chair yoga has been introduced for those who might struggle with traditional yoga poses, making sessions open to a wider range of people.

Additionally, we have worked closely with our partners in the NHS, collaborating with the Health Inclusion Nursing Team and the Health Inclusion Partnership to run a 12-week program incorporating heart monitoring and blood pressure tracking. This initiative has provided valuable insights into the physical benefits of yoga and its role in supporting overall health and well-being. We have also had the pleasure of working with the Best Foot Forward team, an incredibly rewarding experience that allowed us to engage with individuals looking to improve their overall health and mobility through accessible movement practices. Furthermore, we have partnered with teachers, Schools, and Family Development Workers to help support better outcomes for children in our community, ensuring that the benefits of yoga extend beyond physical activity to include emotional and social development.

**Rachel Smith
Outreach & Community Engagement
Officer**

Our Impact In Numbers

The services provided have been analysed by CiCo Consulting (accredited Social Value & SROI Practitioners) for a range of social and economic impacts. Where possible those impacts have been monetised with proxy values in order to demonstrate the scale of impact since our project began.

Since April 2024 we have been gathering information about attendance, feedback, and geographical data while delivering 6-8 week blocks across Dundee. We have aimed to work outwith the West End area of Dundee given our permanent base on Scott Street.

With over 3500 participants since April 2024 through to March 2025 across 32 different venues we have calculated over 15,000 physical activity minutes with groups all over Dundee.

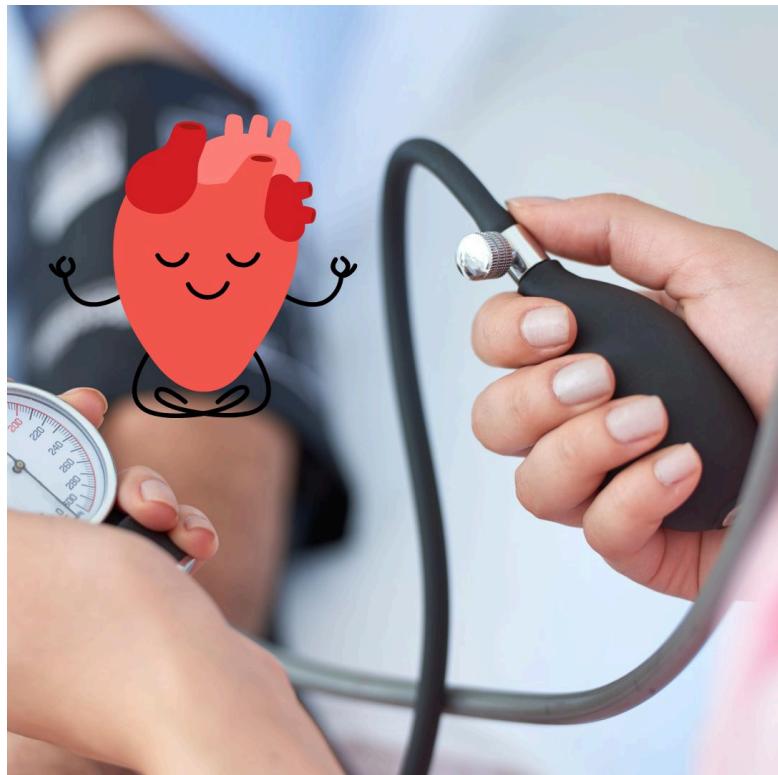
This has generated a Social Value Return of £273,348 in twelve months.

With an investment for the project of £25,000, the social return is already exceptional.

As this is the first year of the project, we imagine new and deeper partnerships in year two with all of the learning from this year.



Heart Space – Health Breaks



As part of our ongoing outreach programme, we started working with Dundee Carers in Ardler and Broughty Ferry Carers Group. We worked in partnership with an NHS practitioner (Senior Keep Well Nurse, Catriona Boal) to establish blood pressure and pulse while supporting six weeks of chair-based yoga and using other qualitative and quantitative tools.

At the end of our time together, we have compiled some of the reflections and observations from this partnership:

- 12 participants started the course in Ardler and 12 in Broughty Ferry.
- All participants had improvement in their mood scores.
- 10 out of 14 who completed the 6 weeks had improvements in blood pressure and pulse.
- 12 out of 14 fed back that the course had increased their confidence.
- All participants said the course had helped their fitness levels, in line with our primary objectives with NHS Tayside Foundation. Three participants discovered underlying heart conditions previously undiagnosed before the course.

Our plans going forward are to continue to build strong community partnerships and to develop resources to encourage participants to practice with us in person, digitally, or to develop their own home practice to maintain their fitness and mobility levels, ensuring greater sustainability.

Dundee Schools – Brain Breaks



Incorporating yoga as a brain break during lessons can greatly enhance children's engagement and well-being. This approach aligns with the health and well-being framework, emphasising that well-being is a shared responsibility. Yoga fosters mindfulness and self-awareness, helping learners manage their emotions. Consequently, brief yoga sessions could serve as effective brain breaks, leading to improved behaviour and fostering a positive learning environment.

We organised a focussed six-week project conducted at three primary schools: Grange, Barnhill, and Seaview. Most of the children were in Primary 4 or Primary 5.

The children developed an enthusiasm for yoga. They learned new poses, explored mindful movements to boost focus, acknowledged the need for a calm learning environment, and learned the link between yoga, emotions, and well-being.

As the children's well-being improved, the last two weeks saw the highest levels of well-being, with 8 out of 30 children presenting extremely high well-being levels.

Many participants expressed a desire for more regular yoga sessions. Looking ahead, it would be beneficial to permanently incorporate yoga practices into the school routine to support the holistic development of children. Options could include a lunchtime club or a daily 15-minute mindfulness break.

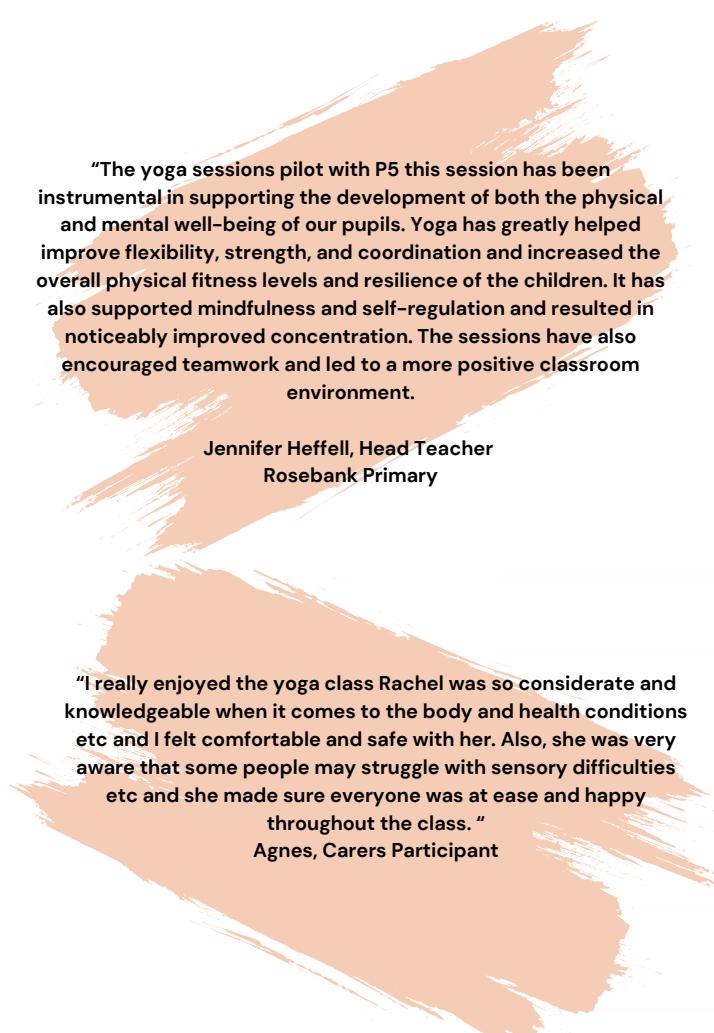
Testimonials/case study

The feedback received has been highly encouraging. Participants have highlighted how the sessions have increased their confidence in movement and provided a safe space for them to relax and learn. One individual expressed how much they appreciated the trauma-informed approach, saying, *"Rachel was wonderful and had lots of great insight and knowledge in regard to how our body moves, where stress and trauma are stored, and how to relieve it. I had never really enjoyed yoga before, but doing it this way through the trauma lens has really helped me."*

Another participant shared how supported they felt in the sessions: *"Rachel was absolutely amazing at her job. She was incredibly knowledgeable, explained each movement in detail, and shared how they benefit the body, which really enhanced my experience. What stood out the most was how safe she made me feel throughout the session. She was mindful of trauma responses, which I truly appreciated."*

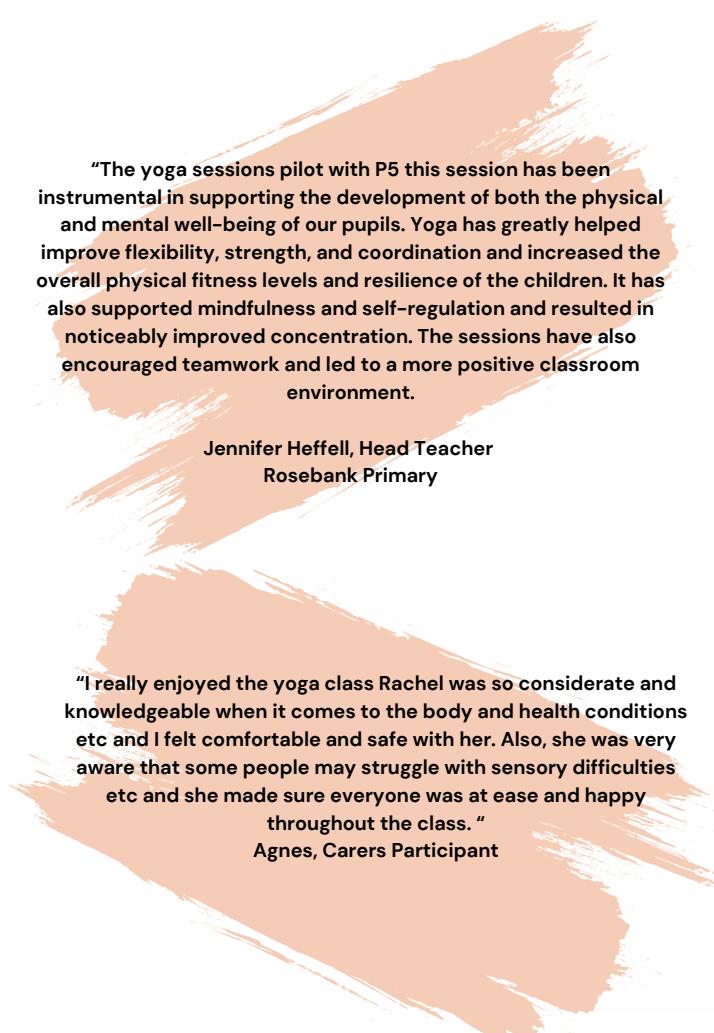
Even those new to yoga have found it to be a positive experience, with one participant noting, *"I had never done yoga before, and at first, I wasn't sure how I would manage, but Rachel made it easier every day. She asked how we were feeling before we started, and we openly shared with her, feeling so comfortable in the space."*

This community yoga initiative has already demonstrated a meaningful impact. Moving forward, we want to keep reaching more people, secure sustainable funding, and find even better ways to engage participants. Collaborating with local organisations will be key in making yoga even more accessible and beneficial for the community.



"The yoga sessions pilot with P5 this session has been instrumental in supporting the development of both the physical and mental well-being of our pupils. Yoga has greatly helped improve flexibility, strength, and coordination and increased the overall physical fitness levels and resilience of the children. It has also supported mindfulness and self-regulation and resulted in noticeably improved concentration. The sessions have also encouraged teamwork and led to a more positive classroom environment.

Jennifer Heffell, Head Teacher
Rosebank Primary



"I really enjoyed the yoga class Rachel was so considerate and knowledgeable when it comes to the body and health conditions etc and I felt comfortable and safe with her. Also, she was very aware that some people may struggle with sensory difficulties etc and she made sure everyone was at ease and happy throughout the class."

Agnes, Carers Participant

We are so thankful to have brilliant partnerships – together we achieve wonderful and positive outcomes for the communities that we support .

Partnerships

Charleston Community Centre
Whitfield Community Centre
Finmill Centre Men's Group
Couch to 5k
Family Group
Kingsway Care Centre
Cedar Group
Rosebank Primary School,
Kingspark School
Downfield Primary School
St Joseph's Primary School
Victoria Park Primary School
Ardler Centre
Dundee International Women's Centre
Tayside Alcohol Service
Den's Road Nursery
Lochee Community Centre
Roundabout Centre
Grange Disability Group
Maxwell Centre
Dundee Food Festival
Honeygreen
Wallace Hospital
Women's Aid
Broughty Ferry Carers Group
St Ninians Stay and Play
Mill'o Mains Primary School
Balumbie Primary School
Best Foot Fowards
Grange Primary School
Barnhill Primary School
Seaview Primary School

Acknowledgements

Heart Space operates a social-economy model with clients accessing services that support the free community work we deliver. Our projects in 2024/2025 are supported by:

- NHS Tayside Foundation
- Northwood Trust

We would also like to acknowledge the support from our local journalists and editors at DC Thomson.



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