

RUNFOREVER

And we will all be RUNNERS!

Annual Report 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

This report covers the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. During the first four months, until 20th August 2024, our activities were under Runforever Running Club. On 20th August, the Running Club was succeeded by Runforever SCIO, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated organisation ([SC053581](#)). The work of Runforever has continued uninterrupted so this report covers the whole year.

Runforever has been working on two combined and interrelated actions:

- 1- Offering educational projects as “beautiful actions” based on [marathon running and the Feldenkrais method](#) for humanising health care within the prison environment and the community. These practices foster the formation of a community of support which works as a bridge between inside and outside HMP Grampian.
- 2- Nurturing the ground for systemic change recognizing the need for a cultural shift around incarceration and rehabilitation by rethinking education and health.

The activities between April 2024 and March 2025 have included:

- **Running** – Runforever continued offering running sessions at HMPG on Wednesdays (two sessions morning and afternoon) until Wednesday May 8th and then started with new running sessions in February 2025 on Thursdays (one afternoon session between Thursday 6th February to Thursday 27th March 2025) for a total of 18 running sessions. The overall total of **running sessions in the two years is 124 involving 130 offenders, 10 prison staff and 7 partner organisations** (IFF - International Futures Forum, Shmu, Familiesoutside, Fife College, RGU - Robert Gordon University, ACE Voices, Cfine).
- **Fun runs and races** – during the year a few different running events have been organised within the prison and outside including the Rungarioch half marathon (Inverurie) which prisoners could take part in, running the race inside the prison on 8th May 2024.
- **Feldenkrais** - we organised the first Feldenkrais course at HMP Grampian, <https://runforever.org.uk/feldenkrais-at-hmpg/>. Runforever delivered weekly Feldenkrais sessions on 30 Thursdays, two sessions (morning and afternoon); a total of **60 sessions** between Thursday 16th May 2024 - Thursday 27th March 2025 involving a total of 43 mainstream and protection prisoners, and 5 prison staff who are part of the HMPG Recovery, Health & Well-Being Strategy Group.
- **Runningstories** – We recorded 5 more Runningstories episodes which makes 13 Runningstories overall - <https://runforever.org.uk/runningstories/> giving voice to runners and Feldenkrais participants (prisoners and ex-prisoners) about their health and wellbeing in collaboration with Richard Skinner, Media Unit HMP Grampian, and Shmu-Aberdeen. The radio show is broadcast inside and outside the prison. See also a similar experience in St. Quentin prison which has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, <https://www.earhustlesq.com/about>
- **Photovoice** - with Stephanie Morrison (RGU and IFF). Capturing prisoners’ experience of the running club and the Feldenkrais classes through photos and words with a health justice approach. The photovoice shows the importance of other ways of valuing the process beyond data gathering (<https://runforever.org.uk/photovoice/>). Together with the Runningstories radio

show, this is a way of co-creating value from the inside and highlighting warm data (Nora Bateson, <https://warmdatalab.net/warm-data>)

- **Runforever presentations** through the year
 - 5 February 2024 - Westhill Running club. Presentation *Runforever and we will all be runners!*
 - 22 March 2024 – RGU University Faculty of Health, Presentation *Runforever at HMP Grampian*
 - 17 April 2024 – Fit Like Joggers. Presentation *Runforever and we will all be runners!*
 - 1st May 2024 - Participation in “Inspiring Change” Scottish Public Health Conference, <https://scotphconf.org/>. Presentation: *Marathon running in prison suggests new paths for humanising prison care/health care* <https://runforever.org.uk/inspiring-change-conference/>
 - 15 May 2024 - Rotary Club Banchory. Presentation *Runforever and we will all be runners!*
 - 22nd August 2024 - Participation in [Healing Arts Scotland](#) led by Scottish Ballet (@scottishballet) and the Jameel Arts & Health Lab (@jameelartshealthlab) in collaboration with the World Health Organisation. Presentation: *Runforever - Through these walls*
 - 28 November 2024 - [Health Promotion Event](#), Reducing Inequalities through our Healthcare Practice – BSLM and IHPE Joint Webinar. Presentation *Runforever and new paths to health*
 - 25 February 2025 - Participation in Ethnographic Research Methods for the Arts and Humanities, University of Aberdeen – 25th February and 11th March 2025. Presentation: *Runforever – beautiful actions leaving inspiration.*
 - 26 February 2025 - Participation in [Demystifying Death: Making Change Happen](#), GLGDGG (Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief) Conference. Renfield Centre, Glasgow, 26 February 2025. Presentation: *Runforever, humanising responses to grief and loss in a prison environment*
 - 18 March 2025 - Participation in The Future We Choose: Ethics, Governance, and Regenerative Leadership, RSA event at RGU Aberdeen. Presentation: *Runforever and Deeside Climate Action Network. Small, beautiful actions – towards healthy and happy communities*
- **The Silent Run** – 7th November 2024. Through this event we celebrated [the Absent friend week](#). The Silent Run is “not a race but a ritual for remembering, with no finish line”, celebrating people who died in prison or elsewhere, because running is not just running. Running is dwelling poetically! In collaboration with other organisations (Acevoices, Cfine, Familiesoutside), Runforever organized also a parallel run in the community on Saturday 2nd November to join the outside and inside in a common path of grief and remembering including art-based activities and singing. This has been a memorial run opening a path for grieving inside the prison and showing that end of life care needs to be considered part of healthcare.
- **Education/Health workshop with IFF** – 27th November 2024. This was a sharing of Runforever work with members of the IFF Community via an on-line conversation (International Future Forums, <https://www.internationalfutureforum.com/>). See link here, <https://runforever.org.uk/runningstories-11/>. What can the educational experience of marathon running inspire in prison education, health and wellbeing? Guided by this question we traced an interdisciplinary and more-than-academic path at the intersection between prison environment, education and health, highlighting values of social inclusion, difference and cultural diversity within the background of systemic transformation.
- **Runforever on the press** - Several publications have acknowledged our work:
 - December 2024 – [Runforever: Through these walls in prison and communities \(ACVO](#)

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- 16 November 2024 – [HMP Grampian running club: How it's transforming lives behind bars](#)
- 29 October 2024 – [How Runforever is changing the lives of North East prisoners'](#)
- 27 January 2024 – [Jogging group at north-east prison HMP Grampian 'breaking barriers' say founders](#)
- January 2024 – [Athletics Trust Scotland, Introducing our latest Transforming Lives Grant winner](#)

See full list of publications here, <https://runforever.org.uk/on-the-press/>

- **Scottish Parliament motion** - Runforever was celebrated in a motion at the Scottish Parliament on the 18th January 2024, <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-11736>

Results:

The impact and benefits of our work are multifaceted. Given our commitment to participate in changing the conversation about prison and incarceration, our activities have both direct results on the lives of prisoners and on raising public awareness potentially informing new policies and a different understanding of the prison environment.

Benefits for prisoners. Prisoners taking part both to the running club and the Feldenkrais classes - around 170 people in the two years of work with a mixture of different ages, health conditions and life histories - improved their health (physical and mental including better mood, sleep, memory, focus and brain functioning), resilience, confidence and sense of self (individual and social) and enjoyed being part of a group environment. Belonging to a running club and a Feldenkrais group including people from inside and outside, helped prisoners to feel less isolated, more empowered about their own health and with the potential of transforming their lives.

There are many underlying factors for prisoners to reoffend including childhood trauma, educational disadvantage, health inequality, unemployment, addiction, family breakdown, homelessness and poverty. The running club and the Feldenkrais group has been helpful in providing the context where good and healthy social relationships can grow. The small community created by our practices, works as a safe microcosm where prisoners can be together in a dignified and supportive environment, providing the context in which the traumatic experiences that have contributed to offending can be reframed.

The number of people interested in our activities is growing and there is demand for more sessions per week. Barriers between prisoners and non-prisoners are loosening by virtue of an educational approach suspending logics of punishment and refusing to impose hierarchies – “we all run in the same direction” avoiding unnecessary competitiveness and individual confrontation. Prisoners often participated to co-create the path of learning and healing of our programmes and there are initial examples of spontaneous mentoring of other prisoners. The non-judgemental environment helped them not to conform to a preconceived set of expected outcomes or achieve specific results but to grow their own potential. Results are in fact specific to each individual and are highlighted by the stories that we constantly collect during our running and Feldenkrais sessions and through the Runningstories podcast and photovoice activities.

Team with HMPG. After two years of work (February 2023-March 2025), Runforever has developed a deeper level of collaboration with HMP Grampian and is integrated with the new corporate plan of the prison which recognises a wider understanding of health which includes its social determinants (social inequalities/inequities and adverse childhood experiences) as suggested by the HMP Recovery,

Health & Well-Being Strategy Group. This approach is coherent with Runforever's philosophy offering educational and mentoring opportunities for prisoners to develop self-awareness through marathon running and Feldenkrais® helping them on their path towards health and recovery. Regular meetings every 3 months among Runforever and HMPG help coordinating the common effort towards an experimental educational programme needing to legitimize its own value and being recognized at the same level of more institutional courses/activities in spite of its difference. This awareness recently highlighted the need to give a name to the team!

First Feldenkrais course delivered in a prison. Weekly Feldenkrais® classes followed by group sharing and conversation, engaging prisoners in a person-centred approach to enable them to self-manage their health and wellbeing within prison and prepare for community re-integration. The course is particularly addressed to vulnerable prisoners avoiding the fit-gym culture, who are at greater risk of frailty and deconditioning, and subsequently experience complex health-related issues. In collaboration with the HMPG Recovery, Health & Well-Being Strategy Group.

Stronger connections with partners. Runforever has established stronger connections with past and new partner organisations: ACE voices, Cfine, Familieoutside, Good Life Good Death Good Grief (GLGDGG), Scottish Partnership Palliative Care (SPPC), Citymoves, IFF International Futures Forum. Our activities have been very helpful in building relationships with all those involved and have been warmly welcomed by offenders, prison staff and partner organisations; all are keen for the work to continue in the next months or years.

Public awareness. During the year Runforever expanded its activities for raising public awareness about the prison environment and new approaches to health and education. It participated in public events where it has been invited to present its work in different contexts including running clubs, partner organisations and academic conferences. It also continued making podcasts to give voice to prisoners and participants directly involved in its activities in order to orient future work. All this activity is not a marginal but rather a fundamental one for nurturing the ground for systemic change. In fact Runforever's work aims at going beyond being a compassionate project towards a symbolic political action raising awareness about walls and separations which characterize prison environment and more generally the world we live in.

New expansion of death awareness. The recent Silent Run (November 2024), offered us the opportunity for opening a wider conversation about death within the prison. It worked as a starting point for opening/allowing a space for grieving for prisoners (without grieving properly a death can become a trauma) and clarified how running is not just running and can be something of a different kind from the fitness culture. As an example, listen to this Runningstories episode at minute 16'15 <https://runforever.org.uk/runningstories-8/>. Our work has been positively recognized by GLGDGG which supported and funded the Silent Run and invited us to give presentation of this new path towards deathcare at the recent conference in Glasgow [Demystifying Death: Making Change Happen](#). This path is rich in potential and our activity for 2025 includes another Silent Run in November 2025 to coordinate our work. Our aim is to create the ground for a culture around death which is equal and just, especially in marginal contexts like prison, in recognition of the fact that end of life care, funeral provision and post-death care need to be considered part of healthcare.

Collaborators and Funders

Runforever's work would not be possible without the collaboration of many groups and generous funding from many individuals and organisations.

Runforever has worked with:

- HMP Grampian
- ACE voices

- Cfine
- Familieoutside
- Good Life Good Death Good Grief (GLGDGG)
- Scottish Partnership Palliative Care (SPPC)
- Citymoves
- International Futures Forum (IFF)

Runforever is very grateful for funding received funding from:

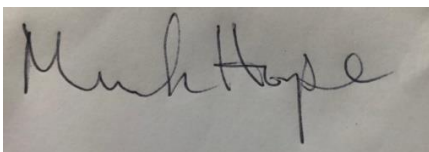
- Athletics Trust Scotland
- To absent friends – GLGDGG (Good Life Good Death Good Grief)
- Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA), Community Mental Health Fund
- Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO), Community Mental Health Fund
- Private donations
- We are also grateful for a previous donation from The Allen Lane Foundation (in December 2023).

Financial Report

A summary of Runforever Running Club's and Runforever SCIO's accounts are as follows:

	Runforever Running Club	Runforever SCIO (21/8/24 – 31/3/25)
Total Income	£5,124.50	£23,808
Total Expenditure	£6,130.00	£16,629
Income Less Expenditure.	(£1,005.50)	£ 7,179
Plus cash brought forward	£2,644.00	£ 1,638
Cash held at 20 th August '24	£1,638.50	Cash held at 31 st March '25 £ 8,817
<i>(cash transferred to Runforever SCIO</i>		

I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for their continuing support and, on behalf of all the Trustees, I would particularly like to thank Paolo Maccagno and Stephanie Morrison for all their inspiring work throughout the year.



Mark Hope,
Chair of Runforever,
on behalf of the Trustees

<https://runforever.org.uk/>

