***How did you find out about the funding?***

The Community Engagement Team from Perth and Kinross Health & Social Care Partnership sent a newsletter out for Stronger Communities

**How did you advertise the course?**

The course was advertised primarily through our partner organisations, which recruited participants directly from their own networks. Our promotional materials emphasised that the neurodivergence pathway works in two directions—offering digital skills training for neurodiverse individuals (such as those with autism) while also providing employer‑side training to help organizations effectively onboard and support autistic employees. In addition, we placed recruitment posters in key locations, and word-of-mouth played a significant role—thanks in part to a contact in Perth DWP who helped spread the message.

**Who did you work in partnership with on the course?**

We collaborated closely with key partners including Birnam Arts, Autus, Dunkeld Archive, Perth DWP and Perth Autism Support. These organisations played crucial roles in delivering the training, providing venues, recruitment support, and technical expertise, which ensured that our approach was both inclusive and effective.

Speaking of partnerships, we were assisted by various volunteers throughout the project, and they brought in much-needed energy and experience, especially considering that 3D virtual worlds were unfamiliar to them, and we are very thankful to these individuals for their assistance.

**What have been the successes of the project?**

The project achieved significant success by upskilling 25 participants—6 of whom were neurodiverse—in advanced data visualisation techniques. We also delivered innovative digital twin outputs such as the Birnam Arts Digital Twin, the Perth Autism Experience, and a high‑resolution 3D model of Birnam Arts. These outputs have been well received, demonstrating measurable improvements in digital skills and providing practical tools for partner organisations. It really helped for partner organisations to see virtual models of their own buildings, and for them to think about how added features could help them with planning future changes to their buildings in a cost-effective manner (like solar power) or to have online versions of past events available within those spaces.

**What have you learned from the project?**

We learned the critical importance of robust contingency planning and flexible scheduling, especially when unexpected challenges arise—such as sudden staff absences or technical issues and being considerate to the neurodiverse learners' mental health and stress levels when it came to booking sessions. We definitely saw the benefit of spreading out leadership experience but could not have predicted the reasons it would come in useful. We learned that individuals with complex needs can have very specific preferences for when and how they learn, and we were able to offer adjustments to their needs.

We learned that we should really do a stress test on partner tech infrastructure, just to make sure it holds up in advance of events, and also to record how a solution to a problem was reached, so we could speed up troubleshooting again in the future. We learned that tight funding for certain organisations restricted their technology offerings and therefore required creative solutions in order to deliver training and other experiences.

**If you were to do the project again, what would you change?**

If we were to repeat the project, a key improvement would be to conduct a comprehensive audit and stress test of all partner technology infrastructure well in advance. This would help to identify and address technical vulnerabilities—like the issues we faced with the analogue mixing desk—before they impact critical events. Such proactive testing would not only save time during event setup but also highlight which partners require additional equipment or support. This approach would enable us to invest in reliable digital alternatives, streamline the setup process, and reduce reliance on specialist technical support, ensuring a smoother, more resilient operation in future projects. We understand that organisations don’t have the funds to run the latest tech, and any changes would have to come from within the resources available.

**What did you learn from the group that stands out?**

The neurodiverse learners in our group truly stood out. They displayed remarkable resilience and rapid progress in mastering complex data visualisation skills through practical, hands‑on training. Their ability to overcome traditional learning barriers underscores the effectiveness of our inclusive training approach, proving that when provided with appropriate support, neurodiverse individuals can excel and contribute innovative ideas.