

Works+ Annual Report 2025 – 2026

Empowering People Across the Scottish Borders
Through Person-Centred Support

August 2026



CONFIDENCE
EMPLOYMENT
EDUCATION
TRAINING



Works+ Annual Report 2025 – 2026

Empowering People Across the Scottish Borders Through Person-Centred Support

August 2026

At the heart of everything we do are the young people who come through our doors.

Each arrives with their own circumstances, abilities and challenges, and the strength of Works+ remains our ability to work with the person in front of us rather than trying to make that person fit a programme.

Over the last twelve months, Works+ has continued to develop across the Scottish Borders, supporting more young people and broadening the help we are able to provide. As Scott's review demonstrates, that progress is not simply about numbers or growth. It is about helping young people build confidence, overcome barriers and take meaningful steps towards employment, education or training.

None of this happens without people. Our staff bring enormous commitment, patience and energy to their work, while employers and partner organisations provide opportunities and expertise which we simply could not replicate on our own. Our funders and supporters continue to place their trust in both what we do and the way in which we do it.

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank all of them.

Most importantly, I would like to recognise the young people themselves. Taking the first step through the door is not always easy, and their achievements are ultimately what Works+ is all about.

As you read this year's report, I hope it gives you a sense not only of what has been achieved over the last twelve months, but of the people and partnerships which have made those achievements possible.

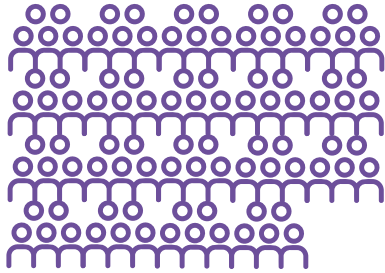
Michael Middlemiss
Chair, Works+

Our Impact

Over the past 12 months, Works+ supported **111 participants** across our Galashiels and Eyemouth sites, delivering intensive employability support, accredited qualifications, mental health interventions, and long-term wraparound mentoring. By taking individuals farthest from the labour market and addressing complex barriers, Works+ achieved an **88.4% positive destination rate** among programme completers.

Outcome Category	Participant Count	% of Total Cohort (111)	% of Completers Cohort (95)	Key Outcome Details & Progression Impact
Sustained Employment	46	41.4%	48.4%	Placed into paid employment in local retail, hospitality, trades, social enterprise, and administration.
Education & Training	38	34.2%	40.0%	Progressed into college courses, vocational apprenticeships, and higher SCQF modules.
Active Engagement	16	14.4%	In Progress	Currently enrolled in daily workshops, group projects, work placements, and 1-to-1 mentoring.
Volunteering	11	9.9%	11.6%	Gaining new skills and retraining
Total Cohort	111	100.0%	100.0%	88.4% Positive Destination Rate across all 95 programmes (84/95).

Summary of Performance Data



95 Participants Completed the Core Programme:

84 achieved verified positive destinations
(46 employed+38 in education/training)



16 Participants Remain Actively Enrolled:

Moving through the programme and working
towards goals.



88.4% Success Rate Among Completers:

A fantastic achievement.

Opening Overview

A Year of Sustainable Impact and Deep Roots

This past year has solidified Works+ not just as a reactive service, but as a vital, foundational pillar for young people across the Scottish Borders. Since our founding in 2018, our principle has remained unchanged: employability support must be person-centred, long-term, and deeply rooted in the community.

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to challenge the status quo of rapid, short-term interventions. As our Project Manager Scott Wight frequently notes, youth employability is not a sprint; it is an ultramarathon. By focusing heavily on our **18-month sustained aftercare model**, we ensure that when a young person takes a brave step through our doors, the transformation sticks. We are proud to present a year marked by geographic expansion, strengthened local partnerships, and extraordinary individual triumphs.

Growth into New Areas

Scaling Our Proven Model

The major strategic focus of the last 12 months has been bringing the unique Works+ ethos to underserved corners of the Scottish Borders. Expanding our footprint requires careful planning, ensuring that the high-value impact demonstrated in our independent economic appraisal, which historically shows a **£3.90 societal return for every £1 spent**, is replicated efficiently and without duplicating any existing service.

Our regional growth has been accelerated by key personnel additions, including bringing on dedicated team members, like Alice with extensive third-sector expertise, to embed our services deeply within new community networks. By expanding outward, we are successfully scaling our capacity to assist those facing severe geographic isolation, ensuring that a young person's postal code does not dictate their employment prospects.

Galashiels Programs

Building Resilience and Integration in the Community

Operating from our base at **9 Island Street, Galashiels**, our core programmes have delivered good engagement this past year. Our signature 8-week “Doing it Differently” employability course continues to provide essential structure, running consistent cohorts on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays to equip participants with critical, CV-boosting certifications, including

Emergency First Aid, Food Hygiene, Manual Handling, and an SCQF Level 4 in Personal

Money Management in partnership with Money Ready. This runs alongside our dedicated Wednesday drop-in sessions, which have expanded our reach, offering tailored employment guidance, application advice, and job-hunting techniques to the wider community.



True to our “Filling the Vessel” philosophy, we ensure our young people are active participants in the vibrant community around them, taking on projects that build real-world confidence and soft skills:

- **Learning in a Heritage Landscape:** In a standout partnership, Works+ collaborated closely with The Abbotsford Trust, who welcomed young people on-site for dedicated work experience and employability initiatives. Our participants successfully engaged with nature and historical conservation, clearing culverts, removing invasive species and planting native trees.
- **Localised Social Enterprise Placements:** We have strengthened our hands-on vocational pathways through active collaborations with local community hubs, such as Café ReCharge and Eyemouth Museum. Through these partnerships, our young people step directly into busy, real-world environments, gaining practical work placements, customer service, hospitality and kitchen experience, in a supportive professional environment.

Berwickshire Programs

Barrier Removal and Overcoming Isolation

Following its initial roll-out, the Works+ Berwickshire programmes have fast become a valued resource for the community. Operating out of key spaces like Eyemouth Community Centre, the programmes balance youth employability cohorts with vital Parents and Carers drop-in sessions, offering flexible 1-to-1 support tailored around family life.

The past year has seen our Berwickshire team tackle head-on the distinct, systemic barriers facing coastal and rural residents, notably public transport deficits and limited local childcare provision. To transform these challenges into pathways, we have created new initiatives to help individuals kickstart their journey.

- **Driving Eyemouth's Future:** Successfully executing our funded 8-week driving theory and practical readiness programme to help eliminate transport as a barrier to further education and work.
- **Parents & Carers Empowerment:** Delivering flexible drop-in support, confidence-building, and person-centred guidance that addresses rural childcare constraints and creates realistic, family-friendly routes back into work or training.
- **Cafe to Career & Local Hospitality:** Cultivating localised hospitality training frameworks to ensure sustainable progression routes directly into the regional tourism sector.
- **Local Mentorships:** Strengthening links with local employers and partner networks to build immediate, earn-and-learn progression routes.

By asking what the people of Berwickshire truly want and need, we have adapted our delivery into an agile, trusted service that meets individuals where they are, removing rigid structural barriers to ensure tailored support reaches the people who need it most. Works+ remains committed to delivering a support service in Berwickshire, and we have exciting plans in place to enhance delivery over the next 6 months to ensure that participants get what they need from our programs.



Case Study: Margaret's Story – From Isolation to Community Leadership

The true impact of Works+ is best understood through the journey of its participants. Margaret's experience illustrates how person-centred support transforms personal hardship into professional leadership.

My Journey: From Setback to a Brand New Chapter

My administrative journey began back in 2008 when I started with the Child Protection Unit at Scottish Borders Council. Over the years, I was proud to carry out various rewarding roles across the Social Work Department.

But then, life threw me an unexpected and difficult curveball. I was dismissed from my role due to ill health. It was a massive adjustment; I became housebound for a long time, only leaving my home to complete necessary tasks. During that isolation, I spent a lot of time thinking about what I was going to do next. I knew I wanted to get back out there, but I felt so left behind, especially knowing that my CV was completely out of date and my confidence had gone.

The turning point came when a family member, who was participating in the Galashiels 16–24 group, mentioned my situation to Pip. Before I knew it, I was invited in for an informal chat, and I officially signed up for the Parents' Employability Programme with Alice. It was exactly the lifeline I needed.

Overcoming My Fears

Stepping back into a structured environment brought its own set of anxieties. While I had come to terms with my symptoms and knew how to manage them day-to-day, a part of me was always worried that a sudden flare-up could happen at any time. I was so determined to succeed that I did not want to miss a single day of the programme.

To make it work, I had to be incredibly intentional with my health. I made sure to rest completely before, after, and between the days I was due to attend. Even though I struggled a lot throughout the programme due to my physical health, I refused to let it stop me. I dug deep, stayed committed, and pushed through to completion.

Finding My Confidence Again

I officially started the Parents' Employability Programme in August 2025. From the moment I arrived, I absolutely loved it. Being surrounded by incredible knowledge regarding employment and volunteering opportunities was inspiring. Every single day I attended, new and exciting opportunities were presented to me.

Historically, my absolute biggest fear when it came to employment was interviews. However, the programme provided the perfect, safe space to face that fear head-on. I was lucky enough to have a mock interview with Alice and Mark Timmins, the Co-Founder of Works+. It turned out to be an incredible learning experience, and I took a tremendous amount of knowledge and strength from it.

Alice was an amazing source of support during my entire time with Works+, constantly ensuring I was prepared for any opportunity that came up. It is hard to pinpoint just one single moment that made me realise "I can really do this," because my entire time with the team was filled with supportive moments. My confidence had taken a major knock due to my ill health, but through this programme, I truly started to find myself again.

The Ultimate Graduation Surprise

The absolute highlight of my journey came on the day of my graduation. Scott completely blew me away by offering me a position right there within the Works+ team as an Admin Assistant!

This moment gave me real hope that I was still entirely capable of being in employment. It meant the world to know that I was joining a team that had an understanding of my condition and was completely supportive of my needs. Transitioning from a programme participant to an actual staff member was an incredible feeling. I'll admit I was very apprehensive at first, but I was also bursting with excitement to get back into employment and share the skills and knowledge I had gained throughout my working life.

Over the last six months, this role has completely transformed my professional life. I have been incredibly lucky to expand my network, build my skills, and get involved in amazing initiatives, including:

- **Welcoming new participants** and sitting in on their initial meetings to offer peer encouragement.
- **Building vital partnership engagements** with the Jobcentre, Cash for Kids, and Borders in Recovery.
- **Representing our team** and connecting with funding partners at a regional Meet the Funders event.

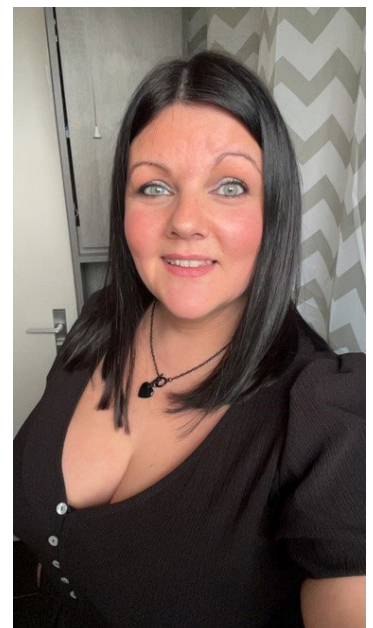
Looking Ahead to a Bright Future

Now, I am preparing to step into a massive new chapter as the **Coordinator of the Galashiels & Area Foodbank**. I look back at my time with Works+, both as a participant and an employee, and realise how perfectly it prepared me to take on this new role. Having the opportunity to practice mock interviews, meet other third-sector organisations, and receive an endless amount of encouragement and guidance has given me the boost I needed to succeed.

Knowing that I will still be working right alongside Works+ within the third sector to support our local community makes me so incredibly proud. I truly feel that this is an amazing opportunity for both Works+ and the Galashiels Foodbank to collaborate, ensuring that as many people as possible in our local community are seen, supported, and heard.

“I honestly don’t know where I would be without the team. They didn’t just look at my CV; they looked at me.”

— Margaret.



Young Person of the Year 2025 – Matthew Rogan

Matthew truly exemplifies what it means to “Do it Differently.” Facing immense personal adversity and structural hurdles, Matthew demonstrated true resilience throughout his journey with Works+, consistently showing up for his peers, learning new vocational skills, and stepping into a natural leadership role within his group. His inspiring transition from deep social isolation to securing a place at Newbattle Abbey College stands as a powerful beacon of what is possible when a young person is given the time, space, and unconditional support needed to thrive.



Partner Organisation of the Year 2025

The Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA)

Our Partner of the Year award went to the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) in recognition of their outstanding commitment to creating meaningful, real-world pathways for our participants. By welcoming our participants on site and delivering supportive, hands-on insights into the world of work. The SPPA has provided an invaluable insight into professional working environments. Their team's dedication, encouragement, and collaborative spirit have played a vital role in rebuilding confidence and equipping our young people with the essential workplace skills needed to achieve long-term success.



The Regional Challenge

The Scottish Borders presents a unique landscape where rural beauty overlays significant socioeconomic challenges. Youth unemployment among disadvantaged cohorts across the region sits above the national average, exacerbated by geographic isolation, limited public transport infrastructure, and restricted access to local training facilities.

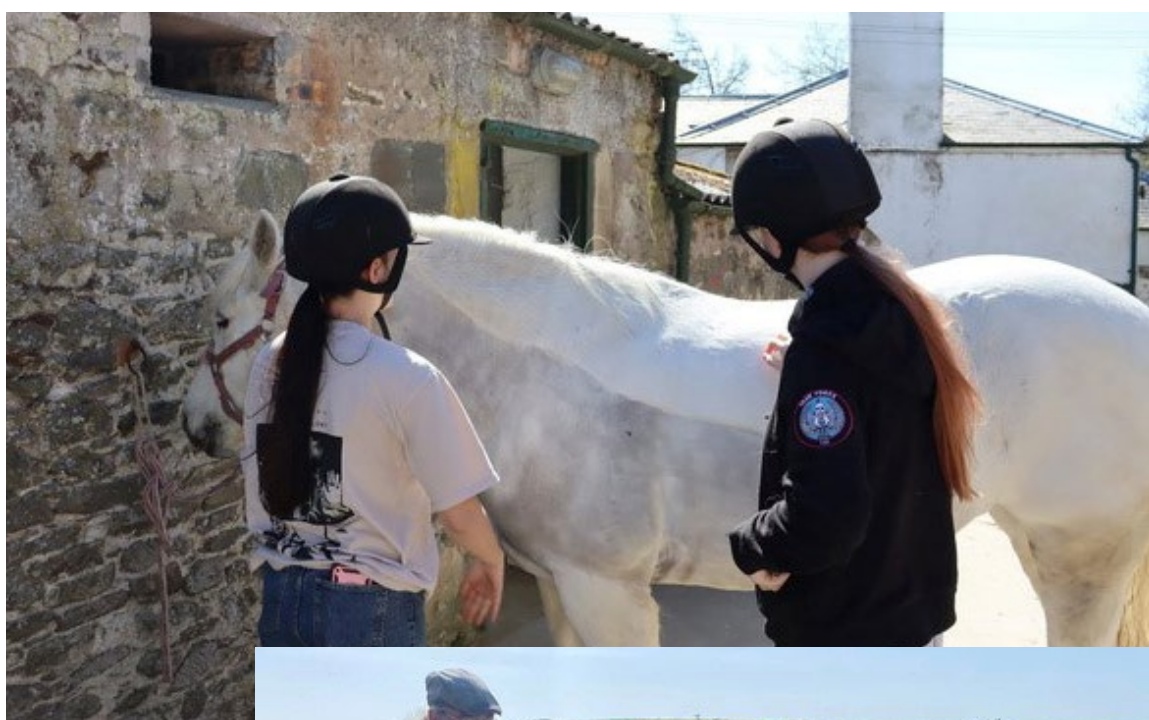
Mainstream data from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) highlights a national positive destination rate of 95% for school leavers. However, this figure drops sharply for individuals residing in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Quintile 1 areas (82%) and care-experienced young adults. Works+ specifically targets individuals within these overlooked demographics, where baseline unemployment is 100%, and reliance on state support is common, and elevates their outcomes above regional mainstream averages.

Rural Isolation & Economic Barriers

In coastal towns like Eyemouth, youth claimant counts reach more than double the Scottish Borders average. Limited bus routes and expensive travel options traditionally prevent young people from accessing employment support in the Central Borders. Furthermore, 59% of Works+ participants present with severe anxiety, depression, or mental health conditions at intake. Standard statutory services often struggle to maintain sustained engagement with this group, leading to long-term welfare dependency without specialised intervention.

The Works+ Delivery Model & Operational Framework

Works+ operates a person-centred, trauma-informed delivery framework designed to rebuild self-worth, instil practical workplace skills, and secure long-term positive destinations.





Dedicated Hubs & Tailored Programmes

- **Galashiels office (9 Island Street):** Serving as the core operational hub, offering 5-day-a-week structured workshops, quiet mentoring spaces, digital access, and group sessions.
- **Eyemouth & Berwickshire Outreach:** A dedicated expansion removing geographic barriers for participants by providing localised employability training and community project access.
- **The 16–24 Youth Programme:** Tailored for young adults who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), focusing on confidence building, team dynamics, CV building and job-search techniques.
- **Parents' Employability Programme:** Specialised support for parents seeking to re-enter the workforce after extended breaks due to ill health, caregiving responsibilities, or life setbacks.

Accredited Qualifications & Experiential Learning

Participants engage in practical, industry-recognised training alongside holistic personal development:

- **Accredited Certifications:** SCQF Personal Money Management, Elementary Food Hygiene, and Emergency First Aid at Work.
- **Community Partnerships:** Hosted by local organisations including Hike and Bike CIC, Abbotsford House, Scottish Public Pension Agency, ASDA, Eyemouth Early Years Centre, The Viking Project, Sea the Change and Eyemouth Museum.
- **Work Placements:** Providing hands-on Work Experience with partners including Cafe ReCharge CIC, Eyemouth Museum and Cheeklaw Garage.
- **Lived-Experience Leadership:** Operational delivery led by staff members who bring authentic empathy, lived experience, and guidance during every session.
- **18-Month Aftercare Guarantee:** Unlike short-term training schemes, Works+ provides continuous wrap-around support for up to 18 months post-programme to ensure job retention and prevent relapse into unemployment, with plans to expand our aftercare service in the future.



Economic Assessment & Value for Money Analysis

An independent economic evaluation modelled on HM Treasury's Green Book principles demonstrates that Works+ delivers exceptional fiscal efficiency and long-term economic returns.



Multi-System Fiscal Savings

The £6,900 net benefit generated per participant manifests across multiple areas of public expenditure:

- 1. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP):** Direct reduction in Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and Jobseeker's Allowance claims.
- 2. National Health Service (NHS):** Lowered demand for primary and acute mental health interventions, addiction recovery support, and crisis care.
- 3. Justice System:** Decreased costs associated with youth offending, anti-social behaviour interventions, and court processing.
- 4. Tax Revenue Generation:** Increased tax and National Insurance contributions from participants entering sustained paid employment.

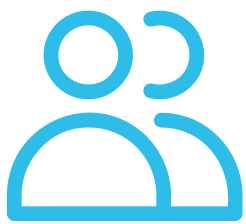


Looking Ahead

Securing Stability to Broaden Horizons

While we celebrate the massive strides taken over the past year, the path ahead demands that we address our ongoing systemic vulnerability: shortterm, project-based grant funding. The deep emotional labour, mentorship, and intensive barrier-removal our staff provides requires long-term stability to remain sustainable.

In the coming 12 months, our strategic priorities focus on:



Securing Core Funding Partnerships:

Actively transitioning towards flexible funding models that allow us to retain our staff team and plan sustainably.



SQA Center Status:

Finalising our journey to becoming a fully accredited SQA Approved Centre, elevating the formal value of our qualifications.



Early Intervention Pathways:

Developing stronger, preventative links with secondary schools to catch early school-leavers before they experience severe disengagement.

Closing notes

The past 12 months have been the busiest and most inspiring in the history of Works+. Supporting 111 participants across Galashiels and Berwickshire while maintaining an extraordinary 88.4% positive destination rate among core programme completers is a proud landmark for our team. Yet behind every figure in this report is a human story, a person who walked through our doors facing isolation, health setbacks, or systemic barriers, and made the courageous decision to rebuild their confidence and step toward a brighter future. As our team often reflects, youth employability is not a sprint; it is an ultramarathon. We are deeply privileged to walk every mile of that journey alongside the people we support.

Outcomes of this magnitude are never achieved in isolation. They are created through the passion, patience, and lived experience of our extraordinary staff team, who consistently go above and beyond to meet every participant with unconditional support. They are powered by our

partner organisations, local businesses, and community networks who throw open their doors to offer real-world work experience, accredited training, and mentorship. And they are safeguarded by our selfless volunteers and Board of Trustees, who give so generously of their time, technical expertise, and strategic leadership to keep our mission grounded and secure. Every single person in the Works+ network plays a vital role, and every contribution directly shapes a life.

To our funders and supporters: your belief in our vision is the foundation that makes all of this possible. Your investment yields far more than a £3.90 economic return for every pound spent; it delivers hope, dignity, and independence. You give us the flexibility to listen directly to our communities, eliminate barriers, and provide wrap-around aftercare so that positive changes can be sustained. Your ongoing support ensures that no postcode in the Scottish Borders ever dictates a person's potential.

Above all, we celebrate our participants, the young people, parents, and carers who inspire everything we do. Taking that first step through the door requires immense bravery, and your achievements are the true heart of Works+. As we look ahead, we remain passionately committed to breaking boundaries, deepening our roots in the community, and ensuring that everyone who needs us is seen, heard, and supported to thrive.

Report Compiled by Scott Wight, Project Manager

August 2026

Works+ (SCIO) • OSCR No: SC048445

Enquiries: enquiries@worksplus.works | www.worksplus.works

Headquarters: 9 Island Street, Galashiels, TD1 1NZ





CONFIDENCE
EMPLOYMENT
EDUCATION
TRAINING