



Annual Report 2024/25



A Message from Our Chair -

Celebrating Shared Success

This past year has been a testament to the resilience, hard work, and shared vision that define the Works+ community. From our dedicated staff and committed partner organisations to the young people who take the brave step of joining our programmes, every individual has played a crucial role in our collective success.

This report is a celebration of their achievements and a recognition of the collaborative spirit that makes our work possible.

Works+ was founded in 2018 as a direct response to the closure of Tomorrow's People, which had supported young people in the Borders since 2013. When that charity went into administration, a group of local professionals and the existing staff team acted swiftly to preserve this vital service. Works+ was born from that determination, not as a fledgling project, but as an experienced and trusted provider with deep roots in the region.

This legacy continues to shape our work today. We are not simply filling a gap; we are building a future. Our approach is distinct: person-centred, long-term, and proven to help young people achieve genuine, lasting transformation.

None of this would be possible without the support of our funders, partners, and wider community. Your trust and belief in what we do, and how we do it, makes everything in this report possible.

As you read on, I hope you'll feel the same sense of pride that I do: pride in the team, in the young people we support, and in the wider community that makes Works+ what it is.

Michael Middlemiss
Chair, Works+

Executive Summary



“Coming to Works+ has been great, I can now talk to people a bit better.”

Executive Summary –

A Year of Proven Impact and Forward Momentum

The last 12 months have been a period of real momentum and strategic growth for Works+. As an organisation dedicated to empowering unemployed and disadvantaged young people in the Scottish Borders, we've not only delivered our core work, but also shown our capacity for lasting, measurable impact.

A recent independent economic appraisal underlines this. For every £1 spent on Works+ programmes, an estimated £3.90 is returned to wider society, a Benefit-to-Cost Ratio (BCR) rated “High” Value for Money by HM Treasury’s Green Book. That efficiency is directly rooted in the changes seen in our participants’ lives.

Before joining Works+, 100% of participants were unemployed, 70% were on Universal Credit, and 59% were experiencing mental health challenges. After completing the programme and receiving our sustained aftercare, 44% moved into employment, and 41% into education or training. An 85% positive destination rate speaks to the deep transformation we help facilitate.

This year has also marked a successful expansion of our model into Berwickshire and Galashiels. These launches reflect a strategic scaling of a proven approach, ensuring more young people across the region can access the support they need to build a brighter future.

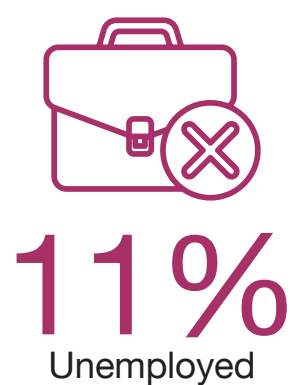
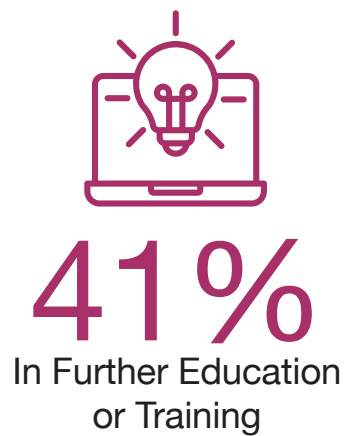
This report reflects not just the outcomes of the past year, but a commitment to keep stepping forward and bringing more young people with us.

Key findings

Before Works+ Intervention



After Works+ Intervention



Of respondents to aftercare surveys after 18 months. Please note these do not total to 100% due to instances sick as maternity / sick leave not being covered.

The Works+ Aftercare Model



The Works+ Aftercare Model – The Secret to Sustained Success

“Positive results are only meaningful if they last,”

Scott Wight, Project Manager, Works+

The journey of a Works+ participant is not a sprint; it’s an ultramarathon. A one-off intervention is rarely enough to overcome the deep-seated barriers many young people face.

That’s why our aftercare model, offering support for at least 18 months, is at the heart of what we do. It’s during this period that initial progress solidifies into real, lasting change, not just finding a job, but building a future.

Our eight-week “Doing it Differently” employability course delivers essential training: CVs, cover letters, interview prep, and accredited courses like Emergency First Aid, SCQF Level 4 in Personal Money Management, Food Hygiene, and Manual Handling. It helps populate a sometimes sparse CV and build confidence.

The results speak for themselves:

85% of participants move on to a positive destination after the initial 8-week block.

But the real transformation comes later. Through long-term aftercare, we help young people navigate setbacks, preventing minor issues from becoming major crises.

Participant Journeys

“Genuine, friendly staff who have helped to build my confidence through fun sessions.”



Participant Journeys:

A Before and After Snapshot (18 Months)

Before Works+ Intervention	After Works+ Intervention
100% Unemployed	44% in Employment
70% Claiming Universal Credit	41% in Education or Training
59% With Mental Health Issues	
	Combined Positive Destination Rate: 85%

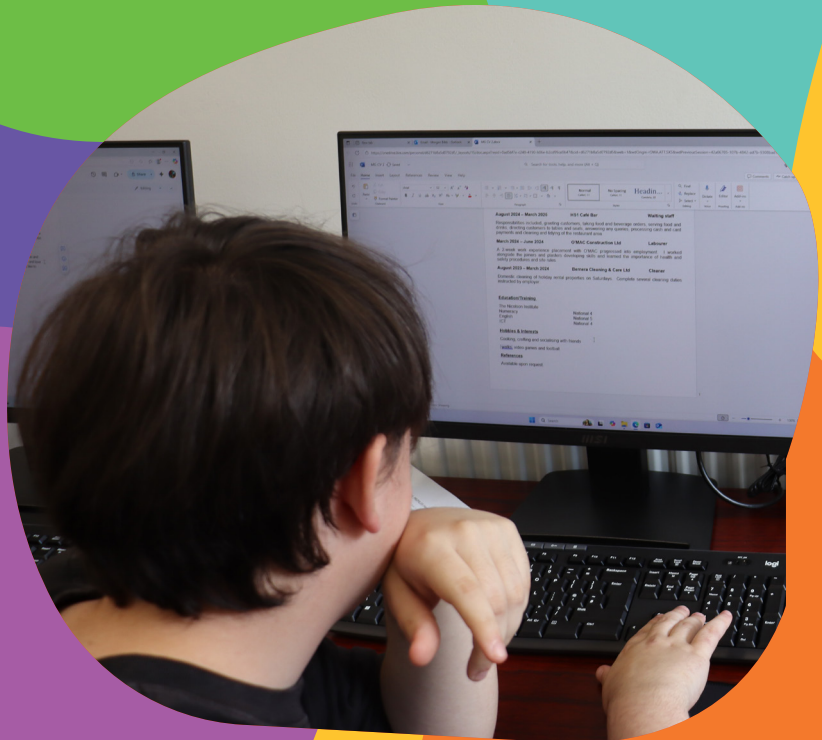
These results reflect our holistic, person-centred approach. Before joining us, participants face unemployment, poor mental health, and low confidence. Our model gives them the scaffolding to rebuild, turning early steps into lasting change.

We go beyond traditional employability training. Alongside practical skills, we prioritise soft skills, confidence, communication, financial literacy, and resilience.

Our “Filling the Vessel” philosophy immerses young people in enriching experiences: digging with Archaeology Scotland, outdoor learning at Bowhill and Abbotsford, industry visits to places like Utility Warehouse and ASDA. These shape self-belief, provide real-world context, and give young people the language and stories to succeed in interviews and beyond.

This unique mix of practical and personal development is the core of our model. True transformation takes time, trust, and support that adapts to the pace of every young person who walks through the Works+ door.

Building a Brighter Future



**“Everyone here is lovely
and it's helped me make
friends and socialise.”**

Building a Brighter Future – Expanding in Berwickshire and Galashiels

2024 was a milestone year, with Works+ launching new programmes in Berwickshire and expanding in Galashiels. Alongside this, we moved into our own dedicated premises in Galashiels, a space designed to offer privacy, support, and purpose-built flexibility for young people and staff alike.

This new base has allowed us to deliver five-day-a-week workshops and one-to-one support under one roof. It has been crucial to the successful launch of our new programmes and forms the foundation for further strategic growth.

As our reach grows, so too does our efficiency. Supporting more participants strengthens our cost-effectiveness and amplifies the positive societal return on every pound spent. Our expansion isn't about scale for its own sake; it's a targeted, data-led decision to broaden impact.

We're proud that our person-centred, aftercare-based model is now reaching more communities. The positive outcomes we've achieved in Galashiels can be replicated in Berwickshire and beyond. This expansion marks a confident step into the future, one we look forward to reporting on in next year's update.

“It's great, staff are nice and it has helped me explain things in more detail on paper.”

The Team



“I’ve really enjoyed the session and the staff are really nice.”

The Team –

Recruiting from Within

Our team is our strongest asset. This year, we were proud to welcome two former participants, Pip and Hazel, into paid roles. Their journeys from client to colleague are a testament to the programme's depth and impact.

Pip joined us a year ago and now leads our “Doing it Differently” programme in Galashiels. Hazel, a Works+ graduate from December 2024, now oversees our IT and key back-office operations. Their lived experience makes them trusted guides for new participants.

We also benefit from the drive and dedication of Charlie, now two years in post as our Volunteer and Partnership Coordinator, helping to keep referrals flowing and opportunities open. And we recently welcomed Alice, who brings valuable experience from the third sector in Berwickshire, supporting our regional expansion.

These team members represent the future of Works+: resilient, empathetic, and committed to empowering the next wave of young people.

**“Lovely staff
and boosted my
confidence.”**

The Path Ahead



The Path Ahead –

Seeking Stability to Sustain Success

The progress we've made is underpinned by the trust of our funders and the dedication of our team. But behind that success lies an ongoing vulnerability: short-term funding.

Despite strong outcomes, our work is still often supported by project-based grants. This hampers our ability to plan long-term, retain skilled staff, and offer the consistency young people deserve, particularly when crises arise.

Our team does more than deliver services; they become mentors and advocates, helping young people navigate trauma, uncertainty, and setbacks. This emotional labour is critical, and it deserves long-term investment.

Looking ahead, we are actively seeking flexible and core funding partnerships that can secure the future of this work. With a proven model and strong outcomes, we are well placed to scale our impact, if we can secure the right support.



A Foundation of Support

CONFIDENCE
EMPLOYMENT
EDUCATION
TRAINING

A Foundation of Support –

Thank You to Our Funders

We are incredibly grateful to the funders who have made this year's progress possible. Their belief in our mission allows us to support young people in practical and transformative ways.

Special thanks to:



National Lottery Young Start – enabling our core work with young people



The Robertson Trust – backing our proven model



Hymans Robertson Foundation – supporting innovation and sustained aftercare



Scottish Borders Council – a vital local partnership



Esme Fairbairn Foundation – helping us build long-term capacity



Scottish Building Society – funding key IT infrastructure for growth

Each of these partners has played a part in the success we're now building on.

A Word of Thanks



A Word of Thanks –

We Couldn't Do It Without You

This year's success belongs to the whole Works+ community.

To our Board of Trustees: thank you for your unwavering support and generous commitment of time and expertise.

To our partners and employers: your insights and career stories offer young people an invaluable connection to the world of work.

And to our incredible staff team: your commitment, patience, and emotional resilience are the heartbeat of Works+. You go beyond “the job,” becoming mentors, allies, and trusted voices. This impact cannot be taught; it comes from who you are.

Report compiled by Scott Wight, Project Manager.

A Word of Thanks



A Life Transformed –

Sam's Story

Sam's journey embodies the power of our model. At 21, she was a single mother from one of Scotland's most deprived areas, living with the weight of trauma, low confidence, and poor literacy.

From day one, our goal wasn't just to get her a job, it was to unpick the barriers holding her back. We supported her digital and literacy development, connected her to learning partners, and helped her realise the value of her caring skills.

Sam started with a local cleaning job but aspired to more. We helped her map transferable skills and build a route into care work. She ultimately secured a job supporting adults with learning disabilities, her first formal interview, and a life-changing success.

Now, with our continued aftercare support, Sam is on a new path, confident, capable, and filled with a sense of purpose. Her story is one of many.



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