



Career
Connect



Impact Report

2025/26



Welcome to our **2025/26** Impact Report

Sheila Clark, CEO, Career Connect



This report brings together powerful stories of change. Joyful, moving and all showing the difference that the right support, at the right time, can make.

These stories are our mission in action: we enable more people to access and succeed in education, training and employment.

In a challenging social and economic landscape, we have a vital role to play: connecting people with opportunity, creating pathways where they don't exist and equipping people to succeed. We contribute to a more prosperous, equitable and aspirational society; and that's why we remain committed to grow in reach and impact.

Our ambition has translated into significant progress.

In 2025/26, we reached 124,369 people — an increase of 16% year on year — and generated £9.1 million in social value. We secured three new justice-sector contracts, expanded our work in primary schools, developed our training offer, and delivered local Youth Guarantee Trailblazer programmes.

This is all underpinned by our new values — **innovation, collaboration, equity and voice** — which shape how we respond to the changing world around us.

We are innovators. Our Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Edge Hill University, funded by Innovate UK, is developing a first-of-its-kind predictive platform. We continue to share evidence and good practice in reducing NEET levels. Research informed by the insight of our frontline advisers has strengthened wider understanding of what works and attracted national recognition.

We collaborated closely with local authority commissioners and 281 schools and colleges. Across our justice custody and community services, our teams supported 27,790 offenders and ex-offenders to consider their future with renewed hope and a clearer pathway forward. Strong working relationships with partners and commissioners has played a key role.

Equity of opportunity is part of our charity's DNA. Each time we advocate for a participant or remove a practical barrier, we help to address disadvantage.

Our voice is strong. We empower participants to share views and experiences that shape our work — and we amplify them. We contributed to the Career Development Institute Conference, welcomed MPs to see our frontline work, shared research with stakeholders and appeared in the media.

We've grown in impact, reach and influence, and been viewed as sector leaders. We were proud to be named Careers Provider of the Year and to rise 39 places in the Best Companies to Work For list.

All of these achievements reflect the commitment of our colleagues, the support and oversight of our Board, and the strength of our partnerships. Thank you to everyone who has contributed this year.

Together, we're making a measurable and lasting difference—and, as the need for our services continues to grow, our focus remains on reaching more people, improving outcomes and creating better opportunities.



National reach, local delivery

While our roots are in the Northwest, we're continuing to grow our services across the country. We deliver:



Employment, education and training support to offenders and ex-offenders.



Careers support for 14-25-year-olds at risk of, or Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).



Careers information, advice and guidance and employer encounters in schools and colleges.



Accredited and non-accredited qualifications, CPD and training.



Research and Impact to inform policy and practice.

Our Vision

A society where every individual realises their full potential.



Our Mission

To drive social mobility by enabling more people to access and succeed in education, training and employment.



Our Values

Innovative



Constantly learning and evolving.

We design our services to bring the most benefit for our participants. Testing new things and using data and feedback allows us to make informed decisions.

We embrace new technology and use it responsibly to equip the people we support.

Equitable



Diversity is a strength.

We recognise that people start from different places.

We take action to promote inclusion and address inequality.

We offer challenge and solutions to help achieve equitable outcomes for all.

Collaborative



We achieve more, together.

We build strong connections every day with our participants and partners, working collaboratively to improve services and opportunities.

We engage with decision makers and use research to influence and make the case for positive change.

A Voice



We're a voice for those we serve, every day.

We amplify our participants' voices in individual, local and national settings.

We listen to our participants. Their feedback shapes our work.

Our Reach and **Impact**

In 2025/26, we have:



Supported

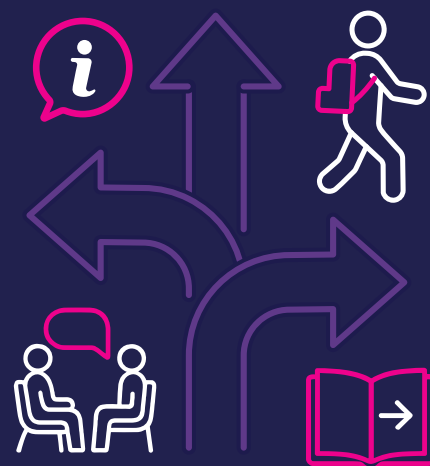
27,790

participants
in the **criminal justice**
system to move towards
a **new path**

Provided careers information,
advice and guidance to

53,000 students

across **281 schools**
and **colleges**



Provided tracking and
support services for

43,245

young people

across **eight local authorities**, with substantive
support provided to **29,255 young people**



Enrolled

334 learners

on accredited and
non-accredited courses
delivered by our **training**
and **development team**

Generated a
social value of

£9.1 million



That's a total of

124,369

people



benefiting from
Career Connect's
support and
expertise



An award-winning charity on the national stage

We're Careers Provider of the Year!

We were proud to be named Careers Provider of the Year 2025 at the UK Career Development Awards.

Hosted by the Career Development Institute, the professional body for all aspects of career development, the award recognises an "outstanding" organisation providing career development services, with a "commitment to professionalism, continuous development of their team, and adherence to the Code of Ethics to offer clients high quality, impartial and expert careers support."

"Excellence in careers information, advice and guidance has never been more important, and we're proud to be helping lead the way. We can't do what we do without our people – and I want to thank everyone at Career Connect for our win."

Sheila Clark



Rising the ranks as a great place to work

In our second year in the Best Companies to Work For list, we leapt up to:

- 12 in the Top Charities to Work For (up five places)
- 36 in the Top 100 North West Companies (up 30 places)
- 45 in the Top 100 Best Large Companies (up 39 places)

The Best Companies to Work for Lists and Best Companies Accreditation are recognised as the standard in workplace engagement across organisations of all sizes.

We also improved our Best Companies star ranking from one star to two, officially recognising our charity as Outstanding to Work For.

Best Companies independently surveyed all Career Connect colleagues on a range of topics including leadership, happiness at work, work-life balance, benefits and organisational structure.



Sharing our expertise in the media

We appeared across a range of media outlets, informing debate and calling for positive change.

This includes a feature on our report into social, emotional and mental health challenges faced by young people (Career Matters) and opinion pieces: 'Why early SEMH support must be a priority in tackling the NEET crisis' (FE News) and 'Young people need support not sanctions to get on the career ladder' (Children and Young People Now).

Our advisers have also appeared on BBC Radio Merseyside to share advice on GCSE and A Level results days and how to navigate career changes.

Career Matters

fe news

Children & Young People Now



Career Connect



Participant voice:

"The Ambassador Programme gives me the opportunity to be a voice for my peers whilst improving and building my skills."

Lincoln, Youth Ambassador

We're committed to truly hearing the people that we support, and taking meaningful action based on their voices. This includes the shape, design, delivery, and evaluation of our services.

We continue to embed the Lundy Model of Participation and meet the Hear by Rights standards.

We gather important insights through our participant voice survey. Participants have identified areas of need such as money management or support in applying for full-time jobs or apprenticeships.

Youth Ambassadors play key role

We recruited six new Youth Ambassadors to join our five Senior Youth Ambassadors.

Our Ambassadors have helped build participant voice into our recruitment processes by joining interview panels. Six of our Ambassadors have taken up the opportunity to enrol onto a personal development qualification. The group also tested a new career conversation resource that is being developed by our schools team,

with the ambassadors' feedback contributing directly to the product's development.



Gathering insights and providing evidence

Each operational team has led at least one dedicated participation project, with approaches ranging from consultative to collaborative. Examples include:

Manchester: 43 young people took part in a survey about barriers to support, employment, education, and training. The results helped to develop a project supporting young people to engage in opportunities.

St Helens: 12 young people who were NEET and/or working with Youth Justice, joined focus groups to discuss their experiences of navigating employment and apprenticeship opportunities. Information from this project helped to inform local employers in St Helens of the challenges and experiences young people face. This resulted in some employers adjusting recruitment processes to become more accessible for local young people.

Voice champions represent and amplify

Our Voice Champions network continues to ensure that lived experience informs how we design, deliver and improve our services. Their role is to amplify participant voices and help take actions forward. The Champions meet every two months and undertake regular training.

Feedback helps shape Discovery Wing project at HMP Risley

The Discovery Wing programme is designed to help hard-to-reach men in custody access support and prepare for release.



Our justice services team runs participant feedback sessions during each cohort to ensure the delivery model remains engaging, supportive, and responsive to participant needs. Following participant feedback:

- We introduced team building sessions, designed to dissolve barriers, build confidence, and foster positive engagement. This has been a success; participants have reported they feel more relaxed in sessions and support workers have seen more participants engage.

- Participants requested more food-based activities, which led to the purchase of a pizza oven. This has supported engagement sessions and practical activities on the wing.
- Several changes were made to the wing environment and delivery of sessions. This included fitness equipment to promote health and wellbeing, a games area, and improvements to the setting.
- A monthly veterans' coffee morning provides an opportunity for ex-Service participants to discuss their experiences, identify support needs, and access additional support from staff and peers. Support workers attend these sessions regularly to gather specific feedback and help direct additional support.

Peer Mentors play a key role

Peer Mentors continue to play an important role across custody settings. At HMP Hindley, the Peer Mentors support delivery of the Dignifi programme for participants dealing with trauma. This has helped promote engagement while providing additional peer-led support.

At HMP Thorn Cross, Peer Mentors support the collection of feedback, assist with arranging appointments, and support the delivery of group sessions, including CSCS and Health and Safety courses.

Creating meaningful services and multiple ways to engage

In response to feedback, we have brought additional external services into prisons, including the DWP to offer pre-release advice on financial stability and benefits around employment.

Group sessions are increasingly delivered directly in prison wings, allowing participants to engage with the service in larger and more accessible settings.

Support Workers continue to gather feedback through one-to-one engagement and joint working with other prison departments, helping ensure participant voice remains central to service development.



Justice services: changing lives and futures with the right support

We remain a trusted partner within the justice sector, and in 2025/26 we were commissioned to deliver three new contracts.

Our justice services team delivered more than 20,000 sessions, helping participants identify opportunities, address challenges and prepare for successful futures in employment, education and training. This support was delivered across a broad network of 14 prisons in the Northwest, 13 prisons in the East Midlands, six CFO Activity Hubs and 14 probation offices.

HMPPS CFO Evolution

We are in the second year of delivering the HMPPS Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) Evolution contract in the Northwest (running from August 2024 to 2029).

The programme continues to play a key role within the wider CFO Evolution delivery model.



Designed to complement core HMPPS provision rather than operate as a standalone service, CFO Evolution provides additional support to help people in the justice system move towards positive futures. Career Connect delivers this support in 14 prisons. Working in partnership with The Growth Company, we also facilitate a network of six CFO Evolution Activity Hubs across key locations throughout the Northwest, creating accessible routes into education, training and employment.

The impact of the programme continues to grow. Between April 2025 and March 2026, the team supported 2,581 approved cases across prisons, CFO Activity Hubs and community locations. As delivery has expanded, this has increased to 3,929 approved cases recorded to date.

Through a strong focus on performance and participant outcomes, our teams have helped individuals achieve 1,847 education, training and employment outcomes between April 2025 and March 2026, supporting people to build skills, increase confidence and take meaningful steps towards long-term rehabilitation and independence.

Greater Manchester Education, Training and Employment (GM ETE)

We continue to deliver the Greater Manchester Education, Training and Employment (GM ETE) programme on behalf of the Greater

Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) as part of the Greater Manchester Integrated Rehabilitative Services (GMIRS).

The team has provided specialist support across 10 probation offices throughout Greater Manchester and three Greater Manchester prisons, helping people on probation take positive steps towards sustainable futures in employment, education and training.

In 2025/26, the programme received 3,160 referrals, reflecting continued demand for tailored and practical support. Through personalised guidance, coaching and progression planning, the team helped 182 people on probation move into employment and/or self-employment, while a further 263 people progressed into education or training.

The team also completed over 2,489 employment-related interventions, including support with CV development, disclosure advice, interview preparation and other employability activities. These interventions provide participants with the skills, confidence and practical tools needed to overcome barriers, access opportunities and achieve meaningful progress towards employment.

Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) East Midlands

In April 2025, Career Connect was awarded the new national Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) contract for the East Midlands region. Delivered across 13 custodial sites, our team of qualified CIAG Advisers provided professional careers guidance to both male and female offenders, helping individuals explore opportunities, develop career aspirations and prepare for successful progression on release.

Between April 2025–March 2026, the team delivered 11,164 careers guidance sessions across the region. Through personalised support, participants have gained the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to make informed career decisions, progress towards employment, education or training, and support their longer-term rehabilitation journey, helping to reduce the risk of reoffending.

CIAG Lancashire and Cumbria

We successfully retained the national Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) contract for the Cumbria and Lancashire region from 1 April 2025, building on delivery that has been in place since 2019. The contract now covers six custodial sites, including one new site added during the year.

From April 2025, the team delivered 7,885 careers guidance sessions across Cumbria and Lancashire. Through tailored one-to-one support, participants have developed the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to plan their futures, and take positive steps towards employment, education or training on release. This personalised guidance plays an important role in supporting rehabilitation and reducing the risk of reoffending.

Age and Rehabilitation Programme

Career Connect has delivered the Age and Rehabilitation resilience support programme since March 2025. The programme, funded by HMPPS, is for those aged 18–25 who are facing multiple barriers in engaging with probation and wider services.

Career Connect's Resilience Coaches are co-located in probation offices, which has supported stronger partnership working and improved participant engagement. During the programme's first year, 92 participants were referred, of which 50% of referrals had either been completed, or engaged in the process.

After year one, there was strong evidence of positive change for participants who completed the programme, particularly around developing confidence, personal resilience and future aspirations.

"I feel a lot more confident to face challenges in my life now compared to 8-months ago, before I had the extra support. Without the support from my resilience coach, I wouldn't have accessed the CSCS course at all."

Age and Rehabilitation Programme participant

Case Study

New start and new opportunities

Paul* worked with Resilience Coach Helen as part of the Age and Rehabilitation programme – and is now giving back to the community.

Helen said:

"When I met Paul, he had little confidence. As a young man with neurodivergence – ADHD – he had struggled as an adult to adjust to the world around him. He did not engage with services in the community, had received little support and struggled with his conviction."

At their first meeting, Helen introduced Paul to the Age and Rehabilitation programme and the support he could receive. Paul appreciated this and agreed to join the programme.

Following an assessment and a measurement of his skills based on the 4C's Framework (Confidence, Commitment, Control and Challenge), Helen helped Paul create an individual action plan. She also developed confidence and self-esteem resources to build his resilience and explained how getting into the community could improve Paul's mental wellbeing.

Instead of using the Probation office, Helen introduced Paul to a local community wellbeing space as a new venue for their meetings. The venue welcomes people who struggle with mental health and wellbeing, with a team of mental health ambassadors for anyone needing support. Paul attended regular community cafe sessions and met supportive volunteers.



Over the next few months, Helen helped Paul access a fully-funded, four-week course called 'ADH-ME' that helped him understand his ADHD and develop coping mechanisms. She also introduced him to 'Chill and Chat' – a group for 16–25-year-olds, which she attended with Paul for the first session, after which he continued to attend by himself.

Helen said: "The Age and Rehabilitation programme had a very positive impact on Paul's engagement with the Probation Service and the wider community. His confidence really grew."

Helen supported Paul as he gained an interview for voluntary work in the café at the community space. Working with Helen on his interview techniques and how to disclose convictions, helped him feel more confident.

Paul was successful at interview and has been volunteering there for several months.

Paul said:

"When I started, I felt broken and isolated with no motivation. This programme, and being introduced to the community hub, changed my life and gave me a safe space where I've made friends for life."

"I've signed up to become a mental health ambassador, so I can help others who feel the same as me. I'm really looking forward to the training and when I'm ready, I'll look into employment opportunities. Right now, I'm comfortable getting experience volunteering and I'm very happy with my life and with being in this role."

*not participant's real name or photograph

Case Study

Blackpool and Blackburn CFO Activity Hubs: helping Joe drive forward

Addressing mental health and housing allowed Joe* to find the right road to employment.

Joe is an armed forces veteran with ADHD, who faced physical and mental health issues while navigating his way back to civilian life.

Joe went into custody feeling his life was over but came out focused on turning his life around.

He attended Blackburn CFO Activity Hub upon release, and after moving closer to family and friends, started attending the Blackpool Hub.

Joe was staying with his sister, but struggled with not having his own space, and understanding housing procedures. His mental health deteriorated, and he developed an overwhelming fear of becoming homeless. This impacted his motivation and wellbeing, and he self-isolated.

Joe felt that it was important to move into his own flat to support his mental health and move towards work – and he expressed an interest in HGV Driving.

Joe attended the Hub for support with housing, employability skills, and job applications, so his Support Worker linked him with Blackpool Council and Shelter. His Support Worker also helped him complete an updated CV and search for HGV Driving and jobs available in the Blackpool area.

This programme is funded by HMPPS CFO. To learn more about the work of HMPPS CFO please visit: [CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk](https://www.creatingfutureopportunities.gov.uk)



Joe secured a place and completed an HGV Driving course for HGV 1 and CE 2 which led to him gaining full-time employment, and a sense of stability. Although Joe moved into a hotel, his increased confidence and resilience ensured he was still able to independently search for a property.

He has received in-work support from the Blackpool Hub team and contacts them any time he needs additional support.

Joe says he feels proud of himself for achieving what he thought was unachievable. He has built communication skills and the ability to understand others. He has a sense of purpose, and enjoys meeting people in his job, while the variety of work suits his ADHD.

Joe said:

"[Gabbie at the Blackburn Hub] was brilliant and helped with me building up my confidence and ensuring I had some accommodation on my move down to the Blackpool area. She was patient and very understanding."

"This was similar with the Blackpool CFO team. No matter what issue I brought to our sessions [Christine] dealt with them confidently and put my mind at ease. I have passed my HGV 1 and CE 2 which led to my employment!"

*not participant's real name or photograph



An expert careers guidance partner improving student outcomes

Our schools offer is designed to support young people at every stage of their career journey.

Through tailored careers education, expert guidance and meaningful employer engagement, we help students broaden their horizons, build confidence and make informed choices about their future.

In 2025/26 we have:

- Worked with 281 schools and colleges (a 14.7% increase from 245 in 2023/24), providing high-quality careers guidance services to more than 53,000 young people.
- Provided targeted employer encounters to 11,730 young people, including workplace visits, challenging stereotypes events, employer Q&A sessions, enterprise and work-related learning sessions, and mock interviews.
- Arranged 26 careers and transition fairs for students and 10 information events for parents.
- Delivered bespoke employer encounter programmes to more than 30 schools, across all key stages.
- Involved more than 370 organisations in our delivery, helping to raise student aspirations and improve outcomes.
- Worked with 87 secondary schools and colleges to mentor teams and assess their careers provision against the Quality in Careers Standard, the national quality award for careers provision.
- Worked with 20 primary schools to mentor teams and assess their careers education programmes against the Quality in Careers Primary Standard.
- Launched our innovative digital CEIAG platform Get Connected Plus, which has been successful in supporting SEND settings to engage young people with the Personal Development curriculum.
- Provided more than 1,200 work experience placements for young people aged 15-18.

More than just a chat: what young people really think about careers interventions

Our careers advisers meet with students across the country, providing supportive and insightful careers guidance.

To aid our understanding of the impact of careers guidance, and the extent to which they make a meaningful difference, we invited Year 11 students to take part in an online survey, which had 137 responses. Students rated how confident and informed they felt about their careers planning prior and post careers guidance.

Our analysis found:

- Careers guidance interviews had a consistently positive effect on the students surveyed.
- Every scored question showed higher average ratings after careers guidance.
- Careers guidance was helping students move from uncertainty to greater clarity and confidence.

The evidence indicates impact not only in student satisfaction, but in the measurable shifts in self-reported career readiness. The strongest impact was on practical career understanding. The biggest improvement was in understanding how to find information about jobs, qualifications, and skills – indicating that students benefited from practical signposting and clearer access to career information. Careers guidance is especially effective at helping students understand where to start and what to do next.



Career Connect

Improved clarity around next steps

The results also showed large gains in understanding grade requirements for qualifications. Careers guidance was shown to support the students in becoming more decision-ready about their futures, with students describing how careers guidance was helping to make their next steps clearer.

They cited more understanding of entry requirements and application processes, which helped them to think more realistically about their future choices. Their responses showed that careers guidance was most impactful when advice was specific, actionable, and personalised.

"This career interview has helped me a lot. It has helped me through seeing the steps that you have to take to get to your goal."

survey response

Never too early: Quality in Careers Primary Standard

We are endorsed by the Quality in Careers Standard to deliver the Career Connect Primary Quality Award for Careers Related Learning.

Since launching the Career Connect Primary Quality Award in 2024, we have been working with 22 primary schools across the UK. This has marked a highly positive step forward in recognising and supporting excellent careers-related learning taking place within primary education.

Our assessor team has also had the opportunity to run focus groups with pupils across Key Stages 1 and 2, gaining first-hand insight into how children are engaging with and benefiting from their school's careers education programme.

Case Study

Informed, ambitious, and inspired careers: Co-op Academy Swinton



Co-op Academy Swinton is demonstrating what ambitious, embedded careers support can achieve: its Year 11 NEET figures are amongst the lowest in Salford.

This is a feat that Acting Headteacher Nathan D'Laryea says wouldn't be possible without embedded, specialist careers support from Career Connect, delivered by Careers Adviser Brendan Prendergast.

"Having the lowest number of NEETs isn't just luck or coincidence.

"It's about what we do as a school, but it's also because of the work we do with Career Connect and Brendan, making sure our students are well informed, and that the choices they make are what will support them the most.

"You can speak to our students in Years 9, 10 and 11 and they all know about careers. I see this as a direct impact from our partnership."

Co-op Swinton Academy's careers strategy is led by Assistant Principal and Careers Leader Felicity Fagan, supported by Head of Year 11 (Curriculum) Laura Cope and Brendan, who delivers a range of targeted interventions.

Felicity says: "It's all about aspiration. For a lot of our students, they may be the first in their family looking at further, vocational or higher education. Our Year 11s go on to a variety of colleges, and we have a high percentage of students who secure apprenticeships – which are hard to get in Greater Manchester."

"Brendan also helps us with staff training, so our teachers feel more informed in discussions with students."

The school, which has a wide catchment area, aims to ensure that students have not just one, but two confirmed options at the end of Year 11 – and this is where Brendan's experience is especially valued: "We've built so many strong connections with providers because of him. It makes things so much easier for us and our students," says Laura.

Laura and Brendan work together to engage Year 11s most at risk of NEET, building confidence, aspiration and understanding of pathways. Brendan also meets with students in Alternative Provision and makes home visits to students with low attendance, to ensure everyone gets access to the careers support they need.

He also supports Year 9s as they choose their options, and delivers earlier, multiple careers interviews to students with SEN identified as needing intensive careers guidance.

Brendan also plays a key role in the school's large scale careers fairs, mock interviews and work experience. Brendan also led on a major virtual work experience project for year 10s.

Year 10 student Afia said: "I've done virtual work experience which was very interesting, and I've talked with Mr. Prendergast. I want to go into dentistry. Work experience is important, and Mr. Prendergast told me where I could go. It was insightful – I think if I didn't talk with him, I would be a bit lost in terms of what I need to do. It was very inspiring."

Case Study

Creating meaningful employer encounters for Kilgarth School



By understanding the needs of the school and individual students, adviser Lisa and engagement specialist Karen create meaningful employer experiences.

Kilgarth School in Birkenhead is a small cohort, community school for boys aged 11–16 with additional social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in 2024, the school creates personalised education programmes to ensure each pupil achieves the best possible outcomes from their starting point.

Career Connect adviser Lisa Kirkham has provided careers support to Kilgarth pupils for more than 10 years. She helps pupils prepare for their transition to life after school, exploring what they want to do, identifying their interests and needs and finding colleges or training providers offering the skills they need for their chosen career.

Lisa said "Because every pupil has an EHCP, a significant part of my role is liaison between everyone involved. I provide recommendations based on the pupil's needs to the school and their chosen destination. This may include inviting the college or provider to the school to meet the pupils and understand their support requirements."

Sue Pelter runs Kilgarth school's Flexible Learning Centre, where Year 11 pupils prepare for life after school.

Sue said: "Finding post-16 opportunities for our pupils can be a challenge, so Career Connect's support is vital. Lisa knows this place inside out, with an amazing knowledge of what's out there. She is great at telling pupils what they need to know and what matches their needs. Lisa takes the time to find out what our pupils are good at, has a good sense of their requirements and understands the need to be flexible, tactful and understanding."

Cath Sissons from Kilgarth School co-ordinates the work experience placements with Career Connect's Employer Engagement Assistant Karen Bancroft.

Cath said: "Karen is always just a phone call away. Finding employers willing to support students with additional needs can be a challenge, but Karen makes sure every Year 10 pupil wanting work experience has the opportunity to do so in a supportive environment. I know, if I have any problems about a placement, I can call Karen and she'll say: "leave it with me", and sort everything out."

Headteacher Jane Westlake said: "Career Connect works the same way that we do. We both want to provide our pupils with access to high-quality career advice and guidance and ensure the best possible outcomes for our pupils. We know we can always contact them for advice, and they'll give us the best support they can."

Building skills and connections to succeed



Working in partnership with eight local authorities, we provided tracking, early intervention and personalised careers support to young people across Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens, Wirral, Manchester and Salford.

This year, we were also commissioned to deliver UK Youth Guarantee Trailblazer activity across four Liverpool City Region authorities.

Liverpool City Region

Our Liverpool team:

- Identified, tracked, and supported 5,286 young people, helping move 1,568 into employment, education, or training (EET).
- Delivered 7,060 face-to-face engagements
- Saw progression of 746 young people who were NEET into EET.
- Made more than 5,000 home visits – an inclusive approach removing barriers to engagement.
- Liverpool Youth Guarantee Trailblazer: delivered one-to-one support for 87 Care Experienced young people, with 31% achieving EET outcomes. 40 young people participated in digital sessions, 40 young people improved confidence, motivation, aspiration and 45 improved wellbeing.

Our Halton team:

- Supported and tracked 919 young people, helping 227 into EET.
- Provided learning support to 300 Year 11 and 12 students who had no existing offer of learning support.
- Supported 93 at risk of NEET young people during their Year 11 transition.
- **Halton Youth Guarantee Trailblazer:** We supported 36 young people aged 18, with a focus on engagement. 40% were referred to Halton People into Jobs, and 50% moved into EET. Youth voice informed delivery – we consulted one-to-one with 14 young people, and a further 10 participated in focus groups.

Our Knowsley team:

- Supported and tracked 2,346 young people, helping place 497 into EET.
- Supported 186 Year 11 students identified as at risk of NEET to transition into EET.
- Made 1,350 home visits, and 653 direct face-to-face contacts.
- Undertook proactive engagement with hard-to-reach groups, leading to referrals for vulnerable young people increasing by 43%. Delivered improved early identification of those at greatest risk of disengagement, particularly Children Missing Education (CME) and Electively Home Educated (EHE).

- Undertook an action research and evaluation project with young people furthest from EET. By testing the effectiveness of the RAG rating methodology in identifying risk and support needs, we produced evidence-based recommendations to improve service targeting, increase engagement and strengthen progression outcomes. Youth Voice was central to the evaluation.
- Achieved a positive destination retention rate of 85% (after one year) for young people who were at risk of NEET.

Our Sefton team:

- Tracked 6,146 and supported 5,565 young people, helping 565 move into EET.
- Delivered 9,382 significant interventions and conducted 1,266 home visits through a proactive outreach model.
- Worked with 846 under-16s at Risk of NEET, providing a total of 2,594 interventions. This included vulnerable groups, Cared For young people, young people with SEN and SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) needs, and school non-attenders.
- Worked with more than 200 Care Experienced young people.
- Were ranked first in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) for the lowest NEET and Not Known percentage as of February 2026. The Sefton team also ranked fourth nationally (out of 153 local authorities) during the October academic annual transition.
- Despite a 5% increase in the 16-17 NEET cohort and rising numbers within vulnerable groups, overall NEET and Not Known rates have remained stable.



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Our St Helens team:

- Tracked or supported 4,377 young people, helping place 357 into EET.
- Supported 1,607 young people with 5,032 information, guidance and advice interventions.
- Increased engagement amongst vulnerable and hard-to-reach young people, supporting 752 young people through 3,052 significant interventions.
- Achieved improved outcomes for young people at risk of becoming NEET, with 78% progressing into EET, up 14% from the previous year.
- Supported vulnerable learners to successfully transition into EET, supporting 946 young people, 84% of whom went into EET in September 2025.
- Contributed to year-on-year reductions in NEET and Combined NEET/Not Known performance measures by 0.3%

Our Wirral team:

- Supported and tracked 2,494 young people, helping place 497 into EET.
- Worked with vulnerable groups, including 159 Cared For young people aged 16-18 of whom 77% achieved a positive EET outcome.
- Helped 126 Care Experienced 18-21-year-olds, 67.5% of whom achieved a positive EET outcome.
- Supported 70 Electively Home Educated young people, of whom 88% progressed to positive EET outcomes.
- Worked with 34 young people who were at risk of NEET, of whom 74% progressed into a positive EET outcome.



- Supported 412 young people to attend the Launchpad Careers Fair, accounting for 70% of all attendees.
- Contributed to measurable outcomes through partnership: collaboration with NHS colleagues and Wirral Council secured seven apprenticeships placements for care leavers. The 'What Next? Wirral Skills Show' engaged more than 1,000 local young people from schools across the borough.

Neighbourhood outreach removes barriers to opportunity

This year we worked in partnership with Magenta Living on the place-based JobsPlus initiative, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Based in a community house space on Bidston Rise estate in Wirral – which has 350 properties – Career Connect advisers Jamie and Aimee work alongside JobsPlus Manager Sally Ross to provide residents aged 16+ with personal coaching, wellbeing help, and support into work.

In 2025/26, the programme achieved 30 new sign-ups, and 12 people started work.

Sally said: "Career Connect brings amazing expertise to the partnership; they've got the same approach, and they understand the barriers that some people are facing, such as lack of work history, aspiration and motivation.

"For some residents, we've put them on a specific course or helped them into a job; for others it has been more about the softer skills – communication, or building their confidence."

Jamie Martin, Social Impact Lead at Magenta Living said: "Career Connect's skilled jobs coaches have enabled us to hit the ground running, to get out and to connect with local people, and create opportunities, working with people on their level.

"We've got very clear, direct job outcomes that people have achieved, but we've also got a lot of learning and development within the project as well."

Bidston resident Mir said: "I was literally on the job search, the whole time, and no-one had given me an interview – since Jamie I've had a few interviews. The best advice Jamie has given me is to be myself in interviews. Just be calm, just give my best, never give up."

Mir has now started work and was able to claim his into work bonus as part of the scheme.

Case Study

Targeted, responsive and personalised: Liverpool City Region Youth Guarantee Trailblazer

Career Connect's Liverpool, Halton, Sefton and St Helens teams delivered the Liverpool City Region Youth Guarantee Trailblazer, achieving life-changing results for young people.

Part of the government's Get Britain Working Initiative, the funding tackles economic inactivity and supports 18–21-year-olds through place-based interventions.

Our Liverpool team supported Care Experienced young people. Halton and St Helens provided tracking and personalised interventions for 18-year-olds facing the greatest barriers to EET, and Sefton worked across both groups taking a flexible, integrated approach.

Across the region, we helped young people address barriers including mental health, poverty, low confidence, low attainment, digital exclusion, trauma, limited work experience, and long periods of being NEET.

Support was tailored, with our advisers building trusted relationships and providing one-to-one support reflecting each young person's needs, strengths and ambitions. This included motivation and confidence building, CV development, applications and interview preparation. Meanwhile, practical support addressed immediate barriers such as travel costs, interview clothing, food, essential household items, and digital connectivity.

Across the Liverpool City Region, our teams supported 239 young people.

In Liverpool, 87 Care Experienced young people engaged (exceeding target by 45%), with 11 progressing into employment or training, 40 improving confidence and employability skills,

and 45 reporting improved wellbeing. More than 40 accessed digital inclusion support.

The Sefton team tracked 74 young people, with 23 (31%) progressing into EET, and 83% of positive outcomes leading to employment. A further 56 Care Experienced young people received digital devices, and personalised support to address barriers including poor mental health, anxiety, autism and digital exclusion.

In Halton, 86% of young people engaged with support, while in St Helens 18 of 42 young people (43%) achieved positive EET outcomes.

Trusted relationships, practical support and early intervention helped young people build confidence and overcome barriers to progress into sustainable outcomes.

Youth voice was vital for identifying barriers and delivering responsive support.

Cade completed the Trailblazer and is now a Customer Service Ambassador Apprentice at Arriva.

Cade said: "I learned a lot of employability skills; how to fix my CV, how to speak in interviews, and I applied to quite a few jobs with the help of my adviser. It was really useful.

"I was given a laptop, which meant I could create my CV and apply for jobs. I used to be shy, but I've definitely come out of my shell. I've started my Apprenticeship and been to networking events.

"My long-term plan is to become a bus driver – and I'm currently doing driving lessons alongside my role."





Shaping support for success

Manchester

The Manchester team had 13,617 significant contacts with 3,810 young people and achieved their best-ever Not Known figures of 0.7% in May 2025.

The UKSPF funded team in Manchester over-achieved across all delivery areas, supporting 268 young people throughout the year (203 NEET young people and 65 at risk of NEET). The team also worked with partners across the city to deliver bespoke engagement programmes, including:

- Construction industry insight and CSCS cards.
- Digital wellbeing and an introduction to coding; online delivery.
- Nails and lashes.
- Music production and performance.
- Employability skills.
- Basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

Despite the continued rise in the numbers of young people who are NEET, and a further reduction in accessible in-year training provision in the city, the team's combined NEET/Not Known figure continues to be sustained at 2024/25 levels.

Pathways programme grows

During 2025/26 we continued to develop the successful Pathways programme, expanding it to other areas of the city and including a wider selection of work placements.

Pathways is a 12-week work placement programme for NEET young people aged 16–18, delivered in partnership with Manchester City Council. It includes weekly two-day work placements, and a training day and development day with a training provider partner. Participants are paid a weekly £80 bursary, jointly funded by UKSPF and Social Value monies.

This year, 45 young people took part in the programme with approximately 80% positive progressions to education, employment or training. Due to the continued success of the programme, it is being further expanded for 2026/27.



Working with partners for better outcomes

The Manchester team continues to chair NEET Prevention Panels.

In the 2025/26 academic year, 19 panels met, attended by 30 schools and training providers. The panels discussed 179 young people and agreed 110 referrals to Career Connect for early intervention and support with transition to post-16 opportunities.

New for 2025/26, and in response to the increase in the number of young people with SEND in the NEET cohort, we introduced an EHCP panel, attended by Career Connect SEND lead Careers Advisers and Manchester City Council's SEND team. During the year, 118 young people were discussed, with suitable and meaningful provision agreed and arranged for over 95% (113).

Monthly VEETO (Virtual Education, Employment and Training Opportunities) network meetings continue to grow. Hosted by our Manchester team, the network now sees around 80 frontline professionals attend each month, alongside a bulletin distribution group of over 500 sign-ups.

Salford Employment Hub

In 2025/26, the Salford team delivered 5,298 substantial interventions, supporting 2,331 young people. 90% of those were contacted within 10 working days of becoming NEET (April 25 – February 26).

The team continued to work on behalf of Salford Council as part of the Salford Employment Hub. This included supporting young people:

- who are NEET aged 16 to 18 (up to 25 for those with an EHCP or Care Leavers).
- at risk of becoming NEET who are electively home educated.
- with an EHCP who were educated out of the city.
- attending a Pupil Referral Unit; who are Care Experienced; or who attend via the Virtual School.

The team also received additional resources funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (via Salford City Council). This resulted in increased staffing and activities, along with beneficiary funding to support young people who are NEET. During 2025/26, the funding provided functional skills support, short activities programmes, and targeted mental health support for seven young people via one-to-one support from a counsellor.

The team supported the delivery of four summer programmes for young people leaving Year 11 who were identified as being at risk of becoming NEET. The programmes offered a diverse range of activities, including Pink Nails and Beauty, Riding to Success bike repair and maintenance, and two construction-focused initiatives.

The programmes also supported those with additional needs, with highlights including Morgan Sindall's hands-on construction experience and Transport for Greater Manchester's travel confidence sessions. The programme had a high success rate, with 85% of the 46 attendees moving into and sustaining a place in EET. Our evaluation showed that attendance at the summer programme increased the chance of young people progressing onto sustained positive education, employment or training destinations.

The Salford team continued its tradition of employing apprentices in 2025/26, with two young apprentices supporting the team while gaining valuable experience in business and administration. Both apprentices were nominated for awards, with Olivia Moss winning the Salford City College Apprentice of the Year in the Business and Professional Services sector.



Case Study

Kayla's musical journey to confidence

Identified as dyslexic during school, Kayla often felt she did not receive the support needed to reach her full potential. She intended to pursue a career in nursing and hoped to continue her studies at college. However, after not achieving her desired exam results, her confidence was low.

Determined to gain the qualifications she needed, Kayla aimed to re-sit her English and Maths exams before starting college. She initially planned to begin her college course in January, only to be told she would have to wait until the following September. This unexpected delay left Kayla feeling discouraged and further affected her self-confidence.

Careers adviser Freya encouraged Kayla to explore two short courses funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). One was a 16-week Functional Skills course, delivered twice a week, which gave Kayla the opportunity to work on her English and Maths at a pace that suited her. It also helped her to build back her confidence.

Throughout Kayla's journey, Freya provided practical support and guidance.

Together, they worked on improving Kayla's time management skills and created an action plan to tackle any barriers that could affect her progress. Freya also helped Kayla obtain identification documents and access fitness activities that supported the development of a healthy routine.

During their conversations, Freya discovered that music made Kayla feel confident and capable. To help transfer that natural confidence into her career building, Freya encouraged Kayla to enrol on a six-week music programme with arts organisation Cultural Fusion. Professional musicians taught songwriting and performance skills workshops. The experience inspired Kayla so much that she wrote a song about her journey with Career Connect.

Today, Kayla plans to progress to college and eventually to university. She now feels excited about the future and sees opportunities that once felt out of reach, including possible careers in both nursing and music.

Kayla said: "Working with Career Connect made everything less scary and stressful. Now, I am aware of opportunities that I wouldn't have known about, and I feel able to take them up and carry on with them."

Freya added: "Kayla has the core skills and drive to achieve. She just needed the right support and guidance. Her empathy, talent and resilience will make her a real asset wherever her future takes her."



Training and developing professionals to make a difference

Our Training and Development team continues to equip professionals with a range of accredited and non-accredited courses and training.

High-quality delivery recognised

In 2025/26, we maintained our position as an accredited assessment centre, delivering qualifications through four awarding bodies: OCR, City & Guilds, ILM and NCFE.

Powering our people

The Training and Development team plays a vital role in powering our charity's work and helping us invest in our people – with 20% of our current workforce accessing a qualification delivered by the team.



Strengthening the skills of the careers sector

The team develops careers professionals internally and externally through nationally-recognised qualifications, including the OCR Level 4 Diploma in Careers Information and Advice and the OCR Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development – the professional standard for careers advisers.

They also celebrated the ninth year as a provider of the Careers Leaders programme, funded by The Careers & Enterprise Company.

The programme continues to create a strong pipeline of skilled practitioners, and we maintain a figure of around 10% Careers Leaders candidates returning to complete their full Level 6 careers qualification with us.

Courses in information, advice, and guidance

Our Information, Advice and Guidance and coaching qualifications have helped frontline professionals in a variety of industries develop the skills they need to support people more effectively and confidently.

In 2025/26 our Training and Development team delivered:

- City & Guilds Level 3 Certificate in Advice and Guidance, and Level 4 Diploma in Advice and Guidance to 38 people
- Level 4 Diploma in Careers Information and Advice to 44 people
- Level 6 Diploma in Careers Guidance and Development to 118 people
- CEC funded Careers Leaders training to 102 people.
- Careers leaders CPD to 32 people.

Launching a new training offer

This year, the team rolled out a new suite of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses, available to our staff and to purchase online. They also prepared to deliver new accredited training programmes for both Career Connect colleagues and external learners. The new courses include:

- Neurodivergence awareness
- Mental Health awareness
- Mental Health First Aid (accredited)
- Motivational interviewing
- Responding to challenging behaviour

Many of the courses were informed by our research findings and insights from Career Connect colleagues, who reported increasing levels of complex needs among adults and young people accessing our services.

By designing courses based on these insights, we aim to ensure more people – often amongst the most vulnerable – have access to the right support at the right time, delivered by confident, informed practitioners.

Additionally, we have developed CPD for Careers Leaders and professionals in education settings.

Case Study

Helping the housing sector build thriving communities



As a Tenancy Resilience Officer at ForHousing, Alicia De Voy helps tenants aged 16+ move towards work, training or a new career.

Alicia's City and Guilds Level 4 diploma in Advice and Guidance helped her make her own transition to her new career in housing – having previously worked in education.

"It's been a unique experience studying the Level 4, and I've really enjoyed it," says Alicia.

"Information, Advice and Guidance is such a wide topic. I wondered if it would be challenging to fit what we do into answering the questions. But I chatted with my assessor Marie and chose optional units – and realised just how much fits within the qualification.

"My two favourite modules were 'advocating on behalf of clients' and 'operating within networks'. Part of my professional development has been about building confidence to reach out and establish myself within networks – now, I'm happy to be there, taking it all in and doing it on my own."

Through building strong networks, Alicia has been able to connect tenants to specialist services, from money advice to homelessness prevention and care leaver support.

"Tenants come out of the process with a strong sense that we care," Alicia explains.

"And I think this helps set us apart. I also think equipping us with this qualification builds people's faith in us as an organisation."

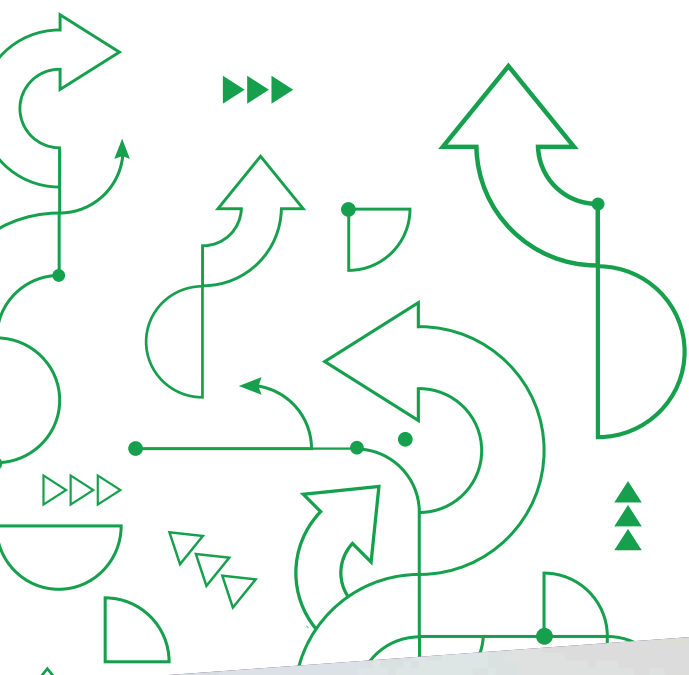
"For the module 'liaising with other services,' I could feel my confidence increasing as I was doing the unit. I applied my learning and reflected on a situation where I took a multi-agency approach and was able to achieve a really positive outcome for a tenant – the lifting of a benefits sanction. Reflecting on it, and knowing that what you're doing is correct, especially as someone fairly new to careers at the time, was a big boost.

"The module 'managing a caseload' has also encouraged me to say no to some things and become much more intentional with my time, because I know it will benefit the quality of service I can provide to tenants.

"I love the reflective element of all of the units. It has cemented a lot of things for me. My assessor Marie is the most down-to-earth person I've ever met. I've been through university and post graduate qualifications and never had the level of support that I've had through this qualification – quiet, compassionate and constant.

"When a tenant rings me to tell me that they've got a job, there's no feeling like it. People know we're here to support – we're not just 'the landlord'. I develop real relationships with people; I'm included in their journey. It's a privilege.

"The Level 4 qualification has given me confidence and skills – and I never forget to reflect."



Case Study

Equipped to support learners of all ages

Studying with Career Connect is helping Gary Byrne and his team make careers guidance accessible to learners of all ages.

Gary is Careers Team Leader at East Lancashire Learning Group, which includes Accrington and Rossendale College, Nelson and Colne College, and Lancashire Adult Learning.

Set over two campuses, it welcomes a wide range of learners – from 16–18-year-olds studying A Levels, BTECs, T-Levels and Apprenticeships, to high needs students. It also offers degree-level study, apprenticeship training and has a wide adult learner base.

Gary has studied with Career Connect since his first Information Adviser role fifteen years ago. He completed his OCR Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice and OCR Level 6 Diploma in Careers Guidance and Development.

"I've had a long relationship with Career Connect, and it's always been a great one. My assessor Andrea has been amazing! The way Career Connect works is professional but also personal. Everybody gets to know you, how you work, and the setting you work in. Delivery is tailored to you.

"It taught me new concepts, theories, ways of working – but sometimes it's knowing why you're doing what you're doing and understanding it better. You can apply that... and not be afraid to go that bit further with your knowledge, with the wide breadth of learners that we have."

Gary also plays a key role in educating colleagues and embedding careers – a priority for the college group: "Whether it's my own team, mentoring and training them, or equally, delivering workshops and tutorials to staff about careers legislation changes and updates."

When Gary wanted to upskill his team, he says, "Career Connect was the first place I turned to."

Two colleagues have recently completed the OCR Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice and are now looking at Level 6. One of those is Careers Adviser Shannon, who says:

"I enjoyed everything about the course – it was so varied. I liked that it was small learning groups for the online webinar sessions – the trainers really spent time clarifying terminology."

"I chose optional modules I felt would best support the students I work with, and that would allow me to develop in my role. One of these was 'using digital technology in careers education'.

"I had been tasked by Gary to help develop our careers pages on Moodle (our virtual learning development site).

"Because of the knowledge I gained – thinking about barriers, limitations, accessibility across different technologies, and how students use them – and how learning can be integrated to promote careers education – I was able to apply that and get a really good result.

"Technology changes all the time, but I'll definitely be using those principles and knowledge as we further develop our digital systems and new intranet system."



Research and Impact

New research into Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs

Our research on Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provided a unique insight into the needs of young people in Year 12 education.

Our findings showed that pupils with SEMH needs and an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) are at significantly higher risk of becoming NEET, revealing that almost two-fifths (38%) of young people with SEMH needs and an EHCP spent time NEET in Year 12, while a quarter (25%) of those with SEMH needs receiving SEN support but without an EHCP spent time NEET – more than three times the rate of their peers.

As a result, we called for more sustained support for young people with complex needs as they transition from school to further education and training, and gave a series of more detailed recommendations. We once again led the conversation, even ahead of the Government's SEND white paper.

University AI research partnership to predict risk of NEET

We launched an ambitious Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), with Edge Hill University, funded by Innovate UK, to develop a first-of-its-kind predictive platform. The project is due to run until 2028.

By identifying young people at risk of becoming NEET before they reach a crisis point, the project aims to transform how local authorities, schools, charities and other agencies deliver life-changing interventions. The project has moved into the application and testing of advanced deep learning AI models, with the aim of allowing us to identify and direct more preventative support.

Contributing to the Government's NEET enquiry

We provided evidence to support the Alan Milburn inquiry into NEET, with evidence of both barriers and enablers to EET. Our culture of continually gathering feedback and insights from our participants meant that we were ready to provide evidence and voices from young people directly to the enquiry.

Sharing expertise on CDI panel

Amnah Vicars, Careers Adviser in our Liverpool Team, was on the panel at November's Career Development Institute Conference, for a discussion on the complex reasons why the number of young people who are NEET is rising – and how career development can help.



Turning data into insight

Our Data Insights Team continues to provide NEET tracking figures to local authorities across the Northwest.

Utilising our new Data Warehouse, we are now positioned to provide even more insightful and accessible data to our partners through our stats packs and expert analysis. Our team have decades of combined knowledge on outcome tracking for young people, which together with our Local Authority partners, is helping to direct resources and monitor interventions that change young lives.





In 2025/26 we were proud to have generated a social value of £9.1 million.

We did this through:

- Promoting local skills and employment through the creation of apprenticeships, training opportunities and providing a Real Living Wage to our staff.
- Supporting responsible regional business growth through our support for mental health and wellbeing initiatives, equality and diversity, both for Career Connect and our local supply chains.
- Cultivating healthier, safer, and more resilient communities; and through our Beneficiary Fund.
- Decarbonising and safeguarding our environment through a range of initiatives to reduce our environmental impact.



How we measure social value

We use the TOMs (Themes, Outcomes, and Measures) calculator, a standardised tool developed by Social Enterprise UK and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

By identifying relevant themes, outcomes, and measures specific to various sectors and areas of our work, the calculator provides a methodology for quantifying the monetary value of our social value outcomes.

Proud of our people

In 2025/26 we:

- Had a headcount of 328, and 17% Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority colleagues.
- Were recognised by the National Centre for Diversity as one of the Top 100 Most Inclusive Employers 2025 – number 18 on their annual list.
- Retained Silver accreditation as an Investor in Diversity.
- Were revalidated as a Disability Confident Leader, the highest level awarded by DWP.
- Were proud to hold ‘accredited status’ in the Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter.
- Achieved an exceptionally high rating on Glassdoor, with 4.8 stars based on over 150 reviews – putting us in the top 1% amongst the highest rated of all UK employers with 96% recommending us as an employer.
- Supported 134 of our people to complete accredited qualifications, delivered by our Training Team. Including City and Guilds Levels 3 and 4 in Advice and Guidance; Level 4 in Advice and Guidance or Careers Information and Advice; Level 6 in Careers Guidance and Development; and Assessing qualifications.

Committed to our planet

We continue to embed sustainability through practical action, colleague engagement and operation and supply chain considerations.

We continued to work with Positive Planet to measure and maintain our independently reviewed Carbon Reduction Plan.

We achieved Positive Planet’s gold accreditation, and we are working towards achieving Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO) silver accreditation in 2027.

Carbon Literacy training

Working closely with the CLO, our Training and Development Team designed accredited training, tailored to Career Connect. This will help us expand Carbon Literacy training to at least 30% of our people. Youth ambassadors, managers and further trustees will have the opportunity to take part.

The Green Team continues to promote practical action and engage colleagues. Sustainability is embedded in our induction, and a MeLearning module is available to colleagues about their vital role in our environmental commitments.

In 2025/26:

- Our people drove 7% more business miles than in 2024/25, while the number of employees claiming mileage fell by 6.2%. This suggests that fewer employees travelled, but those who did travelled further, reflecting our geographical reach and increased car sharing.
- We reduced electricity consumption by 8% (26,172 kWh to 24,045 kWh) and water use by approximately 4%.
- We reduced toner cartridge orders by 15% and confidential waste by 2%.
- We continue to procure 100% renewable electricity at sites where we pay for electricity, making our Scope 2 emissions zero.
- We have reduced our Scope 1 emissions by 79.3% (from 2022/23 baseline) largely reflecting lower gas emissions.

Our total market-based emissions in 2025/26 were 1181.59, and Scope 3 accounted for more than 99% of our footprint. Further information about our Carbon Reduction Plan can be found on our website.

Proud to have achieved:





Reducing environmental impact through technology

We are dedicated to minimising our environmental footprint by using technology to drive sustainable practices.

By implementing server consolidation, smart website design, SharePoint reorganisation, Microsoft 365 adoption, and emissions monitoring, we're making significant strides towards a greener future.

Server reduction and cloud transition

By the end of 2024, we successfully reduced the number of physical servers from 28 to 6. This notable decrease in on-premises infrastructure has already contributed to lowering our energy consumption and carbon footprint. Our long-term objective is to fully eliminate physical servers by the end of 2026, transitioning applications to the cloud for enhanced efficiency and sustainability.

SharePoint reorganisation for smarter data management

Our SharePoint reorganisation project is a crucial initiative aimed at improving data management from user, administrative, and security perspectives. By restructuring folders and implementing data retention policies, we ensure that information is retained only as long as necessary. This reduces redundant data storage, streamlines collaboration, and minimises digital waste.



Smart website design

Our new website (launched May 2025) has led to significant carbon reduction, moving from an F carbon rating (old site) to a B rating, making it cleaner than 77% of all web pages globally. This is due to simpler user journeys, faster loading and improved accessibility. The site's hosting infrastructure is powered by Google Cloud Platform and Cloudflare, meaning it runs on 100% renewable energy.

Microsoft 365 adoption for efficient collaboration

Our Microsoft adoption project focuses on optimising the use of Microsoft 365 applications such as Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, and SharePoint. A core aspect of this is encouraging colleagues to avoid sending email attachments whenever possible. By shifting to cloud-based document sharing, we estimate a reduction of over 1TB in storage usage, significantly lowering our digital footprint.

Technology emissions dashboard

We have launched a pilot technology emissions dashboard to measure our carbon footprint on the Microsoft platform. We are gathering data to pinpoint major sources of emissions and set goals to reduce them.

Sustainable hardware choices

Sustainability is a critical factor in our hardware procurement process. We evaluate new laptops and devices to ensure they comply with sustainable practices while maintaining the balance of durability, performance, and usability.

Storage limits for efficient data management

We set storage limits for each user based on their role. This measure encourages colleagues to minimise storage usage through regular housekeeping. If additional storage is required, users can submit a justification, and space is allocated accordingly. This straightforward yet effective approach optimises storage and reduces unnecessary data accumulation.

CRM implementation for unified operations

We are launching our new CRM (Customer Relationship Management) platform, initially focusing on commercial activities. This will reduce storage needs by consolidating operations and eliminating duplication, offering a single source of truth. Streamlining data management and improving accessibility aligns with our sustainability goals.





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