



Impact and Insights

WORK PATHWAYS
2025

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INTRODUCTION

Our [Impact and Insights Framework \(IIF\)](#), launched in January this year, guides our approach to learning. It aims to draw a line of sight to the changes we want to see in Scotland and helps us understand:

- The difference we make through our own practice;
- The outcomes achieved by funded organisations;
- The contributions we make to social change.

As part of this, we're pleased to share our second thematic report focused on [Work Pathways](#). Through this theme, we want to see a Scotland where paid work is a more reliable route out of poverty, and we want to contribute to tackling the drivers of in-work poverty and to removing barriers so that more people can access Fair Work.

This report provides an overview of what we are funding across Work Pathways and provides a deep dive into supporting people into work, helping retention and progression, and embedding Fair Work practices.

The analysis and discussions underpinning this report have demonstrated to us that to make a real difference, the work that we do

and the work we enable needs to support Fair Work, not just employability or work pathways for individuals. There is greater potential through our responsive funding to support: direct engagement with employers, in-work aftercare, and childcare barriers.

We are an accredited Living Wage employer, but know that there is more we can do to champion Fair Work, through our own practice as an employer and the awards we make.

In addition, through engagement with key stakeholders like the Scottish Government and amplifying the voices of grant holders who are leading the way, we are keen to influence higher quality and more consistent commissioning models (local and national) and to advocate for an evaluation framework which demonstrates how access to Fair Work can offer a genuine route out of poverty.

This report starts to tell the story about the differences we are contributing to within Work Pathways as we seek to prevent and reduce poverty and trauma in Scotland. We welcome your feedback.

Zoe Ferguson
Head of Impact and Insights

WHAT ARE WE FUNDING?

Through our [Work Pathways](#) theme, we want to see a Scotland where paid work is a more reliable route out of poverty. We want to contribute to tackling the drivers of in-work poverty and to removing barriers so that more people can access fair work.

The following charts provide a summary of **Work Pathways** awards* we have made under our current delivery plan: between 1st April 2022 and 30th January 2025.

***Our Funds** are our rolling, responsive funds, which run all year round (Large Grants, Small Grants, Wee Grants, Community Transport and Community Spaces). **Programme Awards** are aimed at delivering big change that lasts on tackling poverty and trauma in Scotland. Unlike Our Funds, we host time-limited open calls for our Programme Awards, which will publicly invite applications around a particular focus. Meanwhile, through our discovery and relationship-building work across the Trust, we also have the ability to co-develop potential projects with a strong likelihood of achieving big change that lasts



From the **1st October 2024**, we started to allocate Our Funds* awards to outcomes**. For Work Pathways, these are:



**Our Funds are our rolling, responsive funds, which run all year round (Large Grants, Small Grants, Wee Grants, Community Transport and Community Spaces).*

***Central to our Impact and Insights approach is clarity about the outcomes we want to contribute to through our strategy. Under each of our themes we have identified four outcomes which are the changes we want to see in order to achieve our long-term vision. Since 1st October 2024, we have been manually allocating Our Funds awards to a primary outcome. We will soon be doing this for other funding programmes and activities across the Trust. These outcomes are for our own reporting purposes and enable us to understand and articulate the collective long-term differences our partners are contributing to. You can find out more about our Impact and Insights approach [here](#).*

£255K has been awarded under Work Pathways through Our Funds since 1st October 2024:



DEEP DIVE: WORK PATHWAYS

Our Analysis is based on:

39

Large Grant End of Year Reports

2

Programme Awards linked employability and fair work



Relevant **External Data** (referenced)



An **in person collective sense-making session** involving 20 grant holders, 2 trustees, Trust staff and external stakeholders

The aim of the deep dive analysis is to:

- Provide **insight into the external context** for our grant holders, including what challenges exist for them and the people and communities they support.
- Explore evidence of impact and to highlight both **common patterns in practice**, and **emerging practice** where a small number of grant holders are doing something different.
- Consider the **implications of what we are learning** for our work across our three objectives to fund, support and influence.

Every quarter, we provide a deep dive into one of our themes based on: analysis of external evaluations and end of year reports; external evidence (such as national data publications and research reports); and a collective sense-making event including grant holders, staff, external advisors and trustees.

For this quarter, the deep dive covers all awards that we made under Work Pathways and looks at supporting people into work, helping with retention and progression through work, and embedding Fair Work practices.

Addressing in-work poverty, structural barriers to work and Fair Work has been the priority for our Programme Awards, while employability support remains the focus for the majority of Our Funds: 95% of our Large Grants aim to support people into employment or Further/Higher Education. However, we can see clear connections between all awards made through this theme.

Between **1st April 2022** and **31st March 2025**, we made **96 awards** under the theme of Work Pathways through Our Funds. This is one of our smallest themes (it accounts for **13%** of the total amount we awarded through Our Funds and Programmes between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2025). The chart below provides a summary of the types of these awards:



EXTERNAL CONTEXT

- The **rising cost of living** continues to eat away at the 2.2% growth in real wages seen in the UK between 2023 and 2024 ([Resolution Foundation, 2025](#)).
- **Scotland has a lower employment rate** than the rest of the UK, driven partly by a higher proportion of people who are economically inactive (out of work and not looking for work): 22.9% of people in Scotland are economically inactive compared to 21.5% of people in the UK ([Scottish Government, Labour Market Trends March 2025](#)). Evidence suggests that bringing all people out of work into either part-time or full-time work would lift 90,000 and 110,000 people in Scotland, respectively, out of poverty ([IPPR, Working Wonders 2024](#)).



- **Women, parents, disabled people, unpaid carers, people with convictions and individuals from racialised minorities** face the greatest barriers to work ([Scottish Government, No One Left Behind](#)). For example, the employment rate for people with a disability was 53.0% across the UK in 2024, compared to 81.6% for non-disabled people ([DWP, Employment of Disabled People 2024](#)).
- Just over **10% of workers are locked in persistent low pay**, meaning they have earned below the real Living Wage (rLW) for at least four out of five years ([JRF, Poverty in Scotland 2023](#)). Evidence suggests that ensuring everyone already in-work is paid the rLW would lift around 70,000 people in Scotland out of poverty ([IPPR, Working Wonders 2024](#)).
- Many people who were in receipt of Working Tax Credits and Child Tax Credits, are **not claiming Universal Credit (UC)**. The National Audit Office reports that as many as [1 in 5 people on Tax Credits who were invited to move to UC did not then claim UC](#).



ISSUES ON THE HORIZON

- The increased rate of **employers' national insurance contributions** (NICs) and reduced threshold at which employers have to start paying is expected to cost the voluntary sector in Scotland alone £75m per year ([SCVO Response to UK Government Autumn Budget 2024](#)). The [Resolution Foundation](#) estimates that the combined impact of minimum wage and employer NIC increases on employer costs will reduce total employment in the UK by 80,000. The lowest-paid workers, particularly women, those under 21 and those working in sectors like hospitality and retail and wholesale, are expected to be at greatest risk of job losses ([IFS, 2025](#)).
- UK Government cuts to incapacity and disability benefits are estimated to push an additional 250,000 people across the UK into poverty, including 50,000 children, by 2029/30 ([DWP, Spring Statement Impacts](#)). The changes will directly impact Scottish claimants of the UC health element and reduce the Scottish Government block grant by around £455 million by 2029-30 ([Fraser of Allander Institute Spring Statement Analysis](#)).
- The Scottish Government's [Programme for Government 2025 to 2026](#) outlines a number of measures to support people to enter and sustain work, including £40m of investment for Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs).

- The [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\) guidance](#), following the Supreme Court Equality Act Ruling, has some significant implications for workplace facilities, and could put trans people at greater risk of feeling discriminated against at work.
- UK Government plans to [reform the immigration system](#) will end health and social care visas, which will likely move current workers into illegal and unsafe employment conditions and exacerbate current staff shortages in the sector.



CHALLENGES FOR GRANT HOLDERS

- **Increased demand and complexity:** employability services are experiencing a significant increase in demand. They are also supporting more people with multiple and complex needs, including mental health issues like social anxiety and depression, often in combination with other issues like learning disabilities, care experience, or homelessness. Several organisations at our collective sense-making event reported that some of their staff members may also be experiencing many of these issues and require support themselves.
- **Funding cuts:** the 23% reduction in [Scottish Government employability funding in 2024/25](#) placed increasing pressure on local authority budgets and has resulted in significant delays and cuts to funding for employability support delivered through LEPs.
- **Rising costs:** The reduced income gained through contracts is compounded by rising costs for organisations, particularly increased staffing costs as a result of the rise in employer NICs, which is creating significant job insecurity as well as uncertainty about continued operation and the level of support that can be delivered.



- **Insufficient and unstable funding:** we regularly hear that short-term funding that does not cover the real costs of projects is creating challenges with job recruitment and retention in the third sector. This is reinforced by research into [Fair Work in the Third Sector](#) that we funded in 2022. This highlights that insufficient and unstable funding are key factors in employee insecurity and that where third sector employers train staff for complex roles, they often leave for public sector roles which offer more stable and secure contracts.
- **Rural access:** different funding arrangements across local authorities create a postcode lottery in which access to employability support is extremely limited in some areas, particularly in rural areas. Limited access to public transport and poor transport infrastructure also limits access to jobs in rural areas, driving the 'rural poverty premium'. Evidence from the Poverty Alliance's [Taking Action on Rural Poverty](#) project that we funded shows that people living in rural areas of Scotland must pay more for further and longer journeys to access jobs and other essential services than those in urban areas.





- **Reporting requirements:** many organisations often have short-term, annual funding streams coming from many different sources, each with different purposes and reporting requirements. At the collective sense-making event, it was highlighted that a lot of time and capacity is required to capture and report different impact evidence for multiple funders, making it difficult to understand progress overall and impacting service delivery.
- **Outcome-based funding:** funding that, in some local authorities, is linked to achieving job outcomes incentivises services to get people into work as quickly as possible and therefore support those closer to the labour market, rather than those who face the greatest barriers to work. This heavy focus on outcomes puts services in competition with one another for funding, which limits their ability to work in partnership and use a holistic approach to address multiple and complex need.

WHAT ARE WE LEARNING ABOUT IMPACT?

Of the 50 end of year reports we analysed, 27 reports included a figure for the number of people that were supported into a **positive destination**. What was defined as a positive destination varied, including volunteering, apprenticeships, work placements, further/higher education, and accessing employment, with a couple of organisations defining it as sustained employment only (e.g. 6 months or more).

The 27 reports show that, collectively, **grant holders have supported 2,627 people into positive destinations**. These organisations have received £1.97m from The Robertson Trust (around 10% of their collective annual income), meaning approximately £7,500 is required for each positive outcome. However, the case study on Works+ detailed later in this report illustrates how this funding can result in significant savings for wider society through sustained employment.

The number of **positive destinations reported ranged from 1 to 1,033 with the median being 39**. This large variation was largely related to the distance from the labour market of those supported. High numbers were often reported by organisations working with individuals already close to entering the workplace, whereas lower numbers tended to be reported by organisations providing more intensive support to people who face the greatest barriers to work and are furthest from the labour market.



awarded **£250,000** spread over 5 years (5% of the annual income for the year the award was made)

DFN Project Search support young adults with a learning disability, who are autistic, or both to make positive transitions from education to work through a year-long supported internship.

Run over the course of an academic year, the programme brings together a network of partners including education providers (schools and colleges), employers who work in the capacity of a host business to the supported interns, local authorities, and specialist supported employment providers to deliver a combination of classroom-based learning, career exploration and hands on training with an employer.

Partners are supported by a Programme Specialist who works with potential host business sites to co-ordinate a range of internship opportunities. In **2024/25**, DFN Project Search had **20 partner sites which supported 138 interns across 17 local authority areas in Scotland**. Once the young adults have started their internship, the Programme Specialist continues to support them and their host business, addressing any issues and providing additional tools and resources to support continuous improvement and build disability confident and inclusive work practices.

This approach has been shown to have very positive long-term outcomes for the young adults supported, as **75% of Scottish interns who graduated in summer 2023 were in paid employment** nine months after they had completed the programme. Of these 65% met the DFN Project SEARCH outcome criteria of being in employment that was full-time (over 16 hours), non-seasonal, paid at the prevailing wage, and in an integrated workspace.

Many end of year reports also provided evidence of **outcomes beyond positive destinations** to demonstrate the wider impact of employability support. These included: greater confidence, improved communication skills, enhanced motivation and resilience, and improved mental health and wellbeing as a result of reduced social isolation and anxiety.

Tools that we have seen used to gather and report on this data include *Outcomes Stars*, *surveys*, and the *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales* (WEMWBS).





Skills Exchange SCIO

awarded **£85,500** spread over 3 years
(11% of the annual income for the year the award
was made)

Skills Exchange supports disadvantaged young people leaving school who face multiple barriers. Support includes provision of group activities focussed on personal development, health and wellbeing and foundational employability skills. The Let's Grow project also incorporates work experience and the delivery of SCQF Level 4 Employability and Horticulture qualifications.

In 2023/24, **18 participants** of the Let's Grow project completed self-evaluations at the beginning and end of the project. These showed that **89%** of participants reported an increase in building positive relationships. **85%** increased confidence, motivation and communication, and **78%** more resilience. All reported goal setting, career planning and practical job search skills had greatly improved.

In the analysis we conducted prior to the collective sense-making session, we assigned each organisation to a stage on the [employability pipeline](#) based on the core work they reported in their application forms or end of year reports. This showed that:

- 21% primarily report on work around stage 2 of the pipeline (not job ready)
- 70% primarily report on work at stages 3 and 4 (job ready)
- 9% primarily report on work at stage 5 (in-work)

However, during the collective sense-making session, grant holders expressed **strong views that the employability pipeline does not accurately reflect their work**. Reasons for this included:

- The pipeline presents the employability journey as linear and forward moving, but organisations often support people who progress through stages in different orders, including those who may need to repeat stages.
- Most organisations are not only working at one specific stage of the pipeline but provide a range of services which support individuals across all stages.
- Few of the organisations we fund provide employability support in isolation and often deliver it alongside holistic support to address a wide range of barriers to employment.





Into Work

awarded **£96,000** spread over 3 years
(4% of the annual income for the year
the award was made)

Into Work supports disabled people, neurodivergent people, and those with long term health conditions at all stages in their employment journey. For individuals who are not job ready, services include person-centred support delivered by a dedicated Employment Adviser, income maximisation and peer group wellbeing coaching helping to build resilience, skills and capability. This helps individuals overcome barriers like low confidence and social anxiety, improving communication skills as well as mental health and wellbeing.

Individuals who progress to being job ready are supported by their dedicated Employment Advisor, and through peer support, income maximisation and workshops such as improving digital skills and exploring workplace cultures to help them build skills in searching for appropriate jobs and accessing relevant training, writing CVs and applications, preparing for interviews and starting employment.

Into Work also deliver Lived Experience Training for employers to help them improve their recruitment and employment of disabled people by developing fair and inclusive workplace practices which enable Into Work participants to sustain employment and progress in their chosen career.

PATTERNS IN PRACTICE

Most of the Large Grants we analysed provide **one-to-one person-centred support** for individuals facing multiple and complex barriers to work, either as their sole focus or as a key part of what they do. This was highlighted as essential to build trust, to understand the causes of issues, and to identify the most effective support.

One-to-one support helps overcome barriers through confidence-building, goal setting and skills development, including CV, job search and interview skills. Support workers also often link in with other services to enable the provision of holistic support which addresses wider barriers, including financial security, housing and relationships.



**Glasgow Council on Alcohol**

awarded **£120,000** spread over 3 years
(3% of the annual income for the year
the award was made)

The **Elevate Glasgow Public Social Partnership (PSP)** aims to increase employment opportunities for individuals affected by poor mental health, homelessness, criminal justice or addiction. Through one-to-one sessions participants are supported to identify their strengths and co-design an individualised plan for achieving their goals.

This can vary from helping individuals to write an effective CV to supporting them to establish relationships with other services which will support them in their recovery, including housing associations, GPs and other healthcare professionals. Participants also engage in group work where they can share their experiences and successes with peers, helping to improve confidence and communication skills.

A few of the organisations we fund are **engaging with employers** to arrange placements, work experience opportunities or employment in a sector/area that is best suited to individual need and interests.

Organisations at the collective sense-making session who are taking this approach reported that it benefits individuals by giving them relevant experience to help secure employment, and also benefits employers by giving existing staff the opportunity to develop supervisory and mentoring skills, helping to build relationships and connectedness in the workplace.





Fife Employment Access Trust

awarded **£96,000** spread over 3 years
(3% of the annual income for the year
the award was made)

Fife Employment Access Trust delivers an Individual Placement & Support (IPS) service which supports people with severe mental health conditions to secure paid employment. Individuals are supported by an Employment Specialist and often a member of the NHS Community Mental Health Team. Employment Specialists help individuals to find suitable employment and ensure that employment is sustained by working closely with employers, which often includes providing mental health-related training to ensure that the role and/or workplace environment is supportive.

In the two end-of-year reports we have received, Fife Employment Access report supporting **47 people** to gain employment and a further **31 people** to sustain employment for 6 months or more between June 2022 and June 2024. They also report that employers have benefited as they have reduced staff turnover and recruitment costs, as well as an overall increase in employee wellbeing.

In some cases, we provide funding to **social enterprise organisations who are themselves the employer**, often linked to hospitality or community food initiatives. They provide on-the-job accredited qualifications and supported work placements.

Grant holders who take this approach report a range of positive impacts at an individual and community level, including **helping more young people who may not want to go down the path of further/higher education to enter and sustain work**, as well as the opportunity to work in partnership with other services and charities to address issues like social isolation and food insecurity in the community.





Inspired

Community Enterprise Trust



awarded **£90,000** spread over 3 years
(4% of the annual income for the year the award
was made)

Inspired Community Enterprise Trust creates employability, training, and wider citizenship opportunities for young people with additional support needs. Their Social Enterprise Training Café, The Usual Place, provides supported work placements across different areas of the café operations, which allow individuals to develop practical and social employment skills that prepare them for the workplace, including organisation, teamwork and adaptability.

Each young person works alongside a mentor who supports them during their training and guides them in completing assessments to achieve a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Professional Cookery, Hospitality Services/Front of House, Retail Services or Facilities Services.

EMERGING PRACTICE

We are seeing some examples of projects that are **providing support to people after they have entered employment to ensure that it is sustained**. Support provided at this stage includes regular reviews and mentoring to help individuals feel comfortable with the transition to the workplace, as well as working with them and their employers to address any issues which may limit their ability to sustain employment, including Fair Work issues like pay and flexible working arrangements.

We have seen one of our grant holders using Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to evidence savings to the public purse as a result of individuals sustaining employment.





awarded **£75,000** spread over 3 years
(10% of the annual income for the year the award was made)

Works+ delivers 8-week employability courses for unemployed young people aged 16-24 from across the Scottish Borders. The courses provide 4 stages of employability support: person-centred barrier removal, confidence building, employability skills, and 18 months aftercare to ensure that positive destinations are sustained. Aftercare is provided by the same staff member who supported each young person through the employability course, meaning they have a trusted person checking in regularly and working with them and their employer to resolve any issues as they arise. Works+ report that this approach has enabled them to support over **90%** of 16-24 year-olds to move into a positive destination after the 8-week course.

The two end-of-year reports we have received show that Works+ have supported **100 young people** to secure a positive destination of employment, education, training or volunteering between November 2022 and November 2024. For example, in the 12 months to November 2024, 12 of the young people they supported moved on to employment, 12 returned to education, 9 moved on to a training program and 12 started volunteering and developing new skills.

An independent economic impact assessment conducted in October 2024 also demonstrated the wider societal benefits of Works+ employment outcomes.

Every £1 spent on Works+ programmes was estimated to deliver £3.90 in savings to the public purse to wider society through increased income tax revenue, reduced Universal Credit claims, and reduced spending on healthcare and crime.



In our Voices series, we spotlight the stories and insights of the incredible organisations we support - those driving real change in the fight against poverty and trauma in Scotland.

Catch up on our [Voices story](#) with Scott Wight, Programme Manager of Works+, an employability project based in Galashiels.

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CLICK HERE 



A few grant holders are addressing the **lack of available childcare as a barrier to entering and sustaining employment** for parents and carers.

Practices include integrating employability support with the provision of free on-site childcare, as well as working in partnership with key stakeholders and local childcare providers to increase the availability and flexibility of provision.





awarded **£93,000** spread over 3 years
(11% of the annual income for the year the award was made)

One of the main priorities for action for Clackmannanshire Economic Regeneration Trust (CERT) is to establish an infrastructure of childcare in Clackmannanshire which will be available to allow parents and carers to secure and sustain employment. Initial primary research into childcare provision/ demand saw circa **220 responses** and highlighted that **47% of parents** wanted to work longer hours, but **84%** reported that childcare was a barrier and **44%** that they had no available childcare support.

As a result, CERT has been working in partnership with key stakeholders like Clackmannanshire Council Employability and Early Learning Centre departments, DWP, Scottish Child Minders Association, Kidz World, Alva Playpals and other local childcare providers, to implement a range of actions including establishing two new after school childcare services (ASC) in Menstrie and Tillicoultry, and a forum to support the operation of existing childminders in Clackmannanshire.

This initial implementation phase has led to **95 children** receiving after school care that they did not previously have, with up to 70% attendance at our new Childminder Peer Support Forum (which provides opportunities for networking; identification and communication of challenges; sharing best practice; and collective problem solving, with great feedback from CMs on benefits of this);

and increased flexibility for employability/ greater earning potential for 50% of parents using our new Menstrie ASC, who confirmed that they have increased their working hours as a result. One childcare provider has reported increased attendance at their Holiday Club provision as a direct result of our new centres, with another introducing a new transport provision to meet local demand.

In addition, with aims to increase the number of childminders in the area and address childcare staffing shortages, a successful Childcare Work Taster programme was undertaken with 80% of participants completing training and 63% going on to work towards gaining qualifications through college or apprenticeships. Further work is ongoing to establish new ASC provision over the next 10 months, either through the creation of new centres, or working in partnership with existing providers to increase their capacity.

Flexible Childcare Services Scotland

(FCSS) is also working to remove childcare as a barrier to work, education or training. Through their Programme Award, FCSS aims to do this by ensuring flexibility is at the heart of childcare provision in Scotland. Susan McGhee, Chief Executive of FCSS, recently participated in our [Voices](#) series to provide insight into the importance of this work.

Embedding **Fair Work** is the primary focus of our Programme Awards but we are also seeing some of our Large Grants working with employers and employees to implement and strengthen Fair Work practices within certain organisations or across sectors or population groups.

Activities that we are supporting across our awards are focusing on different parts of the [Fair Work Framework](#) and include improving workers' understanding of their rights and ensuring they are upheld, implementing the Living Wage and Living Hours, and improving in-work training and progression.





Worker
Support
Centre

awarded **£69,000** spread over 3 years
(19% of the annual income for the year
the award was made)

The Worker Support Centre (WSC)

operates across Scotland and seeks to prevent and tackle labour exploitation by delivering its five-point early exploitation prevention model, spanning direct support, enforcement, and policy change. WSC offers direct support to migrant workers on restrictive visas (immigration visas where an individual's status is tied to their employer or recruiter, with limited access to welfare support). It also engages migrant workers in cultural and social events to build trust, solidarity, and partnership, and to deliver joint UK and Scotland policy change activity with workers. In 2024, WSC supported **697 individuals from over 17 countries**, with 271 cases and 432 enquiries around issues related to welfare, employment, housing, and health and safety, helping workers achieve some resolution in two-thirds of all cases.

WSC also works together with workers to influence enforcement bodies, Scottish and UK government officials, and industry and civil society, including trade unions, for positive change. It is part of the UK-wide Seasonal Worker Interest Group,

which it helped establish (which leads UK policy work on seasonal agricultural workers' rights), the Scottish Food Coalition Operations Group, Poverty Alliance, and the Scottish Human Rights Consortium.

In November 2024, we approved a Programme Award of £150,000 over 18 months to help the organisation develop a roadmap for change and to create an influencing strategy.

In our previous **Financial Security report**, we highlighted the Employment Rights Advice Service (ERAS). This is one of two Large Grants Partnership Awards that we have made since we launched our strategy. Delivered in partnership between Dumfries & Galloway and Roxburgh & Berwickshire CABs, ERAS provides support (including advocacy at tribunals) to people who are experiencing employment issues. It also works with local employers and support agencies to help embed Fair Work practices across the region.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Going forward, we are keen to expand our collective sense-making sessions to include a wider range of voices from different key stakeholders. This has the potential to enhance our collective learning and, alongside our analysis, allow us to identify more actionable recommendations for:

- (i) delivery organisations;
- (ii) funders (particularly The Robertson Trust);
- (iii) influencing the wider system.

We will be developing this approach over the rest of this year with a quarterly focus on one of our themes, and we are thinking about how we capture and share the implications of what we are learning for what we do more of/ less of, stop, start.



Delivery Organisations

This analysis identified some key approaches used by grant holders which are particularly impactful, including:



One-to-one and **holistic support** addressing a range of issues and barriers experienced.



Working directly with **employers** in key sectors.



In-work **aftercare** to sustain employment.



Working with partners to address **childcare barriers**.



Working to implement and strengthen **Fair Work** practices.



We will support delivery organisations to **learn** from these approaches and develop their own practices by continuing to refine how we share our quarterly insights reports externally.

Funders

(particularly The Robertson Trust)



Relatively few UK trusts and foundations have a **sustained commitment** to the issues we cover in our Work Pathways theme. We are also relatively unusual in funding organisations working across the whole life cycle of employability, from pre-employability to long-term aftercare and engagement with employers to sustain Fair Work. We will encourage more of this funding through our own practice and that of other funders.



We are also an accredited **Living Wage** employer but know that there is more we can do to champion Fair Work, through our own practice as an employer and the awards we make. For example, many of our grant holders are paying the real Living Wage, but it is not clear from our data how many are accredited.



We will undertake **further analysis** and develop appropriate responses through our awards and non-financial support (Funder Plus), building on insights gained through our earlier support for the [Fair Work in the Third Sector in Scotland](#) research (2023).

Influencing the Wider System



At our collective sense-making event, it was striking that many organisations do not think that the **employability pipeline** accurately reflects their work, which is often more complex and non-linear in response to the needs and goals of the people they work with.



It is also clear from our analysis that no consistent approaches are currently in place to **evaluate the effectiveness** of employability programmes. Practice varies significantly between local authorities and there is a lack of understanding about what it takes to deliver long-term change.



Through engagement with key stakeholders like the Scottish Government, we are keen to **influence higher-quality and more consistent commissioning models** (local and national) and to advocate for an evaluation framework which demonstrates how access to Fair Work can offer a genuine route out of poverty. There was support at our collective sense-making session for developing a sharper understanding of impact, and a number of organisations are developing their own using different evaluation approaches, including tracking individuals' progress (e.g. Outcomes Star, WEMWBS) and applying Social Return On Investment (SROI) models. A key strength we can bring is convening to amplify the voices of grant holders who have been particularly innovative in this area.



What do you think?

Does this align with the work you are doing or how you are thinking? What have we missed? Do you have questions or ideas for us?

If so, please get in touch with us at:



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The Robertson Trust



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