

Experience Works Biannual Impact Report

3. EXPERIENCE WORKS

October 2021 – March 2022





This report was produced by Devon Communities Together, who are the evaluation and impact measurement partner for Experience Works. Visit www.devoncommunities.org.uk for further information.

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Experience Works is part-funded by the European Social Fund through the Department for Work and Pensions, and is managed by Petroc.



October 2021 to March 2022 - Key Findings

In this period:

1. The project has seen a marked increase in the number of participants contacted and those going live over the previous reporting period, and has seen the first successful completions.
 - 110 young people had initial contact with the project (compared with 70 in the previous period)
 - 67 young people became live on the project (compared with 38 in the previous period). This represents 19.5% of target.
 - 10 participants exited the project into employment.
2. All delivery partners had live participants during this period.
3. The young people engaged on the project are presenting significant challenges with 28.4% having disabilities and 53.7% declaring mental health difficulties on their enrolment paperwork
4. Activities seeking to improve confidence, self-esteem and reduce anxiety are the most named actions on participants' Personal Development Plans.
5. Partnership development has continued with 2 partnership wide project meetings, and ongoing training sessions on finance, participant paperwork, case study development, PDRS training and the Explore website. These training sessions were delivered by Petroc and DCT.
6. Several mentors have reported that the Explore website has been very useful in supporting participants for activities such as CV writing, whilst others have used their own resources.
7. Owing to the delays in starting activity and, for many partners, the difficulty in recruiting new staff, the partnership is behind the expenditure profile that was set at application stage, but claims are increasing in value quarter by quarter.
8. The project has moved beyond its 'set up phase'. However, due to the challenges of the covid pandemic several partners were still building up their delivery. Covid affected not just the recruitment of participants, but also delivery staff.

Introduction

October 2021 to March 2022 was the third 6-month period. This report will follow the same structure of previous reports, exploring the activities undertaken, the outputs achieved and relating these to the project outcomes. This report will reference the numerical targets and desired results as well as the qualitative stories and lived experiences of change which have occurred for individuals and communities. For a full discussion of the projects Theory of Change and its relationship to impact measurement please see the previous periods report.

This partnership project is **managed by Petroc**, who manage the project's **strategy, budget and administration**, and are responsible for **leading the partnership and ensuring that the intended targets, results and outcomes are achieved**. Devon Communities Together continue in their role as evaluation and support partner. **The 9 delivery partners vary in size and operating structures with a number of mentors per organisation**. Delivery partners operate throughout Devon (as shown in the table below), but predominantly in Plymouth. As of this period, it should be noted that dormant delivery partners are South Devon College and ODILS.

Delivery partner	Area
Battling On	Plymouth and Tavistock
Bluescreen IT	Plymouth
City College Plymouth	Plymouth
Groundwork South	Plymouth and Torbay
ODILS	Plymouth
Petroc	Barnstaple and North Devon
PGL Training Ltd	Exeter
South Devon College	Torbay
The Prince's Trust	Plymouth, Torbay, Exeter and North Devon

Regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic, all legal limits on social contact were removed on July 19th 2021, however as will be discussed below the pandemic has continued to affect delivery, specifically in terms of the wellbeing and confidence of young people, the sorts of activities undertaken and the availability of support services.

Activity

The previous period was described as the ‘set-up phase’, as the delivery partners began to be able to engage with young people following Covid, and bring on board the first ‘live’ participants. The current period marks the start of real delivery, with **all active partners registering live participants and most achieving some completions.**

In this reporting period **67 young people became live.** Figure 1, below, shows the increase in live participants over time, Figure 2 shows the number of participants per partner. The Outputs section (page 9) provides further data on the live participants, and the number of mentoring sessions delivered.

All mentors follow a mentoring model with their participants, and deliver information, advice and guidance sessions to identify individual needs. Delivery does, however, vary widely depending on the individuals’ talents, ambitions and barriers (TAB) and personal development plan (PDP)¹, and the delivery organisation’s own approach. These activities and their impact are discussed in ‘Outcome 1’ (page 9-11) and ‘Outcome 2’ below (page 15-16).

The activity among the delivery partners has varied; for example Battling On reported that their activities have had various focuses, including some group activity, such as accessing the Young Devon ILS course. There have been DWP meetings where the project has supported participants to go to the Job Centre which has helped to break down barriers to attending interviews and improve the young people’s employability chances.

There are some challenges for delivery partners. For example, City College Plymouth has had their main focus on recruiting new staff to the project which has proved challenging. Unfortunately, in January 2022 BlueScreen IT lost the funding for a school programme that they were running and using to match fund the Experience Works project. As of the end of March, they will not be an active delivery partner.

Fig 1

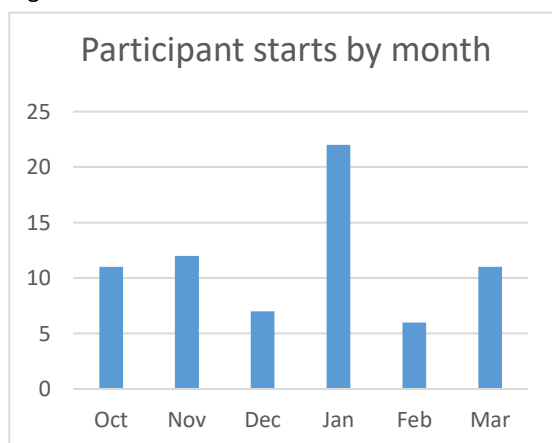
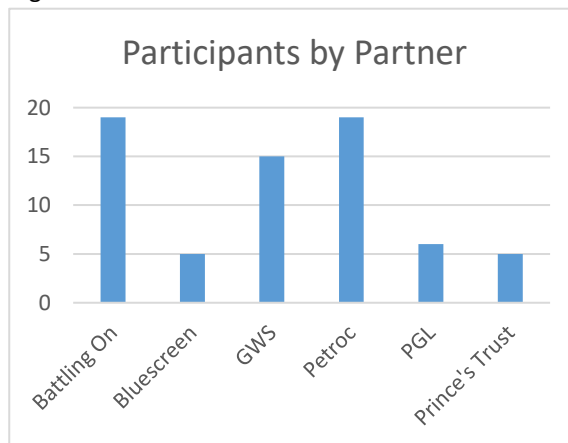


Fig 2



¹ Two required pieces of paperwork are central to informing delivery with each participant, one looking at and individuals talents, ambitions and barriers (TAB) and a personal development plan (PDP) to tackle any identified gaps.

Outputs (Targets)

The following outputs and results are the projects' targets agreed with DWP.

Outputs	Target		Numbers in reporting period and % of overall target	
Total participants engaged		1220	5.4%	67
Male	61%	748	5.2%	39
Female	39%	472	5.7%	27
Unemployed	68%	828	2.7%	23
Economically inactive	32%	392	11.2%	44
Participants from ethnic minority groups	5%	60	3.3%	2
Participants with disabilities	10%	116	28.4%	33
Participants without basic skills	17%	202	7.4%	15
Participants from a single adult household with dependent children	4%	49	10.2%	5
Results				
Participants gaining basic skills on leaving, where basic skill is RQF accredited	4%	49	0%	0
Participants in employment, including self-employment or education/training on leaving	43%	525	1.3%	7
Participants in employment, including self-employment or education/training 6 months after leaving	34%	415	0%	0

The above table shows details of the **67 participants who went 'live' on the project** – meaning that they completed the entry paperwork with their mentor and provided and submitted the necessary paperwork to evidence their eligibility. 10 of these participants have exited the project. **This figure of 67 represents 19.5% of projects profiled target by this point (342)**, and is therefore below where the partnership was profiled to be at this stage. However, Petroc recognised that this is to be expected as the project had the added challenges of Covid and that the start-up phase of the project took longer than anticipated.

With the current number of participants to look at, some conclusions can be drawn on the demographics engaged by Experience Works. Trends which are worth reporting include:

1. **The number of males (39) who have been engaged are higher than the number of females (27). However the percentage of females is ahead of target.**
2. **33 of 67 (49.2%) participants enrolling have declared a disability, a considerably higher proportion than the target.**
3. **36 of the 67 (53.7%) live participants declared a mental health difficulty in their enrolment paperwork.**

As seen on fig. 3 below, the participants are mostly from around Plymouth, Barnstaple and Bideford. However, some participants are also around Exeter. It is encouraging to see that participants are somewhat spread across Devon. This gives a good indication that the project and its partners are able to engage with young people from the whole county.



Figure 3: Participant locations

Project outcomes

The next section of this report details the project's desired outcomes, and a **diverse range of additional outputs** have been identified by Devon Communities Together to support the identification and measurement of progress towards outcomes being achieved. Though these are not contractual targets, when considered cumulatively, they are valuable indicators of change.

Experience Works Outcomes

- 1. Young people participating in the project have improved their employability and life skills.**
- 2. Young people have increased their knowledge of their local communities and have made positive contributions to them.**
- 3. Employers have increased their understanding of young people who are NEET, and are better equipped to provide them with valuable opportunities.**
- 4. Local support services have benefitted from improved referral processes**
- 5. Organisations inside and outside the partnership have access to best practice and lessons learned from Experience Works.**

Outcome 1

Young people participating in the project have improved their employability and life skills.

During this period **67 young people have met regularly with their mentors and have completed entry paperwork.** In addition, significant number were unconfirmed starts, that is, they had enrolled onto the programme and were awaiting all documentation to be gathered and approved. Those who had become 'live' started to identify their talents, aspirations and barriers (TAB), designed a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and created their initial Progress Star. These documents are used by mentors to design activities which lead to increased resilience and improved life chances by **increasing the participants:**

- **Hard and soft skill levels**
- **Knowledge and understanding of the world of work**
- **Network of positive role models and contacts**
- **Aspirations**
- **Knowledge of the wider world**



Figure 4: Word cloud of actions named on PDPs

Of the PDPs created **21 (31.4%) individuals are aiming for employment, 30 (44.8%) for further education or training, 14 (20.9%) are aiming to gain basic skills and 2 (2.9%) are aiming for self-employment.** Of the 25 words most frequently used by participants when naming actions to achieve these results, it is notable that the word confidence was used most often (36 times), e.g. *“Improve confidence and social skills”* and *“Boost my self-esteem and confidence”*.(fig 4)

589 sessions, totalling over 294 hours of engagement, have taken place across different settings – remotely, in centres, and in ‘open spaces and small groups’. The sessions are a mixture of structured courses, and 1-2-1 responsive mentoring.

As presented in the previous report, group sessions have shown to be valuable co-benefits of bringing people together, helping to build confidence and break down isolation and loneliness.

“Petroc Lunch Club @ Medard House – retirement housing complex in Barnstaple. Involves working as part of a team to prepare and cook mains and desserts for elderly residents. Good work experience for CV – working in a fast-paced environment, team-working, presentation skills, customer service skills, organisational skills.” Delivery team at Petroc

Groundwork South’s mentor reported that a typical group session would require the young person to share their ideas. *“The session would then include a variety of activities that will help put the young persons’ knowledge to the test. Throughout the group sessions, I encourage the young people to work in pairs and in small groups so that they can build their communication and teamworking skills. Both of which allow the young person to develop the skills needed for employment. The session often ends with a reflective activity, where each young person can reflect on what they have learned.”*

“Allowing the participants to co-design their own sessions has allowed them to feel empowered and to take control of their learning. After the initial entry forms are completed, I have a session with each young person, where we discuss the topics that they would like to further develop. I find that asking for feedback and allowing the young person to reflect on their learning helps them to be engaged within the sessions. In these sessions it allows the young person to creatively pick the skills and techniques that they would like to learn. It also helps me with delivering planning as I get to think of creative ways to deliver the session.” Groundwork South

In addition to these sessions, the delivery partners have also supported the young people on the project in various ways, this wrap-around support has been very valuable for the participants. Support has also been provided for employability skills including Interview Techniques, Equality and Diversity, Prevent and British Values. The support is tailored to the participant. For example, Battling On reported that they have supported participants in maintaining various employment roles that they have helped the participants get as they have investigated different pathways which participants can move onto; including Access course options and access a local college where the participant is on route to progress onto a traineeship. Another participant was signposted to access employment-based workshops with Smart Skills via Learn Devon provision.

PGL Training reported that their participants on the project have been completing employability lessons and that they have been focussing on current affairs in order to reflect our everyday lives.

“We discussed and evaluated how electricity, gas and food prices are increasing and how this will affect the participant and their families. We created a chart to show what the learners would spend their money on if they were an apprentice or employed and how would they budget, including discussions on essential and non-essential spending. This activity supported

all participants with having a deeper understanding of why it is important to keep to a budget each week and to make savings where possible.” PGL Mentor

Another participant from PGL Training has during this period been working on his employability skills mostly interview techniques and developing his practical skills. The support PGL Training has been giving him as part of this project has led to the learner gaining work experience and subsequently a paid part time position with a local holiday park.

A mentor at the Prince’s Trust reported that;

“We have had a good success with a young person in Torbay who we supported through our M&S provision. Rachel has some complex mental health needs along with autism and lack of confidence and work experience. Rachel received a very high level of mentoring and support over the four weeks (as well as support prior to the project) and we can report that she has been offered a paid contract of employment with M&S – a huge achievement for her.” Delivery team at Prince’s Trust

Outcome 1 Indicator (Output)	01/10/2021 - 31/03/2022
# of young people receiving support from EW	67
# of 1-2-1 sessions (and hours)	589 (294)
# of group sessions (and hours)	52 (133.5)
# of young people are in employment on leaving	10
# of young people are in employment after 6 months	0
# of young people are in education/training on leaving	6
# of young people are in education/training after 6 months	0
# of young people have gained a qualification	0
# of young people have gained a basic skill	0
# of young people have gained an RQF accredited qualification	0
# of young people accessed workplace opportunity	0
Participants feel that their employability and life skills have improved*	9
Participants express higher levels of desire for EET*	4
Participants feel more prepared for EET*	7
Participants feel more prepared to apply for opportunities*	7
# of Outcome 1 Case Studies	2

*These outputs are measured via completion of the Progress Star.

Case study

In November 2021 Devon Communities Together visited BlueScreen IT to film and interview the students, trainers and CEO for case studies. Leandra said that *“Our biggest success is our first candidate, that we took on. He had so much anxiety originally that he could not walk in the front doors”*. Through one-to-one sessions, initially online, Bluescreen helped the young person to recognise his existing soft skills, acquire new work skills and learn how to communicate them to an employer. He finally exited the programme and took up an apprenticeship.

Explore

Explore was designed to support participants to prepare for job searching. It includes resources on transferable skills, preparing a CV, job searching, and interview techniques. It contains links to job search sites, further training and education, volunteering opportunities and wellbeing resources. It is specifically designed to help those with little or no work experience to identify attributes that may be valuable in job seeking. The website can be found using the following link: [How to write a CV | Explore | England \(explore-experienceworks.com\)](https://www.explore-experienceworks.com)

Site use Oct 21 – Mar 22

	Current reporting period		Previous reporting period			Difference (monthly average)	
	Total 21 – 22	Sep – Mar	Ave per month	Total Apr – Sep 21/Jun – Sep 21*	Ave per month Apr – Sep 21		Adjusted average – Jun – Sep**
Site sessions	117		19.5	154/89	30.8	22.3	- 2.8
Unique visitors	70		11.7	106/62	21.2	15.5	- 3.8
• New	3.5		8.5	90/46	18	11.5	- 3
• Returning	23		3.8	16/16	3.2	4	- 0.2
Ave session duration			9:16		6:16		

*Explore launched in May 2021 so the figures are for 5 months

** May was an outlier with figures roughly twice the average. This is due to training sessions and initial interest in the site. Comparison has therefore been made with the period Jun – Sep.

The slight drop in average monthly visits is in keeping with mentors' reports that they generally download the resources that they need then don't return to the site.

DCT has undertaken a review of the site as some sections were not being used and the site was not being used by all partners. All mentors were sent a questionnaire about their use of Explore. Four responses were received. Mentors were subsequently asked about their use of and likes/dislikes about Explore during a partner meeting.

- Not all mentors use Explore
- Those who do use it for 'inspiration' or download the materials they need and don't return to the site much.

DCT has provided ongoing support to all delivery partners, in particular, partners appreciate the advice and guidance on the Explore website resources. PGL Training reported that; *"We have maintained close contact with DCT, who will be providing more training to one mentor on using the Explore website. [This] will improve our quality of work on the project."*

Positive comments highlighted the industry section, CV writing resources, building a portfolio section and life experience section.

A wish list included:

- more around work experience; how to find work experience and volunteering opportunities
- updated with new resources more often
- more resources and tasks for the lower levels
- signposting section to, for example, Mind, Samaritans etc.
- resources for under 18?

DCT is following up these initial findings by seeking more detail from mentors about what specific additional resources would be useful. For example, what would be useful for 'lower levels' and under 18's. We have begun to restructure the Explore More section of the site and add links to third party resources.

When Explore was designed, it was intended that there should be an area of the site for employers, with aims and content to be determined during the development of the site. DCT has begun researching possible content for this section in conjunction with developing its employer engagement strategy. DCT is aware that not all aspects of the site are currently being used, and is reviewing the site's content, how it is being used and continually altering the content to suit the partners and participants.

Outcome 2

Young people have increased their knowledge of their local communities and have made positive contributions to them.

Experience Works intends that communities will benefit from young people making an increased positive contribution through social action and work experience; their young people being better skilled and prepared to make positive contributions; a lower risk of young people participating in negative behaviours; and places being more socially cohesive and safer due to reduced antisocial behaviour.

The number of instances of volunteering has increased dramatically in this reporting period. Anecdotally, volunteering is proving to be a very positive step for some volunteers, providing both a way to meet new people and to develop life skills. As well as offering real-life experience (for example a participant with Petroc volunteered at a Forest School doing practical and design work outdoors) some organisations require a written application, giving the chance to practice applying for work (a young person at Groundwork South applied to volunteer with Age UK).

Activities taking place in communities are yet to be widespread across the project. One of the delivery partners reported that they were *encouraging one participant to access art provision within their local community so that they can engage with others and gain social interactions and eventually feel that they are contributing to their locality. This participant was initially very as they said that they do not like being in a group environment.*

There were no social action sessions reported during this period. One factor in this may be that there is no clear definition within the project of what constitutes social action or how it differs from volunteering. It is recommended that DCT discusses this with mentors at a future meeting.

Outcome 2 Indicator (Output)	01/10/2021 - 31/03/2022
# of participants attended a Social Action session	0
# of instances of a participant attending a Social Action session	0
# of participants attended a Volunteering session	20
# of instances of a participant attending a Volunteering session	24
# of participants volunteering on exit	0
At least once a week	0
Less often than once a week but at least once a month	0
Less often than once a month but at least 3 or 4 times a year	0
Twice in the last 12 months	0
Once in the last 12 months	0
Participants feel that they are increasingly helping others*	5

Participants feel that they are better able to engage with new people*	6
# of Outcome 2 Case Studies	0

*These outputs are measured via completion of the Progress Star.

Case study

“Two of our participants who are deemed as homeless (residents at Plymouth Foyer) accessed the method of Forum Theatre and are communicating their own experiences around being deemed as homeless and the impact it has had on them. These participants thoroughly enjoyed accessing these workshops and performing as actors at the end of the workshops to an audience. These participants have communicated that they are proud of their achievements and didn’t know each other as residents at Plymouth Foyer until accessing these workshops. The project has liaised with Theatre Royal and Cardboard Citizens and both participants are hoping to access the ‘Open Space’ provision.” Delivery Lead, Battling On

Outcome 3

Employers have increased their understanding of young people who are NEET, and are better equipped to provide them with valuable opportunities.

Delivery of Experience Works is expected to lead to employers having a greater understanding of the needs of young people. This will be achieved as they offer positions and experiences to young people on the project. It is also expected that partners will have direct communication with employers as they offer wrap-around support for participants, and work with employers to secure appointments and other forms of work experience.

As discussed above, there have been 10 formal results of participants moving into employment in this period. Partners have continued to build relationships with employers in preparation for expected placements. For example, Battling On reported that their employer engagement work has been ongoing and work experience plans are in place for a participant to work in 5-star local salon - to gain experience of this environment and understand what is required within the various roles. This participant has also been supported in accessing and maintaining an 8-week nail course at a local beauty training provider which is another success story.

“One employer in particular has confirmed their increased understanding of young people who are NEET. Their participation in the project has resulted in the young person being offered some paid work, following work experience.” Delivery team at PGL Training

“The participant wishes to gain self-employment knowledge and advice within the graphic design field. A local Graphic Designer - who has supported our provision and is very experienced, has provided the mentor with details that participant asked about. [He] has agreed to contact the participant (via Teams or Zoom) to discuss the industry further Positive partnerships are ongoing. We are working with the Plymouth Ski Centre manager who has kindly offered to do mock interviews and review CVs.” Delivery team Battling On

Finally, Devon Communities Together hired a new member of staff to support Employer Engagement in February, and are excited to continue to work with employers, delivery partners and mentors. There is an understanding that there is a need to work with both young people and employers to make sure both are in readiness for one another. Conversations and visits have been taking place between DCT and partners to better understand their existing employer relationships and their perceptions of employer needs. This information was used in the following ways; to further discussion on how DCT can support partners regarding Employer Engagement, to improve the 1-hour employer support session that DCT have been offering employers in Devon and to deliver this support session on a more regular basis. To the question *“After attending the training are you more*

likely to offer young people who are NEETs opportunities?" the attendees of the employer support sessions answered yes.

"Learning about NEET and the increased numbers of NEET out of work due to Covid was very interesting." Attendee on the employer support session in February 2022.

Outcome 3 Indicator (Output)	01/10/2021 - 31/03/2022
# of learning opportunities offered to a participant by an employer	3
# of learning opportunities hosted for a participant by an employer	0
# of employers made aware of Experience Works	2
# of Outcome 3 Case Studies	0

Outcome 4

Local support services have benefitted from improved referral processes.

Relationship building with support services, for both referrals in, and signposting out, is central to the success of Experience Works and has been prioritised by partners with meetings taking place across the county.

Princes Trust reported that *“success with the local DWP team in Torbay referring young people for our programmes. Employer Services Team Leader has been a key contact.”*

“We have started to receive referrals from support services and feel we respond to them very quickly, whether they are received direct or via Petroc. The referral process is simple and seamless.” PGL Training delivery team

Of the 67 live participants, 48 of these (71.6%) have come from external services who have been made aware of Experience Works and have referred to the project. Significantly, 17 of these 48 have come from Careers South West (CSW). Further referrals have come from councils and their Care Leaver Teams, The Zone in Plymouth, and Job Centre, amongst others.

As reported previously, some referrals have also come from within a delivery organisation. Included in the figure of 48 are 11 referrals which have come from other departments. This has been a significant source of client engagement for the colleges, who have been able to access lists of learners who have withdrawn from courses or who are identified as being at risk of being NEET.

Furthermore, there have been occurrences of mentors signposting young people to external support services within this reporting period. The table below provides a breakdown of support areas which participants have been signposted to. Employment opportunities (60 instances) have been identified as the main route of signposting, for example, via job search platforms, such as the National Apprenticeship Service website, or directed towards local job clubs. It is worth noting that these numbers provide an overview of the signposting, there has been more communication taking place between external support services and delivery mentors to ensure opportunities arise.

Outcome 4 Indicator (Output)	01/10/2021 - 31/03/2022
# of advocacy sessions (and hours)	26 (8)
# of instances of signposting to external support services (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	110 (96)
Careers Advice (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	10 (9)
Employment opportunities (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	60 (54)
Education or training (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	10 (8)
Soft skills development (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	2 (2)
Legal advice (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	1 (1)
Housing services (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	3 (3)
Additional needs support (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	8 (7)
Mental health services (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	8 (5)
Physical health & wellbeing (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	6 (5)
Money advice (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	2 (2)
# of referrals into the project from external service (where that participant went live)	48
Participants feel that they are better informed about support services*	6
# of Outcome 4 Case Studies	0

*These outputs are measured via completion of the Progress Star.

Outcome 5

Organisations inside and outside the partnership have access to best practice and lessons learned from Experience Works.

Petroc has offered extensive support to partners, enabling them to set up their organisations for both practical delivery and administration and management of contracts. Petroc continued to offer 1-2-1 support in areas of financial claims and participant paperwork as partners employed new members of staff, and additionally trained all delivery organisations, in 1-2-1 sessions, on the use of the Participant Data Reporting System (PDRS).

Two partner meetings were hosted in this period, 9th December 2021 and 10th March 2022, with 36 total attendees from across all organisations. These meetings are facilitated by Petroc to enable the organisation Project Managers to understand the project position against contracted profiles and for the partnership to gain an understanding of current and pipeline activity. These meetings allowed for progress to be shared as well as insights to be shared between partners about their experiences of project set-up and engagement with young people.

Within these meetings, there is also the opportunity to discuss the Cross Cutting Themes of Sustainability and Equal Opportunities and to advise the partnership of the necessity to provide case studies. DCT offered their ongoing support on case study production, and worked with two partners to produce case studies in this period, these video case studies could be found in Appendix A.

“This period has seen an increase in spreading an awareness of the Experience Works project, its outcomes, progress, results and impact both within the partnership and outside it. There has been more content shared on the social media platforms, it has been great to be able to work with and support the delivery partners. Currently there are two video case studies which have been uploaded onto the YouTube channel showing the impact this project.” Project Manager, Devon Communities Together

Outcome 5 Indicator (Output)	01/10/2021 - 31/03/2022
# of instances of a partnership staff member attending an inter-partner meeting	5
Partnership meeting	2
Local meeting	0
Support/training from Petroc (e.g. admin/finance/delivery)	3
Other (e.g. steering group; focus group; etc)	0
# of instances of a partnership staff member receiving a project newsletter/newsflash	0
# of instances of project insights being shared outside of the partnership	2
# of Outcome 5 case studies	0

Looking Forward to the Impact of Experience Works

As this report has shown, [the work of the partnership is having an impact across Devon](#); impacting on young people, employers, support services, communities, and delivery partners themselves.

Although numbers of participants to date are lower than expected, the support which is being provided by mentors can be invaluable in helping to address issues of both personal resilience, and in bridging the skills gaps needed for securing work. [The findings highlight the need for this service. With 53.7% of enrolled participants declaring mental health challenges and 28.4% declaring a disability, the complexity of the participant group is clear.](#) The project will continue to work with participants from Devon who have complex challenges and who need close support.

The partners are coming together to share best practice and will continue to do so throughout the project's lifetime. [This best practice will improve the delivery of this project.](#) The young participants who are either NEET or at risk of NEET continue to face barriers, especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this project has proved to be valuable to ensure that the young people get support to overcome these challenges to gain lifelong skills and qualifications and to improve their own self-esteem and confidence.

In order for the project to improve the participants needs, the delivery partners and the support partner have been working more closely to ensure that the participants are supported. The DCT team have held meetings with all partners to discuss specific aspects of their work, particularly employer engagement, as a result of which we are developing a strategy to help partners find work experience and other workplace opportunities for their participants.

In this report Devon Communities Together have continued to capture and share the work delivered and insights gained to date. We expect to continue to bring this further to life in the next period by tracing the journeys of participants and partners through on-site visits and multi-media case study development. DCT will also continue to engage employers by delivering support sessions on inclusiveness and to give insight into how employers can support young people.

Finally, going forward, the partnership will continue to engage with Experience Works' Cross Cutting Themes of Equality and Sustainable Development.

The next Experience Works Biannual Impact Report will be available in November 2022 and will provide an impact update covering April 2022-September 2022.

Appendix A – Social Media


Throughout this period information about the projects, promotions of workshops and case studies was shared with the community via social media channels. Please see below some examples of the social media content which was shared;

 **Devon Communities Together**
@DevComsTogether

EMPLOYERS, are you looking for new skills? Want to make a difference in a young person's life? Learn about the strengths and talents of young people currently not in employment and how you can benefit by offering opportunities. FREE 1-hour online training: buff.ly/3HK4nJn



14:56 · 11 Feb 22 · Buffer

 **Devon Communities Together**
569 followers
4mo · 🌐

DCT's Freya explains the fantastic FREE online training the team at Experience Works and Empowering Enterprise are providing for local employers to help understand the huge benefits of offering opportunities for young people who are not already in education, employment or training. Next one on 28th Feb - book here: <https://buff.ly/3HK4nJn> #diversity #Inclusivity



Appendix B – Case Studies

During this period, the following two case studies have been publicised on the Experience Works YouTube account:

1. Leandra Goncalves from Bluescreen IT talks about supporting a young person into work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wAHUIW1JX8>



2. James, a young person with a talent for IT, tells his story, and Bluescreen's Dave explains how they can help such young people get qualifications and into work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Oij88QhtaE>



For more information and to engage with the project's social media channels please visit;

Petroc's twitter handle: <https://twitter.com/petrocofficial>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvcuyVWwC2JpRLBB-PnZ5ZQ/featured>

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For more information on the project, please contact experienceworks@petroc.ac.uk