

Experience Works Biannual Impact Report

2. EXPERIENCE WORKS

APRIL 2021 – September 2021





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.



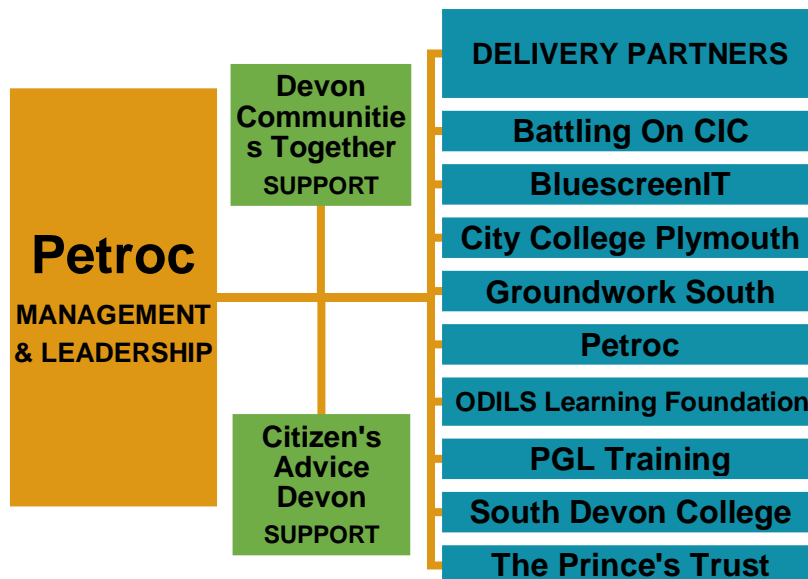
April to September 2021 - Key Findings

In this period:

- The project must be described as still being in it's 'set up phase'. Due to the challenges of the covid pandemic several partners were still struggling to deliver as hoped. Covid affected not just the recruitment of participants, but also delivery staff.
- 38 young people became live on the project, and a further 51 were engaged during this period. This represents only 11% of where the project hoped to be by this stage. Positively, there was a sharp increase in participant recruitment rates in September.
- There have been no official participants reported as exiting the project, and therefore achieving results, however several participants have gained employment or enrolled on courses and these results are expected to be formalized in the next quarter.
- The young people engaged on the project are presenting significant challenges with 81% having disabilities and 71% declaring mental health difficulties on their enrolment paperwork.
- Activities seeking to improve confidence and self-belief are the most named actions on participants' Personal Development Plans.
- There has been excellent work continued with the project set-up, especially in relationship building with signposting and referral services, with a large number of referrals coming from CSW and volunteering and work placements starting to be secured.
- Partners are reporting a low number of referrals from JCP, it is understood that Work Coaches have been instructed to refer clients to the DWP Kickstart scheme. There is a concern from the wider community that this may be a short term 'fix'. However, if clients were to be signed up and mentored by the EW project prior and during Kickstart this would ensure a longer-term solution.
- Partnership development has continued with two partnership wide project meetings, a 'local' (mentors) meeting, and training sessions on finance, project administration, case study development, PDRS training and the Explore website. These training sessions were delivered by Petroc and DCT.
- The Explore website and the associated portfolio, which was designed to support participants to demonstrate and pull together a tangible pack of evidence, was launched in April. This has been well received, being referred on nearly half of participants Personal Development Plans.
- The Project Inception process was completed with DWP which resulted in the first financial claim. Owing to the delays in starting activity and, for many partners, the difficulty in recruiting new staff, the partnership is well behind the expenditure profile that was set at application stage, but claims are increasing in value quarter by quarter.

Introducing: Experience Works

Experience Works is a project that seeks to support 15–24-year-olds in Devon who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), or at Risk of becoming so, from January 2021 to May 2023. 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**. Petroc has committed to delivering Experience Works, with the **eight other delivery partners**. Along with Devon Communities Together and Citizen's Advice Devon who participate in the partnership as **support partners**, the partnership is as follows:



Support is intended to be flexible, with mentors creating a package of activities that meet the needs of the participants. This may include:

- **Regular one to ones or group sessions with their mentors**
- **Workplace learning**
- **Volunteering and social action**
- **Opportunities for short tasters and training on a range of topics**
- **Employability sessions using the Employment Key Toolkit**
- **The option of in work support**

The time commitment could be from 30 minutes to 16 hours a week, depending on the type of sessions booked. It is ensured that any time the young person spends on the project can be counted against their claim commitment.

Theory of Change & Impact Updates

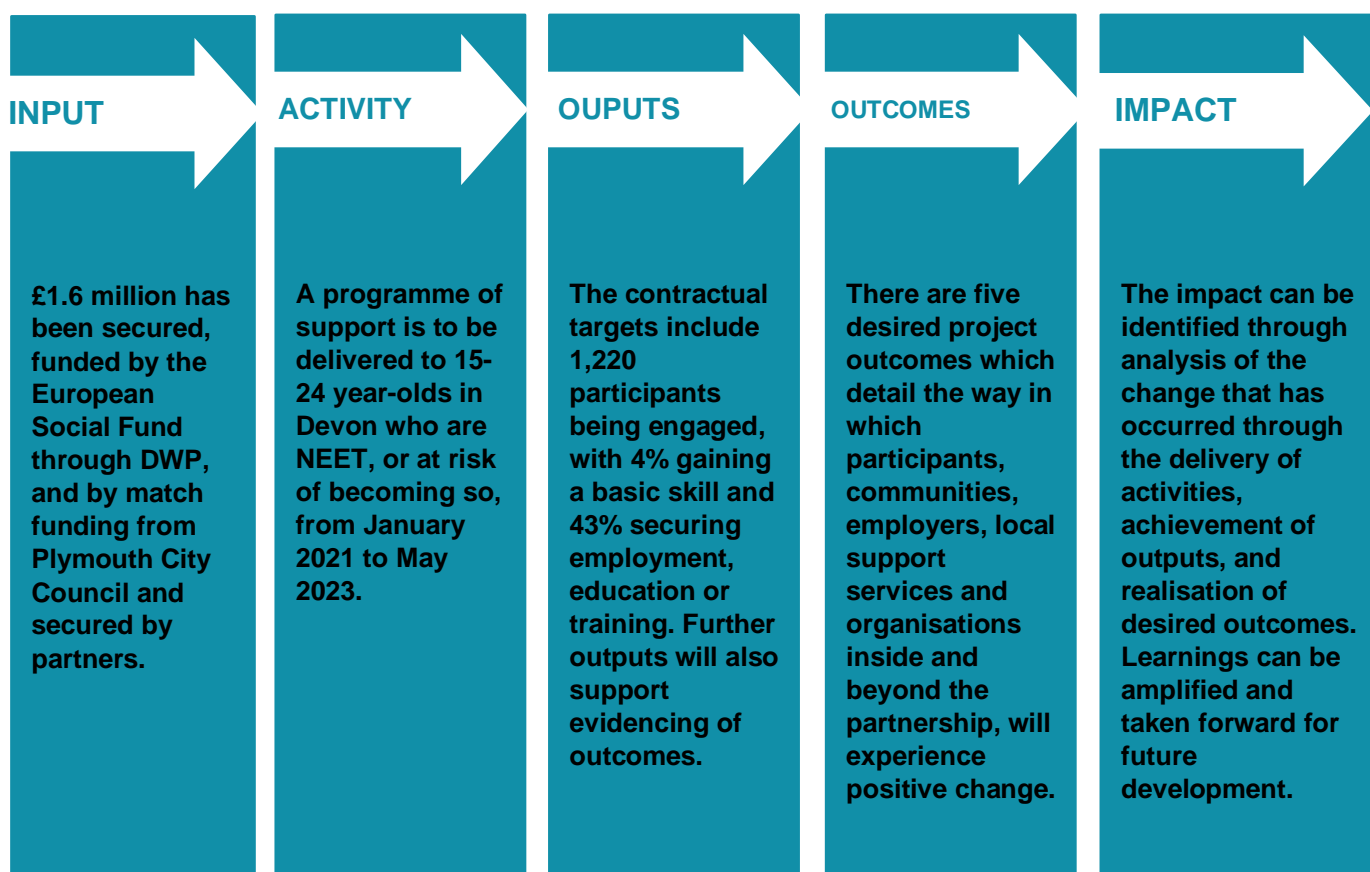
Petroc report quarterly to European Social Fund (ESF) through the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) portal regarding quantitative data in respect of participant numbers and project spend, alongside submitting narrative on project activity, updates on cross cutting themes, pipeline activity reports and case studies. Alongside this, [Devon Communities Together will produce biannual reports to capture and present the change that is being achieved by the Experience Works partnership.](#)

As the evaluation partner for Experience Works, Devon Communities Together will support the partnership by:

- measuring the impact that is being achieved by the partnership,
- working with Petroc to highlight the **successes of this work in order that it can be** shared as best practice,
- agreeing with the Partnership **key areas for further development and growth**, as the project unfolds over the coming two years.

This report is the second of **six biannual impact updates**. The [first biannual update](#) reported on the project set-up phase between October 2020 and March 2021, and provides full detail on the impact measurement framework and theory of change through which the project will be evaluated. This second report is able to draw upon qualitative and quantitative data from project activities over the past six months and uses this data to focus on the partnership's progress. However, as in many ways the project is still establishing itself, some outcome areas do not have complete data sets to report on.

A summary of Experience Work's Theory of Change can be seen below.



Input

There is a **financial budget of £1.6 million** for Experience Works. This funding partially comes from the European Social Fund (ESF) and is managed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). As well as money from ESF, all project partners are using match funding from other sources. Plymouth City Council has also contributed match funding to support the project management & evaluation elements of Experience Works, which maximises the amount of ESF funding that all partners are able to access.

The profile was drawn up pre-pandemic, at application stage in 2019, and it is anticipated that there will continue to be a difference between real expenditure and the contracted profile for some quarters to come. Currently behind the profiled expenditure and we are behind the profiles that were set at application stage (i.e. pre-pandemic). These profiles can be changed through the Project Change Request (PCR) process which Petroc has been actively exploring with our DWP Contract Manager.

- The Project Inception process was completed with DWP and we were able to make the first claim and the partnership has now settled into the regular schedule of claiming each quarter.
- Owing to the delays in starting activity and, for many partners, the difficulty in recruiting new staff, the partnership is well behind the expenditure profile that was set at application stage, but claims are increasing in value quarter by quarter.

Activity

In the last biannual report, describing activity up until the end of March 2021, no participants had yet gone live on the project (13 young people had been engaged and were awaiting paperwork). The majority of partner activity had revolved around project set-up, staff recruitment and forming of referral partnerships. Recruitment, of and engagement with, participants was also overshadowed by the covid pandemic. **During this reporting period engagement with young people significantly increased, however Experience Works must still be considered to be in its start-up phase.**

Covid restrictions remained in place until mid-July¹, and **many partners still had to carry out staff recruitment during this time. This meant that not all partners were actively working with young people during this period**, however, all partners now have delivery teams in place, except GWS (starting November) and ODILs (whose involvement is still delayed, as planned). **Establishing wider relationships for referrals and signposting remained a key action for all partners during this period** (discussed in 'Outcome 3' below) as did partnership wide training and project set up managed by Petroc (discussed in 'Outcome 5 below).

In this reporting period **38 young people became live, and a further 51 were engaged by the partnership.** 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 partners follow a mentoring model with their participants, and deliver information, advice and guidance sessions. Delivery does, however, vary widely depending on the individuals' talents, ambitions and barriers (TAB) and personal development plan (PDP)², and the delivery organisation's own approach. These activities and their impact are discussed in 'Outcome 1' (PP 12-15) and 'Outcome 2' below (PP 16-17).

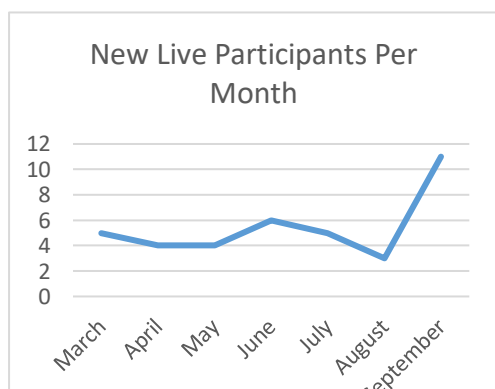


Figure 1: New live participants per month

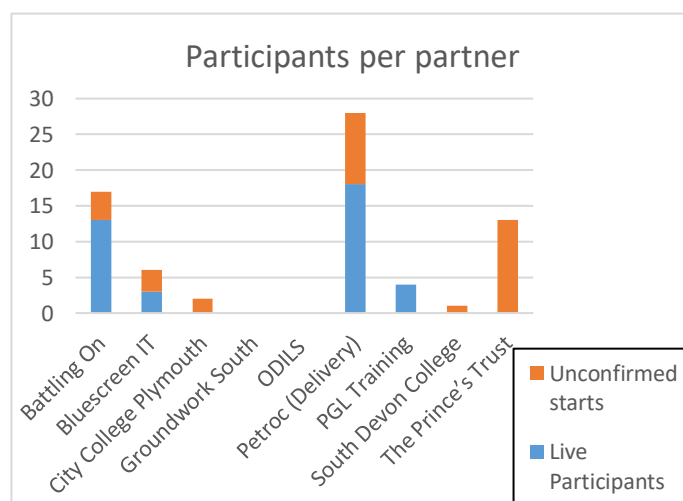


Figure 2: Participants per partner

¹ Outdoor gatherings of different households was not permitted until March 29th, non-essential retail and outdoor restaurants and venues opened on April 12th. Opening of indoor venues, and indoor gathering was not permitted until May 17th, all legal limits on social contact were removed on July 19th.

² Two pieces of paperwork are required 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 the funding bodies.

Outputs	Target	Numbers in reporting period and % of overall target		
Total participants engaged		1220	3%	38
Male	61%	748	4%	27
Female	39%	472	2%	11
Unemployed	68%	828	2%	18
Economically inactive	32%	392	5%	20
Participants from ethnic minority groups	5%	60	0%	0
Participants with disabilities	10%	116	27%	31
Participants without basic skills	17%	202	9%	19
Participants from a single adult household with dependent children	4%	49	0%	0
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	0%	0
Participants in employment, including self-employment or education/training 6 months after leaving	34%	415	0%	0

The above table shows details of the **38 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. None of these participants have yet exited the project. This figure of 38 represents 11% of projects profiled target by this point (339), and is therefore far below where the partnership would like to be at this stage. However, this is to be expected somewhat in the set up phases of a new project, especially with the added challenges of Covid, and number of participants going live increased significantly in September (as shown in figure 1).

With only a limited number of participants to look at, it is hard to draw any strong conclusions on the demographics engaged by Experience Works. Trends which are worth comment include:

- **Over double the number of males (27) have been engaged than females (11).**
- **31 of 38 (81.5%) participants enrolling have declared a disability.**
- **27 of the 38 (71%) live participants declared a mental health difficulty in their enrolment paperwork.**

Promisingly, participants have been engaged in several distinct areas across Devon, see figure 3, indicating that the make up of the different organisations on the partnership will be able to engage young people Devon-wide.

Finally, it should be noted that **a further 51 young people were engaged on the project**, and worked with an Experience Works mentor to begin their participant journeys. Of these, only 7 have been formally withdrawn meaning there is a good potential for rapid increase of live participants. One partner noted:

“Our main issue has been translating starters into active participants due to a lack of administrative staff within the team. We are currently recruiting for support in this area.”

Delivery Partner, Project Manager



Figure 3: Participant locations

The next section of this report **details the project's 5 desired outcomes**, and a diverse range of additional outputs to support the measurement of progress. Though these are not contractual targets, however, 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.

The **38 live young people have met regularly with their mentors and have completed entry paperwork** and, in doing so, 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**

Of the PDPs created **18 individuals (47%) are aiming for employment, 13 (34%) for further education or training and 7 (19%) are aiming to gain basic skills.** Of the 25 words most frequently used by participants when naming actions to achieve these results, see figure 4, it is notable that the word confidence was most used most often (21 times), e.g. *“Boost my confidence and self-belief”*.



Figure 4: Word cloud of actions named on

293 sessions, totalling over 360 hours of engagement, have taken place across different settings – remotely, in centres, and in ‘open spaces and small groups’. Furthermore, mentors have completed 5 ‘Advocacy’ sessions on behalf of their participants. Sessions are a mixture of structured courses, and 1-2-1 responsive mentoring, and although all partners are used to working with young people, several have found the need to adapt existing approaches to meet the needs of this client group. These adaptations are discussed in Outcome 5 (Page 22).

Some sessions have been topic specific, such as Bluescreen IT running a Cyber Security course ‘CyberSAFE’, and modules on Artificial Intelligence, or PGL hosting basic Maths and English training, Health and Safety training, and practical skills taster sessions on Bricklaying, Carpentry and Electrical.


Other sessions have covered more general skills, like timekeeping, communication and personal confidence. These topics have been covered on The Prince’s Trust’s Future Steps programme, Battling On’s Functional Skills course, Blue Screen IT’s Personal Development Modules, and PGL’s CV and Interview workshops.

Group sessions have been small and limited, but they have shown the valuable co-benefits of bringing people together, helping to build confidence and break down isolation and loneliness.

“One participant that suffers from social anxiety helped me to instruct another student on how to use an editing programme.” Mentor, Bluescreen IT

Beyond these activities, mentor's wrap-around support has meant working with participants to address surrounding life challenges. This has included supporting a participant attending court for child custody hearings; supporting participants with housing and benefits claims; supporting with mental health needs; or continuing to support a nervous participant into their new employment.

No participants have yet formally moved off the project, and as such cannot be reported in the outputs table (below) as having achieved one of the target results categories. However, partners have reported that several participants have accessed opportunities. These have included employment as a farm worker, as a barista, in retail, and as a plastering apprentice. Partners also report that participants have begun or even finished qualifications which include GCSE Maths and English, Beauty Therapy, Bricklaying and Cyber Security. It is expected that these, and other, results will be formalised in the next quarter.



"I need help to change my mindset, because when I am depressed, I lack motivation and end up just doing nothing. In the past when my mentor took me to a place for work experience, I couldn't go into the building because I would get physically sick! But I'm practical about my challenges, they are scary, but I know deep down I will be ok, I want to look back one day and know that no matter how hard my life was, I managed to come out on top.

The difference the programme has made has helped a lot, but this doesn't even come close to actually describing it. I never used to leave the house, but now I am getting out and do a lot more and I am actually enjoying it. I feel so much better in myself – thanks to Leandra, I can now go out and speak to people. Yesterday I managed to get on a bus and didn't have any anxiety. I feel like a different person and I am so proud and happy at this moment in time." Harvey, Age 17, Bluescreen IT Participant

Outcome 1 Indicator (Output)	01/04/2021 - 30/09/2021
# of young people receiving support from EW	38
# of 1-2-1 sessions (and hours)	281 (333)
# of group sessions (and hours)	12 (30.5)
# of young people are in employment on leaving	0
# of young people are in employment after 6 months	0
# of young people are in education/training on leaving	0
# 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	3
Participants feel that their employability and life skills have improved*	0
Participants express higher levels of desire for EET*	0
Participants feel more prepared for EET*	0
Participants feel more prepared to apply for opportunities*	0
# of Outcome 1 stories	3

*These outputs are measured via completion of the Progress Star of which only 2 have been completed to date.

Outcome 1 Story

"I feel a lot more positive and organised with my life now. I'm keeping busier and using techniques to improve my sleep. I have gained more experience for my CV and definitely feel more confident applying for jobs now. Before the programme, I was putting it off for ages because I wasn't happy with my CV. Now I know what sites to look on"

Ruby, Petroc Delivery Participant

Explore

Explore was designed to support participants to demonstrate transferable skills, job search, and interview techniques, and pull together a tangible pack of evidence including a CV and references. It contains links to a personality-type quiz, guides for demonstrating evidence of skills and experience and templates for creating a CV. It is specifically designed to help those with little or no work experience to identify attributes that may be valuable in job seeking.



Explore was launched in April 2021 and training was delivered to 21 members of partnership staff in May. The training covered: the purpose of Explore; the development journey; structure and use of the site; future development.

During the reporting period, using the Explore website is mentioned as a step on 17 of the 38 (45%) participants Personal Development Plans, and there were:

- 129 site visits, of which 21 were by the editor, website manager, Petroc admin or bots, leaving **108 visits**.
- 90 unique visitors (though this may include the same people accessing it from different devices).

The average visit time was 4m38s.

These figures reflect that mentors log on to the site on behalf of their clients, rather than every client accessing it individually. Also, mentors report that they download the resources from the site and so do not return to the site regularly. They print out the downloads to complete them with the participant.

The traffic pattern shows a peak at the start, that then dipped before rising slightly in August and September. This fits mentors' reports that they **accessed the site early and downloaded what they needed**. It does not match the dates of participants going live.

Although these numbers are not large, it is encouraging that Explore is named on PDPs, and several mentors have commented on the value of the resource. As new participants join Experience Works it is anticipated that traffic will increase.

DCT are aware that perhaps not all aspects of the site are currently being used, and some partners are less clear about its value or how to access. DCT will be reviewing the site's content and how it is being used, in order to provide guidance for mentors. DCT will continue to provide online training for all new mentors.

Outcome 2

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

Experience Works expects 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.

Activities taking place in communities are yet to be widespread across the project, but The Prince's Trust have helped participants take part in 'Get Started with Spoken Word' held at the Theatre Royal Plymouth, and partners are starting to think, with their participants, about the types of in-community action which could be completed in the future, and the relationships which will allow this action. For example, Bluescreen IT are talking with a local school about participants gaining experience fixing the schools computers.

A number of volunteering placements for individuals have taken place. These have included the British Heart Foundation charity shop; Caen Primary School art club; gardening skills (via the community connector) in Bideford and Torrington; the Cinnamon Trust; Fern Lodge Kennels; and with The Scouts. These placements and wider mentoring activities 'on location' in communities are key to helping participants feel confident travelling around their area and to know new places.

"After moving in with his father in a rural village Chris has learnt to adapt to life in the country, although he very much misses his old life of the city and London. Chris is unable to learn to drive, as he suffers from epilepsy and is forbidden.

Sometimes Chris longs to be in the city, travelling freely [on public transport], and through participation in the project Chris has been able to go into the city of Plymouth and although tiny compared to London this has provided him with much needed time back in the environment he has always known." Project Mentor, Battling On

“I don’t drive, so getting the bus is quite a struggle - I quite often don’t make it in time and end up missing it. Attending the group walks, gardening and mentoring sessions has helped to improve my confidence. I’ve had to make it on time to Experience Works sessions and activities, travel to different places, and be more independent. I’ve had to navigate my way around to find new places that I had never been to before, for example, Ayres Close in Bideford for gardening club” Ruby, Petroc Delivery Participant

Outcome 2 Indicator (Output)	01/04/2021 - 30/09/2021
# of participants attended a Social Action session	2
# of instances of a participant attending a Social Action session	0
# of participants attended a Volunteering session	0
# of instances of a participant attending a Volunteering session	1
# 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	0
Participants feel that they are better able to engage with new people*	0
# of Outcome 2 stories	0

*These outputs are measured via completion of the Progress Star of which only 2 have been completed to date.

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 no formal results of participants moving into employment in this period, however partners have been building relationships with employers in preparation for expected placements. For example, PGL have held Employer Engagement Sessions, Bluescreen IT have formed a relationship with a local IT business for work experience placements, City College Plymouth have met with care agencies, retail organisations and garages, and Petroc (Delivery) have met several local hospitality and tourism organisations.

Additionally, during this period the teams working on Experience Works in the 3 college delivery partners (City College Plymouth; Petroc; South Devon College) have worked with their employment and apprenticeship departments. These departments will be key factors in the promotion of Experience Works and it's key messages, as well as helping secure placements for participants.

Finally, Devon Communities Together hired a new Employer Engagement Lead in September, and are excited to begin strategic work in earnest in the next period, knowing there is a need to work with both young people and employers to make sure both are in readiness for one another. For example, in this period employers have reported to our partners that young people taking up positions through the Kickstart provision (discussed below) would benefit from parallel support, such as that provided by Experience Works.

Outcome 3 Indicator (Output)	01/04/2021 - 30/09/2021
# 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	5
# of Outcome 3 stories	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.

Of the 38 live participants, 31 of these (81%) have come from external services who have been made aware of Experience Works and have referred to the project. Significantly, 11 of these 31 have come from Careers South West (CSW). Further referrals have come from councils and their Care Leaver Teams, The Zone in Plymouth, Garland Support, and North Devon Against Domestic Abuse, amongst others.

It is notable that Job Centre Plus (JCP) have only referred one participant. Many of the partners have good relations with their local JCP work coaches, but some have reported that their JCP seem focused on the Kickstart programme³ which is channelling away referrals from Experience Works. Additionally, success in referring young people to the right provision can depend on relationships built between individual members of staff and work coaches, and these have been especially difficult to build with Covid creating a lack of face-to-face meetings. It is expected that this situation

will change as partners continue building relationships with JCP staff, and work coaches better understand how Kickstart can work alongside Experience Works.

“The success of the Kickstart programme, by in which we have supported over 150 learners, has also negatively impacted this project due to significant overlap in target audience.”

Project Manager, South Devon College

Included in the figure of 31 are 9 referrals which have come from other departments within a delivery

organisation. This has especially 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.

Equally important as referrals into Experience Works, are the instances of mentors signposting young people to external support services. The table below shows the breakdown of support areas which participants have been signposted to. Employment opportunities are named 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. However, these figures do not capture all the interactions taking place between mentors and services, as mentors additionally reported participants taking part in activities at the Wave Project and with Young Devon, and discussed how they had worked closely with young person’s support workers.

³ During this period the government’s ‘Kickstart’ scheme has been in operation, starting in late summer 2020 this scheme funded employers to provide 6-month, 25-hour a week, minimum wage jobs available for 16-24 year olds claiming Universal Credit. Additional funds were available for support and training in these roles. Kickstart job roles can start until 31st December 2021.

Outcome 4 Indicator (Output)	01/04/2021 - 30/09/2021
# of advocacy sessions (and hours)	5 (1.25)
# of instances of signposting to external support services (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	33 (26)
Careers Advice (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	3 (2)
Employment opportunities (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	13 (11)
Education or training (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	3 (2)
Soft skills development (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	1 (1)
Legal advice (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	0 (0)
Housing services (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	2 (1)
Additional needs support (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	2 (1)
Mental health services (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	3 (1)
Physical health & wellbeing (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	1 (1)
Money advice (of whom the participant was previously unaware)	0 (0)
# of referrals into the project from external service (where that participant went live)	31
Participants feel that they are better informed about support services*	0
# of Outcome 4 stories	0

*These outputs are measured via completion of the Progress Star of which only 2 have been completed to date.

Outcome 5

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

In the first reporting period Petroc 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 finance 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, in June and September, with 37 total attendees from across all organisations, mostly in management positions. Additionally, there were 13 attendees at a 'local' meeting in July, mostly in mentoring positions. These meetings allow for insights to be shared between partners about their experiences of project set-up and engagement with young people, such as Petroc Delivery staff sharing contact information for LiveWest housing association and the Wave Project.

In the July local meeting attendees were trained by DCT on the value of case studies and shown how the stories of their work will usually relate to several of the project outcomes, where they might be preoccupied on participant's journey's (Outcome 1). DCT offered their ongoing support on case study production, and worked with 3 partners to produce case studies in this period. Additionally, as mentioned above, DCT trained 21 members of partnership staff on the use of the Explore website and accompanying portfolio in May.

In September an 'Unemployment Support' newsletter with links to support organisations, employment opportunities and other information from 3 youth-focused projects managed by Petroc, including Experience Works, was shared with all partners across these 3 projects.

As partners have begun working with participants in earnest, learnings and adaptations of practice are starting to emerge and have been reported on by partners. For example, PGL Training have adapted their sessions to be shorter and sharper to meet learners' needs.

Outcome 5 Indicator (Output)	01/04/2021 - 30/09/2021
# of instances of a partnership staff member attending an inter-partner meeting	72
Partnership meeting	37
Local meeting	13
Support/training from Petroc (e.g. admin/finance/delivery)	11
Other (e.g. steering group; focus group; etc)	21
# of instances of a partnership staff member receiving a project newsletter/newsflash	1
# of instances of project insights being shared outside of the partnership	2
# of Outcome 5 stories	0

Looking Forward to the Impact of Experience Works

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

The findings highlight the need for this service. With over 70% of enrolled participants declaring mental health challenges and over 80% declaring a disability, the complexity of the client group is clear. Although numbers of participants to date are low, 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 project is expecting to continue working with participants with complex challenges and those who need close support. The 9 partners will meet these needs through a range of unique but equally valuable approaches.

The best practice being developed by mentors will be all the more important in the aftermath of, and ongoing uncertainty around, the Covid pandemic. Young NEETs will continue to face the brunt of many challenges, whether the impacts on the job market or impacts on the mental and emotional health of young people themselves.

To meet these increasing needs the partnership will have to work closely with all bodies and sectors, and it appears they will be in a strong position to do just this. This reporting period has shown that an especial strength of delivery partners work in this time has been the relationships built with support services, employers and community groups, and it is expected that these relationships will pay dividends in the coming months. These relationships will likely lead to an increase of referrals into the project, and allow for exciting opportunities for participants via employment, education, volunteering or social action projects.

In this report Devon Communities Together have begun capturing and sharing the work delivered and insights gained to date. We expect to be able 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 be beginning employer engagement work in earnest, by delivering support sessions for employers to enable them best support young NEETs, and by sharing key messages to strategic bodies.

Finally, as the partnership moves from forming into norming, and is able to focus on the delivery of social action and group activities, it is expected that the partnership will begin to engage significantly with Experience Works' Cross Cutting Themes of Equality and Sustainable Development.

The next Experience Works Biannual Impact Report will be available in May 2022 and will provide an impact update covering October 2021 – March 2022.