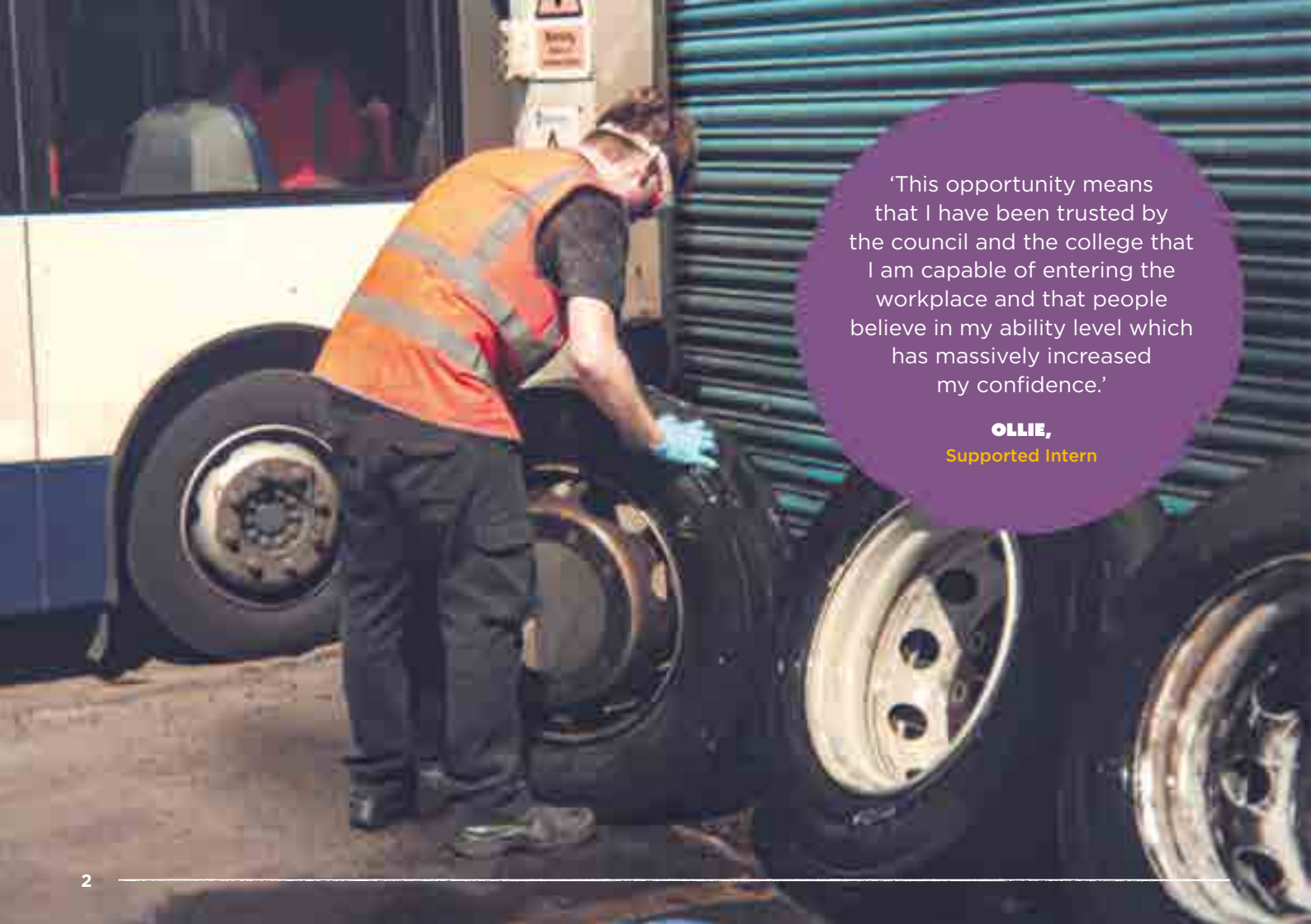




**EMPOWERING
EMPLOYMENT**

IMPACT REPORT 2025/26

Creating pathways to employment for neuro disabled people.



‘This opportunity means that I have been trusted by the council and the college that I am capable of entering the workplace and that people believe in my ability level which has massively increased my confidence.’

OLLIE,
Supported Intern

THANK YOU

This work would not be possible without our employer network, partners and funders.

Every opportunity created, placement offered and achievement celebrated has been made possible through collaboration with businesses, local authorities, educators and community partners who believe in inclusive employment.

Together, we are helping people build skills, gain confidence and move towards meaningful and sustainable employment.

With thanks to our employer network and delivery partners:



WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO



Across the UK, neuro disabled people continue to face significant barriers to employment, despite having valuable skills, ambition and potential.

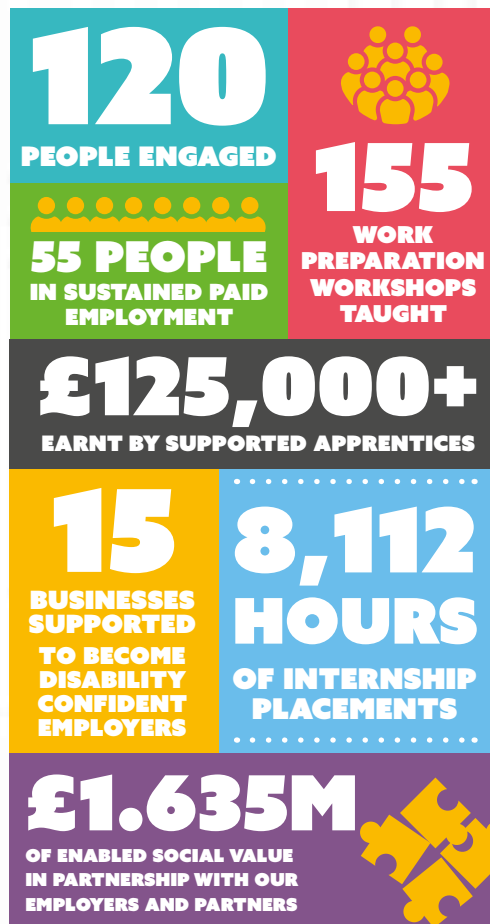
Too many people are still waiting too long for support, struggling to access opportunities or being excluded from workplaces that are not designed with inclusion in mind. Delays such as extended waiting times for Access to Work support continue to impact people's ability to move forward into employment.

At Empowering Employment, we believe everyone deserves the opportunity to prepare for, access and thrive in work.

Since 2023, we have continued to grow our programmes, strengthen partnerships and support individuals to achieve outcomes that matter to them. While we are proud of the progress made, we know there is still much more work to do.

Chris Hillman

Head of Empowering Employment



Rolling Figures since 2023

OUR PROGRAMMES

Supporting people and employers through every stage of employment

Our programmes are designed to provide tailored support to individuals and employers at every stage of the employment journey.



For every £1
Spent =
£4.13
of Social Value
is created

JOB COACHING

Delivering recognised supported employment approaches that provide personalised guidance to help individuals gain and sustain meaningful employment.

WORK READINESS AND PREPARATION

Supporting people to build confidence, develop workplace skills and prepare for future opportunities through structured learning and practical experiences.



For every £1
Spent =
£5.29
of Social Value
is created



'Working in partnership with Minstead Trust and Empowering Employment to develop Supported Internships in Portsmouth has been key to the success of our programme. Minstead have worked with us from the very start to develop the offer and deliver professional and highly effective job coaching. The positive outcomes for young people are a testament to this work.'

Amanda Percy:
Portsmouth City Council



For every £1
Spent =
£7.27
of Social Value
is created

SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS

Creating opportunities for people to gain hands-on experience, develop industry skills and progress into employment through supported pathways. Supported Internships and Apprenticeships are helping neuro disabled people access meaningful work across Hampshire and beyond.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND ASSISTANCE

Working alongside employers, education providers and organisations to create inclusive workplaces and accessible employment opportunities.



Over 100
hours given
supporting local
employers and
projects

'We are delighted to have engaged with Empowering Employment through the Modern Work Experience Project, helping to inspire young people as they explore their future pathways. The project provides valuable opportunities for young people to gain an insight into the workplace, build confidence, and develop skills that will support them in their journey.'

'By working together, we have helped young people recognise their own strengths and potential. Through meaningful workplace experiences, mentoring, and positive role models, we aim to inspire aspirations, broaden horizons, and support each individual to take their next steps towards a rewarding future.'

'We look forward to continuing our partnership with Empowering Employment and playing a role in empowering young people to achieve their ambitions.'

**Lisa Fox: Enterprise Coordinator,
Hampshire Careers Hub**



OUR **ACHIEVEMENTS** AND THE WORK STILL TO BE DONE

This year has seen continued growth across our programmes, partnerships and employment opportunities.

Together, we have supported people to:

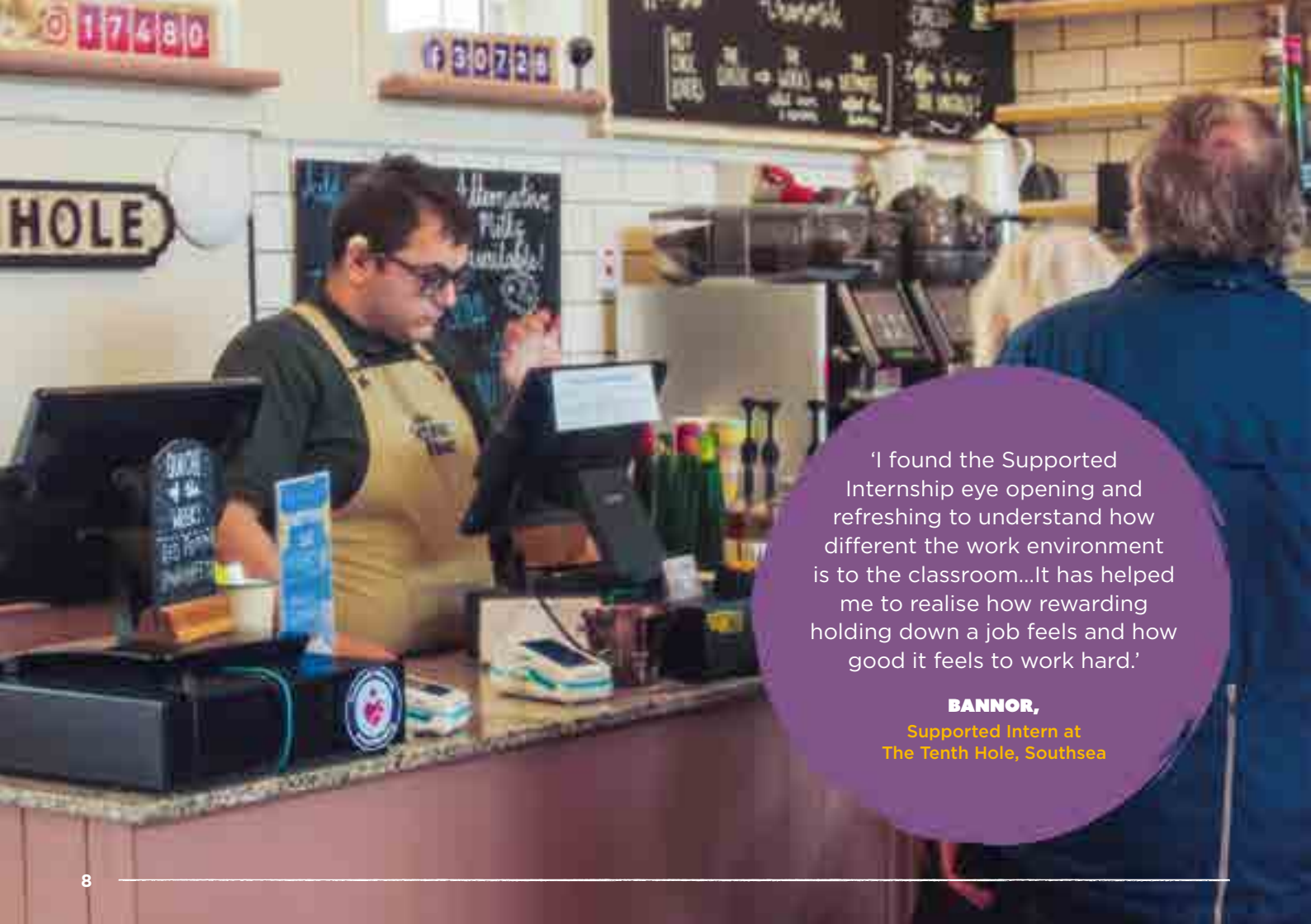
- Build confidence and independence
- Gain qualifications and work experience
- Progress into internships, apprenticeships and employment
- Develop skills for long-term success

However, significant barriers remain.

Many neuro disabled people are still unable to access the right support at the right time. National challenges such as lengthy Access to Work waiting times and limited inclusive employment opportunities continue to impact individuals and families.

Our work remains focused not only on delivering opportunities, but on challenging barriers and helping shape a more inclusive future.





'I found the Supported Internship eye opening and refreshing to understand how different the work environment is to the classroom...It has helped me to realise how rewarding holding down a job feels and how good it feels to work hard.'

BANNOR,
Supported Intern at
The Tenth Hole, Southsea

SUCCESSES CLOSE TO HOME

Creating inclusive opportunities within our own organisation

We believe inclusive employment starts with us.

This year, Minstead Trust has continued to create opportunities across their own teams and locations, supporting people to develop skills and gain valuable workplace experience.

Case study

JOE at Minstead Trust

After completing his Customer Service Apprenticeship at Hanger Farm with a Distinction last year, Joe secured a paid role working across Minstead Trust's social enterprises, including Furzey Gardens, Minstead Lodge, Hanger Farm, and the Real Jam & Chutney Company.

He's involved in everything from cooking and barista work to mentoring people they support, including volunteers and those following the same apprenticeship path he completed.



'I can't believe I'm here, I've achieved so much already. I feel more independent and it's a cool thing to support others.'

JOE,
Hospitality & Catering
Assistant

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

Strong partnerships continue to play a vital role in creating opportunities and improving outcomes.

This year we have:

- Continued to grow Supported Internship delivery
- Strengthened partnerships with Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council
- Retained Disability Confident Level 3 status
- Continued engagement with BASE and recognised supported employment frameworks
- Built new relationships with employers and local organisations

Our partnerships help us expand opportunities, improve support pathways and influence more inclusive employment practices across the region.

Minstead Trust was chosen as Coastal Kitchen Family's charity of the year in 2025, and the two organisations have collaborated on a community kitchen garden in Milton, creating a horticulture experience for those who aren't on an employment pathway.



Case study

JACK AT MOUNTJOY

Partnerships with employers such as Mountjoy have helped create apprenticeship opportunities and meaningful workplace experiences.

Jack has been completing his Supported Internship at Mountjoy.

Jack says, 'The staff were lovely and treated me well. They were always very understanding. It has been great to be given an insight into a working life, as well as showing me things I need to work on within myself. I'm really happy about having the opportunity to work with other people. It has made me understand more about where I want to go with work, what my dreams are, and how I can get there.'



GROWING OUR EMPLOYER NETWORK

Employers creating real change

Our Employer Network continues to grow, with businesses recognising the value of inclusive employment and the positive impact it creates for individuals, workplaces and communities.

At a time when many organisations are facing significant pressures, we are incredibly grateful to employers who continue to invest time, opportunities and support into

creating inclusive workplaces. These businesses do not do it alone; they are there to help each other, and we are always there to help and support when needed.



Case study

KATY AT SPARK

Katy's confidence has grown through her volunteering at Spark, where she has developed new skills, built strong relationships and increasingly taken on her role with independence.

In November, Katy returned to Minstead Trust to host their annual Showcase and Awards event. Katy's growth in confidence earned her great acclaim from visiting partners and supporters.

'I love going to SPARK. My favourite thing about volunteering is making new friends. I like meeting new people and getting to know them. SPARK is a good place for that to happen. As the back of my T-shirt says, 'SPARK is a place where anybody who feels like a nobody can be a somebody.'



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

CELEBRATING LONG-TERM SUCCESS

The impact of supported employment extends far beyond placements and qualifications. It is about confidence, independence and building futures.

GREG

Greg completed his apprenticeship in February 2026 and was awarded a distinction, a well-deserved grade! After celebrating, he was presented with a permanent contract with Marsham Court Hotel, where he continues to develop his skills and demonstrate the hotel's passion for inclusivity.

CONNOR

Connor has continued to grow in his role as Assistant Gardener at Furzey Gardens. Since last year he has, '...gained more responsibility here. I have more confidence helping students, leading tasks with them and sharing knowledge. My knowledge is coming together and getting better over time...This is what I love...it's a really nice feeling.'

JAMES AND LUKE

Continuing with their apprenticeships

JAMES

James is entering the last few months of his apprenticeship and is employed by Voi to set up new warehouses across the country - he's been to Manchester, Aberdeen, Cardiff and Glasgow to help train their new staff. At just 19, he has already been offered a supervisor role.

LUKE

Having mentored James and completed his own management apprenticeship, Luke continues to support in the warehouse and represent Voi at social value events. In September 2026, he will welcome back new interns, hoping to follow in James' footsteps.



LOOKING AHEAD

As demand for inclusive employment support continues to grow, we remain committed to expanding opportunities and strengthening our impact.

Our key priorities for the year ahead include:

- Developing the Assemble Project with Mayflower Theatre and Studios
- Continuing to grow Supported Internship provision
- Strengthening employer partnerships
- Increasing social value measurement and reporting
- Continuing to influence inclusive employment practice across the sector
- Building a Job Coaching Network

We are excited to continue building opportunities alongside the people, partners and employers who make this work possible.

Equally, in response to the Milburn Report, Empowering Employment is committed to supporting neuro disabled young people who are NEET, as the country begins to focus on this key cohort.

'As Empowering Employment looks ahead to our new cohort, we want to take this moment to look back and remember Jayden Brookes, a Supported Intern who sadly passed away earlier this year.

We remember Jayden's dedication and determination, on the programme and in his life, and hope it inspires those who studied alongside him, and those who follow in his footsteps.'

**Remembering Jayden Brookes
2004-2026**





RECOGNISING OUR TEAM

Behind every opportunity created is a dedicated team working to support people, build partnerships and champion inclusive employment.

From frontline delivery staff to employer engagement teams, every colleague plays an important role in helping people move towards their goals.

Thank you to our staff, partners and supporters for their continued passion, dedication and belief in creating meaningful opportunities for all.

WE'RE NOT ALONE

Creating a more inclusive future requires collaboration, shared learning and strong community partnerships.

We are proud to work alongside organisations, employers and supporters who share our commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for neuro disabled people.



Featured partners

MAYFLOWER THEATRE & STUDIOS

Two venues under one banner, Mayflower Theatre & Studios are committed to making the industry accessible to all, and create opportunities for young people to feel empowered, engaged and confident.

We are proud to be working with Mayflower Theatre & Studios on the Assemble Project which launched summer 2026.

The logo for Mayflower Theatre & Studios, featuring the word "Mayflower" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

MOTIV8

An organisation whose values and commitment closely align with our own vision for inclusion and opportunity, Motiv8 support young people across the South East of Hampshire. Aspiration NEET Zero brought our teams closer together and we look forward to working more with them.



INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT CHANGES LIVES

Together, we can continue creating opportunities, building confidence and helping people move towards meaningful and sustainable employment.

How can you get involved?

- Talk to us about how we can help your company
- Join our Employer Network
- Partner with us
- Support inclusive employment opportunities.





empoweremploy.org.uk hello@empoweremploy.org.uk

 Connect with us on LinkedIn

Registered charity number: 1053319. Empowering Employment is part of Minstead Trust, a charity that supports over 600 neuro disabled people along the south coast of England.

**Empowering opportunities
for businesses and people**