# IMPACT REPORT

## Participant outcomes and progression following the VENI Skills Bootcamp in Bury St Edmunds, March 2026




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# Impact Report for the VENI Skills Bootcamp in Bury St Edmunds, March 2026

***"I didn't apply for pubs in the past, but now I have… and that's something I wouldn't have done before the course… I actually had an interview at Elveden last week because of the VENI course."* – (Participant who was successful at interview and now works for The Elveden Estate)**

The **VENI 12 Day Skills Bootcamp** was delivered in March 2026 at Bury St Edmunds Library, along with sessions at West Suffolk College, employer engagement activities and local visits exploring Bury St Edmunds' visitor economy.

The course combined industry-recognised customer service training with practical employability support, this included CV workshops; interview preparation; employer engagement and interviews; and local visitor economy activity designed to build confidence, strengthen interview readiness and support participants towards employment pathways within the sector. Participants also completed the WorldHost Principles of Customer Service qualification.

The course also addressed practical barriers to employment, including transport and mobility challenges, through sessions introducing participants to support available via the Kickstart mobility scheme. Transport and rural accessibility were recurring themes within participant interviews, particularly in relation to accessing visitor economy employment opportunities.

Follow-up interviews were conducted in late April to early May and then again in June and July. Findings indicate positive progression into employment with **five out of the nine** participants now in work, alongside significant shifts in confidence, employability, mindset and awareness of career opportunities within the visitor economy.

*All quotes in **orange** are from participants

## Key Outcomes

***"It made me much more confident applying for jobs. Before, I wasn't getting anywhere, but now I feel more prepared and able to put myself forward."***

- **Nine** participants took part in the programme.
- **97% attendance** across the 60 hour, 12 day course.
- **Five** participants have so far progressed into employment.
- **All five** participants are now employed in roles that relate to **customer service** or the **visitor economy**
- Participants linked the VENI course to **increased confidence, stronger interview skills, improved CVs and greater motivation to apply for work**.
- Several participants described **positive impacts on wellbeing, routine and social confidence.**
- One has participant progressed into **further training.**
- One participant is looking into starting **her own business.**
- Nearly all participants **broadened their job search** to include **visitor economy and customer-facing** roles following the course.

## Confidence, Employability and Mindset Shifts

***"It was good for confidence building because most of us had been out of work for so long we'd lost confidence, not just in applying for jobs, but in talking to people as well."***

A clear theme across interviews was the extent to which the programme supported confidence, motivation and renewed engagement with the labour market.

Participants repeatedly described the value of learning within a supportive group environment alongside others facing similar challenges.

***"It helped my mental health as well. Getting up and getting out for something."***

***"It was very helpful for mental health because you realised you weren't the only person struggling."***

Participants also described increased confidence in interviews and applications following practical employability activity delivered during the programme.

***"Because of the course, I feel more confident now in applying for jobs. I didn't know about the STAR interview method before, and I've now been able to apply it to the job interviews I've been on."***

***"The interview practice and feedback was particularly helpful because that is an area I always struggle in."***

***"The course really helped with interviews. We practised questions and learned to prepare properly, and for the first time since doing the course I actually felt ready and positive going into an interview."***

Several participants also described the programme as helping them rethink their own transferable skills and future career direction:

***"It reminded me that I do have skills that can transfer into other areas."***

***"I realised there are hundreds of jobs within the visitor economy that I had never considered before."***

***"I know a lot more now about how the visitor economy works and how many different sectors there are. I thought it was just coffee shops and tour guides, but it's much more varied than that."***

Participants also highlighted the importance of meeting others, rebuilding routine and reconnecting socially during periods of unemployment.

***"In terms of morale boosting, it really did help. I got a new friend out of it and we're still talking and we send each other jobs."***

## Participant Experience of the Programme

***"I'd previously walked out of another [construction] employability course after two hours because I hated the environment. VENI was the complete opposite. The people***

***were nice, the atmosphere was nice… the room was sunshine. It felt like somewhere you actually wanted to be."***

Participants consistently described the VENI programme as distinct from more traditional employability provision. Practical activity, discussion-led delivery, employer engagement and local visits were repeatedly highlighted as particular strengths of the programme.

***"It was dynamic, clear and fun."***

***"It didn't feel like ticking boxes."***

Participants valued the balance between classroom activity and practical local engagement.

***"There was enough practical activity as well as classroom learning. Everything felt balanced."***

***"It was very interactive without feeling too much like school."***

The group-based structure of the programme also appeared particularly important in maintaining engagement across the 12 day delivery period.

***"It was nice because we all stayed together, had lunch together and supported each other."***

Participants praised delivery staff and a supportive learning environment.

***"The course leader was brilliant. Very understanding of everybody."***

***"The atmosphere was welcoming and positive."***

Several participants specifically highlighted the value of the programme feeling like genuine training rather than mandatory employability activity.

***"It felt like proper learning again."***

## Participant Case Study: Tibor, who is now working at The Elveden Inn

***"I didn't apply for pubs in the past, but now I have… and that's something I wouldn't have done before the course… I actually had an interview at Elveden last week because of the VENI course." – ( Tibor before getting the job)***

Tibor joined the VENI Skills Bootcamp in Bury St Edmunds, which ran from 17th to 28th March 2026, after being referred by the Jobcentre. Tibor was initially interested in the opportunity to strengthen his CV and improve his job applications but discovered that the programme offered much more than practical employability support.

For Tibor, spending time with other people facing similar challenges helped rebuild his confidence and motivation during a difficult period of unemployment.

***"It was nice to connect with everybody... because I got to know that it wasn't me that was 'the big rubbish person'."***

He described the programme as dynamic, supportive and engaging,  and particularly valued the opportunity to ask questions, learn from others and receive practical guidance. As a result, he said that he began to approach his job search differently.

***“I feel more confident, and I’m applying for a complete range of jobs now… a whole variety of things, because I feel I can adapt and make my CV appropriate for that role.”***

The course also encouraged Tibor to consider opportunities within the visitor economy that he would not previously have applied for. Shortly after completing the course, he secured an interview at **The Elveden Inn**, in which he used the interview techniques practised during the Skills Bootcamp.

***"The course was very helpful to give me that kind of structural understanding... when he's asked the questions, respond to the question... I found the VENI course very good at helping along those lines."***

Following the interview, Tibor was offered the position and now works as a **waiter full time** for The Elveden.

Looking back, he felt the programme had made a significant difference not only to his employability skills but also to his wellbeing.

***"It's good to get out. That's what I found very useful with the VENI course, was getting out as well, not just being stuck in my house on my own."***

Tibor's experience is an example of how the programme combined practical employability support with peer encouragement and personalised guidance, helping him to rebuild confidence, broaden his aspirations and progress into employment within the visitor economy.

***“I felt that that gave the option rather than just ticking boxes, it was a connection with, you know, and the tutor was really good, you know, and they explained it all well…I felt, oh this is very helpful”***

## Conclusions

Evidence gathered through participant interviews suggests the VENI Bury St Edmunds Skills Bootcamp programme is generating positive employment progression outcomes, alongside significant improvements in confidence, employability and engagement with the labour market. The programme appears particularly effective because it combines:

- Industry recognised customer service training
- Practical employability support
- Mock interviews and CV development
- Local employer and visitor economy engagement
- Supportive group-based delivery and peer support
- Confidence and wellbeing gains

The high completion and attendance rates across a 60-hour Skills Bootcamp programme are notable given the barriers many participants described prior to enrolment, including long-term unemployment, reduced confidence, transport limitations and difficulty accessing

suitable local opportunities. So too are the high employment numbers (five out of nine) at the time of the July follow ups, with four participants still looking for work but showing substantial progression in interview readiness, training engagement, confidence and willingness to pursue broader opportunities within the visitor economy and related sectors.

Overall, findings suggest the VENI Skills Bootcamp model is supporting participants towards employment and also towards renewed confidence, broader career ambition and more positive engagement with the labour market.

***"I feel more confident, and I'm applying for a complete range of jobs now… a whole variety of things, because I feel I can adapt and make my CV appropriate for that role."***

***"It made me realise there are more possibilities out there than I thought."***