IMPACT REPORT

Participant Outcomes and Progression Following the VENI Visitor Economy Programme in Haverhill, May 2026



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Impact Report for the VENI Visitor Economy Programme in Haverhill, May 2026

"Hospitality wasn't my thing... but I thought I'd go on that [course]. It was absolutely brilliant."

The VENI Visitor Economy Programme was delivered at Haverhill Learning Centre between 11th and 14th May 2026, over four days. The programme combined the VENI *Training for the Visitor Economy* certificate, developed in partnership with Visit East of England and endorsed by the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), with practical employability support including CV development, interview preparation, employer engagement, and confidence building. Participants who successfully completed the programme received both a certificate and badge recognising their achievement.

Participants explored Haverhill's visitor economy through local visits and activities designed to increase awareness of local employers and employment opportunities. Sessions also addressed practical barriers to employment, including transport through the KickStart Moped Hire Charity, while encouraging participants to recognise their transferable skills and consider a broader range of career pathways.

Follow-up interviews were conducted in June and July 2026, one to two months after programme completion. The findings showed positive early outcomes, with one participant already having secured employment, alongside other participants reporting increased confidence, broader job search activity and greater awareness of local employment opportunities. Participants consistently described the programme as supportive, engaging and different from previous employability provision they had experienced.

*All quotes in **orange** are from participants and names have been changed where appropriate.

Key Outcomes

- **Nine** participants took part in the programme.
- Attendance and retention were strong across the four-day programme with **97% attendance.**
- One participant has so far secured employment as a **Learning Support Assistant**.
- One participant has expressed an interest in progressing into further learning through Haverhill Learning Centre to work on their **literacy skills.**
- One participant has expressed an interest in attending an **entrepreneurship** course.
- Participants consistently linked the programme to increased confidence, improved interview skills and broader job search activity.
- Several participants described increased awareness of Haverhill, local employers and opportunities within the visitor economy.
- While not all participants felt the visitor economy was the right long-term career pathway, many valued the confidence building, practical employability support and

interview preparation.

Confidence, Employability and New Opportunities

A clear theme across interviews was the extent to which the programme helped participants build confidence and approach job searching differently.

Participants consistently highlighted the interview preparation, interviews and CV workshops as among the most valuable elements of the programme. Receiving feedback from tutors and fellow participants helped increase confidence and provided practical techniques that participants were able to use immediately.

“I also got to learn some good interview skills on the last two days of the course.”

One participant, who secured employment shortly after completing the programme, reflected:

"I have used it. I had a few interviews that I did that went well after it."

Several participants also described how the programme encouraged them to broaden their thinking about future careers.

"It's making me look into hospitality more. So yeah... it's done its job."

Not every participant felt that hospitality represented the right long-term career pathway. One participant explained that, although many local hospitality roles were part-time and therefore unsuitable for his circumstances, he nevertheless found the programme valuable for building confidence and practising interview skills.

"It was definitely confidence building."

Reflecting on the interview sessions, he added:

"The interview role-playing was quite interesting... public speaking is something I'm quite bad at."

For another participant, the programme highlighted that further learning would be an important next step. After discussing the impact that reading and writing difficulties had had throughout her working life, she expressed an interest in continuing her learning through Haverhill Learning Centre, recognising that improving these skills would support her future employment opportunities.

“People notice that I'm not that bright. Or I can't spell very well or my maths is not very good. And then they start, it starts off little things… but as time goes on, it gets worse and worse and worse. And then you get the thing, well, I'm not wanted there. Why should I go back?”

Another participant felt inspired to broaden their job search and apply for positions further away than before:

“I'm expanding horizons like going to Cambridge, Bury that sort of areas now”

Together, these experiences demonstrate that progression took many forms, including employment, greater confidence, wider career ambitions and engagement with further learning.

Participant Experience of the Programme

Participants consistently described the VENI programme as welcoming, engaging and different from previous employability courses.

Local visits and opportunities to learn more about Haverhill were highlighted as memorable aspects of the programme.

"I've never been around a church in Haverhill... it was really, really good."

Participants also reflected on discovering more about their local area.

"I learned a lot new about Haverhill."

The supportive delivery style emerged as one of the programme's greatest strengths.

"They helped everybody... whether you were a cleaner or had been in management, we were all treated the same."

Unlike some previous employability provision participants had experienced, the programme was described as inclusive, encouraging and free from judgement.

"There was nothing bad about it."

Participants particularly appreciated learning alongside people with different backgrounds and experiences. One participant simply described it as:

"It felt like a nice group."

Case Study 1: Sarah

Sarah joined the programme looking to strengthen her employability skills and particularly valued the interview preparation and mock interview sessions.

She explained that receiving feedback from tutors and fellow participants helped improve her confidence before attending interviews.

"Everyone having input on how you handled a mock interview was quite useful."

Shortly after completing the programme, Sarah secured employment as a Learning Support Assistant.

Reflecting on the impact of the programme, she explained:

"I have used it. I had a few interviews that I did that went well after it."

Sarah's experience demonstrates how practical interview preparation and confidence building can quickly translate into positive employment outcomes.

Case Study 2: Sonia

Sonia joined the programme with little expectation that it would influence her own career plans. Having previously focused on administrative roles, she described attending simply because the opportunity had been suggested through the Jobcentre.

Reflecting on the experience, she explained:

"Hospitality wasn't my thing... but I thought I'd go on that. It was absolutely brilliant."

She particularly valued the supportive tutors, the inclusive atmosphere and the opportunity to discover more about Haverhill and its visitor economy. By the end of the programme, Sonia found herself considering opportunities she would not previously have explored.

"It's making me look into hospitality more. So yeah... it's done its job."

She also became a strong advocate for the programme, recommending it to others.

"I think most people should actually go on that, even if they're not interested in hospitality."

Sonia's experience demonstrates how the programme broadened participants' horizons, increased confidence and encouraged them to consider employment opportunities they had not previously explored.

Conclusions

“I think now that you should bring it out there and advertise it more and that people will be quite impressed about it and they'll probably be longing for it.”

Evidence gathered through participant interviews suggests the VENI Visitor Economy Programme is generating positive employment and progression outcomes alongside increased confidence, stronger interview skills and greater awareness of local employment opportunities.

One participant had secured employment at the point of follow-up a few weeks after the course had finished, while others had identified further learning as the next step towards employment. Participants also described broader job search activity, increased confidence and greater willingness to explore opportunities they had not previously considered. Where participants chose to pursue careers outside the visitor economy, the practical employability support, confidence building and interview preparation were widely valued.

The programme appears particularly effective because it combines:

- The VENI *Training for the Visitor Economy* certificate
- Practical employability support
- Local visitor economy awareness
- Employer engagement and local visits
- Interview preparation and CV development
- Confidence building
- Supportive group-based delivery

Overall, findings suggest the VENI Visitor Economy Programme is supporting participants towards employment and progression while fostering greater confidence, aspiration and positive engagement with the labour market.

“The tutors were very good, fantastic. Yes, I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I recommend it to anyone.”