# IMPACT REPORT



## Participant Outcomes and Progression Following the VENI Visitor Economy Programme in Lowestoft, January 2026

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# Impact Report for the VENI Visitor Economy Programme in Lowestoft, January 2026

***"VENI gave me the confidence to go for a job which I would never have ever thought I was capable of doing."***

The VENI Visitor Economy Programme was delivered in Lowestoft in January 2026 at Sam's Café over five days. The course combined the industry-recognised WorldHost Principles of Customer Service programme with practical employability support, including CV development, interviews, employer engagement, action planning and activities designed to increase awareness of opportunities within the local area.

Participants took part in local visits, a visitor economy walkabout and sessions exploring Lowestoft's visitor economy and employment opportunities. The programme also addressed practical barriers to employment, including transport and mobility challenges through the Kickstart mobility scheme.

Follow-up interviews were conducted in May 2026, approximately four months after course completion. The findings from these follow-ups showed strongly positive outcomes, with five of the fourteen participants having already secured employment, along with significant reported increases in confidence, career ambition and awareness of employment opportunities across the group.

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

## Key Outcomes

***"It was only because I had the visitor economy in my head after the course that I even contacted a holiday park. Before that, I was only looking at restaurant and bar work. I would never have considered being a receptionist."***

- **Fourteen** participants took part in the course
- Attendance and retention were strong, with **97% attendance** across the five-day programme.
- **Thirteen** participants attended every session, with only one participant missing part of the programme due to illness.
- **Five** participants have progressed into employment.
- **One** participant secured a new role directly through connections made during the programme.
- **One** participant has progressed into further training and is actively applying for related roles.
- In follow ups, participants consistently linked the programme to increased **confidence, broader job search activity** and a willingness to apply for roles they had **not previously considered**.
- Several participants described positive impacts on **motivation, optimism and career ambition.**

## Confidence, Employability and Mindset Shifts

***"It opened my eyes to how many opportunities there actually are in the visitor economy. I think people often have far more transferable skills than they realise."***

A clear theme across interviews was the extent to which the programme helped participants recognise transferable skills and broaden their understanding of employment opportunities available within the local area.

Several participants described entering the programme with narrower expectations of their own career options.

***"I think the course made me look beyond what I thought I was capable of. I'd always pigeonholed myself into certain kinds of jobs before."***

Participants repeatedly reflected on how the course encouraged them to reconsider previous assumptions about their skills and experience.

***"She did me a CV, which was amazing, and that led to me thinking, actually, I don't want to be stuck at the back of house."***

***"After doing the course and looking at all the things we discussed, and then looking at everything I'd done before, I realised I had a skill set that was much more useful on the front line. The course helped me see that."***

For others, the programme provided reassurance that existing experience could be applied in new sectors and roles.

***"I wasn't expecting to learn anything I didn't already know. But actually there were a few things that I picked up that I hadn't really thought about previously."***

Participants also described increased confidence, motivation and optimism following the programme.

***"The positivity and networking from everybody connected with the course made a huge difference. It felt like if you put the effort in and made the contacts, opportunities would come, and that's exactly what happened."***

Several participants highlighted the way the programme increased awareness of opportunities available locally.

***"I didn't realise until after doing the course just how much of an industry Lowestoft itself has."***

***"It opens up far more opportunities than just restricting yourself to one kind of job."***

## Participant Experience of the Programme

***"It was nothing like I expected. It felt more like I was on a proper training programme."***

Participants described the VENI programme as distinct from other employability provision. They frequently cited local visits, employer engagement and opportunities to learn more about Lowestoft's visitor economy as particular strengths of the programme, highlighting the value of exploring the local area, meeting employers and developing a broader understanding of the opportunities available within the region.

***"Spending the whole week with the same people, going out and visiting businesses, learning about the visitor economy, it didn't have that Jobcentre feel or stigma about it."***

The supportive and discussion-led nature of delivery was also highly valued.

***"The way the course was presented was really great. It wasn't hard and fast. There was discussion and engagement allowed."***

Participants valued learning alongside people of different ages and backgrounds.

***"There was a very broad range of ages and experiences, but there was equally fair engagement across everybody."***

The group environment was consistently described as welcoming and supportive, helping participants share experiences and learn from one another.

***"The best bit was definitely the group interaction and learning more about the local visitor economy and the opportunities that might be there."***

## Case Study 1: Louise

*Participant names have been changed to protect anonymity.*

Louise joined the programme shortly after becoming unemployed and expected to return to chef work, having previously worked in catering and hospitality, however, during the programme, Louise began to recognise the transferability of her skills. Support with her CV, exposure to a wider range of visitor economy roles and increased confidence encouraged her to consider opportunities she had not previously explored.

Following the programme, Louise successfully secured a permanent role as a receptionist at a local holiday park. Louise has since received excellent customer feedback in her new role and described the move as a career direction she is really enjoying and would never previously have considered.

***"I realised my skills were much more useful on the front line."***

***“I got a 10 out of 10 review yesterday for my customer service. I was personally named. That's the first one I've had!"***

## Case Study 2: Oscar

Oscar joined the course after a long career in accountancy, and was exploring how his skills might transfer into new areas of work.

During the course, conversations with delivery staff led to introductions for a lecturing role at the college. Although Oscar originally attended to learn more about opportunities within the visitor economy, these discussions helped him identify an alternative pathway linked to his professional experience.

Oscar has now secured lecturing work and had been working with the college for three months at the time of follow-up.

Reflecting on the experience, he explained:

***"I was starting to think about how I could transfer my skills into other areas. This course came up and I thought I would see what happened."***

Oscar's experience shows how the course allows space for participants to identify transferable skills, explore new opportunities and make valuable local connections.

## Conclusions

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

Five participants had secured employment at the point of follow-up. Attendance and retention rates were also very strong, demonstrating sustained engagement throughout the programme and suggesting that participants found the course relevant and valuable.

The programme appears particularly effective because it combines:

- Industry-recognised WorldHost customer service training
- Practical employability support
- Local and on-site visitor economy awareness
- Employer engagement and interviews
- Confidence building
- Supportive group-based delivery

Notably, outcomes were not limited to visitor economy employment, and the course also helped participants identify transferable skills, broaden career ambitions and connect with wider opportunities, including teaching and further training pathways.

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

***"I wasn't expecting to enjoy my new job as much as I am, and I honestly don't think I would have applied for it if I hadn't done the VENI course."***