IMPACT REPORT

Participant Outcomes and Progression Following the VENI Visitor Economy Programme in Woodbridge, June 2026



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Impact Report for the VENI Welcome to the Visitor Economy Programme, Woodbridge, June 2026

"It helped build my confidence. It showed me what an interview would roughly look like."

The VENI Welcome to the Visitor Economy Programme was delivered at Woodbridge Jobcentre from 8th to 11th June 2026. Seven participants took part in the four-day programme, achieving an overall attendance rate of 93%, with only two participants missing a single day during the course. Participants completed the VENI Principles of Customer Service and Local Context course alongside practical employability support including confidence building, CV development, interview preparation and direct engagement with local employers. Through a guided walkaround of Woodbridge, employer presentations and practical activities, participants explored the breadth of opportunities within the local visitor economy while developing the confidence and skills needed to move towards employment.

Follow-up interviews took place four weeks after the course. Early findings demonstrate encouraging progression, with one participant securing employment in local farm work, another preparing for an interview with a local hotel and two participants submitting their CVs to employers they met during the course. Alongside these early employment outcomes, participants described increased confidence, valuable interview experience and a greater understanding of local employment opportunities, suggesting that the programme successfully helped participants move closer to employment.

All participant quote appear in **orange.**

Key Outcomes

- **Seven participants** completed the four-day programme.
- **93% attendance** over four days
- **One** participant had **secured employment** four weeks after the course finished.
- **One** participant was **preparing for an interview** with a local visitor economy business.
- **Two** participants had submitted their CVs to employers they met through the programme and were awaiting further contact.
- **All** participants completed the VENI Principles of Customer Service and Local Context course.

- Participants highlighted **interview practice** as one of the most valuable aspects of the programme.
- Participants reported **increased confidence, improved interview skills and greater readiness** to apply for work.
- Participants explored **Woodbridge's visitor economy** through employer engagement, local activities and a guided walkaround of the town.

Building Confidence for Employment

A recurring theme throughout the follow-up interviews was the value of building confidence before returning to work.

The programme concluded with interviews involving local employers, giving participants the opportunity to experience realistic interview situations within a supportive environment. For many, this was the most valuable part of the four days.

Cameron explained:

"It helped build my confidence. It showed me what an interview would roughly look like."

By the time of follow-up he had increased the number of jobs he was applying for and was preparing for an interview with a local hotel.

Kai also felt the programme had strengthened his confidence.

"It's given me more confidence with interviews and I plan on changing my CV."

Bethany described herself as naturally shy and admitted that she had found the employer interviews difficult because she was nervous. Nevertheless, she chose to take part and reflected positively on the experience afterwards.

"I wasn't very good at them because I was nervous, but it was good experience."

Bethany's experience demonstrates an important aspect of the programme. For participants who may lack confidence, simply taking part in a realistic interview can represent a significant achievement. By providing a supportive environment in which participants were encouraged to step outside their comfort zones, the programme helped build confidence while making future interviews feel less daunting.

Exploring Local Opportunities

Alongside employability support, the programme introduced participants to Woodbridge's visitor economy through employer engagement and practical activities designed to help participants view the town from a visitor's perspective. A guided walkaround, local employer sessions and discussions about the range of careers

available within the visitor economy encouraged participants to consider opportunities they may not previously have explored.

Participants valued different aspects of the programme depending on their previous experience. Bethany particularly enjoyed exploring Woodbridge and felt the programme offered a broad range of opportunities:

"I think I liked the more recent one [course]... it was more useful with more options."

Cameron also reflected positively on the overall programme.

"I found it useful, some good information. It helped me out with some increase in my knowledge."

Participants who were already familiar with Woodbridge particularly valued the employability elements, while others appreciated the opportunity to discover new organisations and career pathways. Together, these responses suggest that combining local knowledge with practical employability support helped participants better understand the opportunities available while maintaining a clear focus on progression towards employment.

Employer Engagement and Early Progression

Direct engagement with employers formed an important part of the Woodbridge programme. Participants met local employers throughout the course before taking part in employer interviews on the final day, creating opportunities to develop confidence while making direct connections with businesses.

By the time of follow-up, one participant had secured employment in local farm work, another was preparing for a local hotel interview and two participants had submitted their CVs to employers they met during the programme.

Kai explained:

"The lady that came in from Two Magpies front of house asked for my CV. Unfortunately, I haven't heard anything back."

Another participant described a similar experience, having been encouraged to submit a CV following conversations with an employer during the programme.

The programme created valuable connections between participants and local employers, with two participants progressing to the stage of submitting CVs following conversations during the course. While these opportunities were still developing at the point of follow-up, they demonstrate the programme's ability to open doors and create meaningful employer relationships. Building on this success through continued employer follow-up and communication could help translate these promising introductions into even more employment outcomes.

Case Study: Cameron

Before attending the programme, Cameron was exploring opportunities within retail, hospitality and warehouse work.

Reflecting on the course, he described the programme as both informative and practical, particularly valuing the opportunity to experience realistic interviews with local employers.

"It helped build my confidence. It showed me what an interview would roughly look like."

Following the programme, Cameron reported increasing the number of jobs he was applying for and, at the time of follow-up, was preparing for an interview with a local hotel in Woodbridge.

"I've been applying for an increase in jobs."

Cameron's experience demonstrates how a short employability programme can help participants build confidence, strengthen interview skills and move positively towards employment through practical preparation and direct engagement with local employers.

Conclusions

Evidence gathered from participant follow-up interviews suggests the VENI Welcome to the Visitor Economy Programme successfully combined practical employability support with meaningful engagement with local employers and Woodbridge's visitor economy.

Seven participants completed the programme, achieving an overall attendance rate of 93% across the four days. Follow-up interviews, undertaken just one month after the programme, demonstrated encouraging early progression. One participant had already secured employment, another was progressing to an interview with a local employer, and two others had established direct connections with employers through the programme, leading to requests for their CVs. These early outcomes demonstrate the programme's ability to create genuine employment opportunities and build momentum towards sustainable employment.

Participants highlighted the value of interview practice, confidence building, practical employability support and the opportunity to engage directly with local employers. Rather than simply preparing participants for employment, the programme enabled them to develop greater confidence, strengthen their interview skills, explore local opportunities and begin building relationships with employers in the visitor economy.

The programme appears particularly effective because it combines:

- VENI Principles of Customer Service and Local Context training

- Practical employability support
- Confidence building
- Direct engagement with local employers
- Interview preparation and CV development
- Local visitor economy knowledge
- Career planning and progression support

As the evaluation took place just one month after programme completion, several opportunities were still unfolding. The direct employer connections established through the course provide a strong foundation for future employment, particularly if these relationships continue to be nurtured through effective follow-up. Two participants reported that, after employers had requested their CVs during the programme, they had not yet received further communication. This presents a valuable opportunity for VENI to strengthen post-course employer engagement by encouraging timely follow-up and feedback from participating employers. This could help maintain participants' confidence, strengthen employer relationships and increase the likelihood that early expressions of interest translate into employment outcomes.

Overall, the evidence suggests the VENI Welcome to the Visitor Economy Programme provides participants with a valuable bridge between employability training and local employment opportunities. By combining accredited customer service training, practical employability support and meaningful employer engagement, the programme is helping participants take positive and realistic steps towards sustainable employment within the local visitor economy.

"I definitely feel a bit more confident about it now."