

IMPACT REPORT

2017-2023



GETTING STARTED

The Norfolk Community College project launched in April 2017 for an initial 33-month period. It was awarded £1,934,200 by the Building Better Opportunities Programme, which is co-financed by The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund. Following good performance, the project was extended in January 2020 and again in October 2022. By the end of June 2023, the project will have successfully delivered £4,429,695 of investment.

The project supports adults aged 25 or over into job related activities. It is led by East Coast College and delivered by local voluntary sector organisations. After the expression of interest stage, the project was given a grant to help it prepare its final application. This provided time and space to procure partners and to test the project model. It also gave partners the opportunity to get to know each other and to share services, including IT systems and recruitment.

THE DELIVERY MODEL



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

An independent evaluation of the Norfolk Community College project has identified 3 main factors which have underpinned its success.

SUCCESS FACTOR

- Being able to hit the ground running with a proven model.
- Working in partnership with the local voluntary sector.
- Encouraging innovation and responding to changing needs.

SUPPORTED BY

- The provision of pre-engagement events and development funding.
- Generous leadership provided by the project's lead and core partners.
- Recruiting local trainees and providing grants to pilot new ideas.

CASE STUDY JANINE'S STORY



Janine (Nin) lives in Breckland with her partner and children. Nin came into contact with the Norfolk Community College project as she was really keen to learn new skills and improve her employment prospects however she was nervous about her level of knowledge.

Nin was interested in receiving help from the project's Training Coordinator to improve her I.T, English and Maths skills. She also was keen to complete an Adult Safeguarding refresher course and take part in an Interview Skills workshop. After completing a number of 1:1 training sessions with the project, Nin was surprised by how much she enjoyed herself.

“ Slowly I got more confident in myself and kicked an underlying personal issue. ”

“I got involved with a local support service and started receiving help from them as I was so depressed and anxious. I couldn't bear to leave my house not even to get my daughter to school! With support from the Norfolk Community College team I completed a programme of Home Achievement modules. Slowly I got more confident in myself and kicked an underlying personal issue that I had been ignoring for years!



“I enjoyed completing my course so much that I got involved with volunteering for a local charity. After completing my peer mentor support Home Achievement Programme module, I was able to mentor others.

“With an interest in support roles, I realised with my life experiences I could help others who had been in similar situations to myself. I met with the Project's Skills Connector and Employment Development Worker and they helped me to apply for my dream job! It was a real team effort. Without support from agencies and the project team I couldn't have got where I am today. Sometimes a little bit of support can make a lot of difference to someone's life, and I want to be that person who helps make a difference to others.”

“ I enjoyed completing my course so much I got involved with volunteering for a local charity. ”



CASE STUDY LANA'S STORY



Having studied for a Foundation Degree in Spa Management and Beauty Therapy, Lana came into contact with the Norfolk Community College team after deciding to embark on a career change to follow her passion of working with animals.

Suffering from anxiety and depression, Lana was lacking in confidence and uncertain if she could study whilst juggling the responsibilities of being a parent.

With the help of a project's Skills Connector, Lana quickly identified the steps she would need to take to retrain and gain the additional qualifications she needed in Animal Care, Ecology and Conservation if she was to achieve her career goals. She also started studying for a Math qualification.

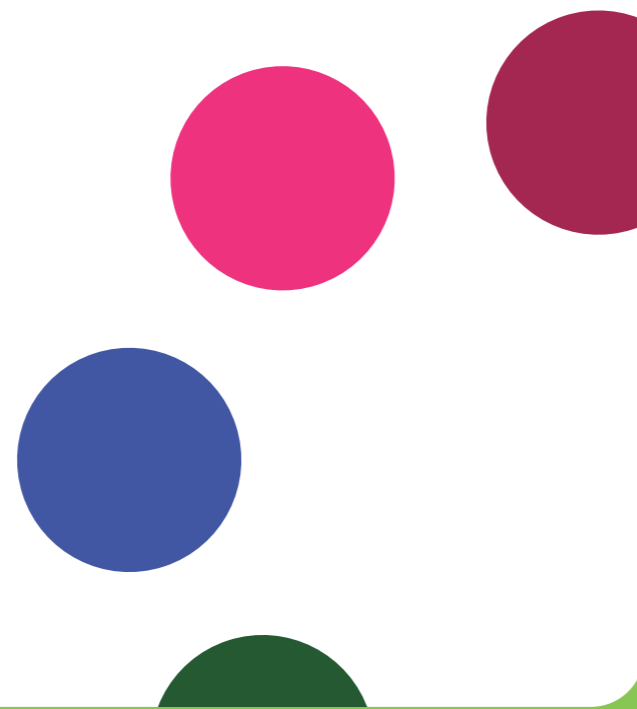
With a training plan in place, Lana's one to one sessions continued with the project team as she planned for a career during and after her course. She took part in a number of job searching workshops and CV writing classes as Lan learnt how to highlight her skills, experience and qualifications in a way that appeals to employers.

She also received advice from East Coast College's student finance team to plan for changes in her household income after applying for a student loan.

Lana started a Zoology Degree with a Foundation year on 20th September 2021.

Reflecting on her experience on the project Lana said: "I have learned a lot about myself and you have all helped me to look to the future and to work on being a more positive person, to believe positivity attracts positivity. I have come a long way since the first time I joined Norfolk Community College. I am continuing to grow and learn about myself, I'm on a long journey of self-discovery."

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NORFOLK COMMUNITY COLLEGE TIMELINE

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Our partnership came together to complete an induction programme and set the partnership's delivery plan.



2017



EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Working with employers and businesses as part of the project's responsible employer network to provide mentoring, work experience and work trial opportunities for the group.

THE FIRST GRANT

The project's e-procurement process released its first specification targeting training provision for people with mental health support needs.



2018



JOBS FAYRE

2018 also saw more than 1,000 people attend the Norfolk Community College and Great Yarmouth Job Centre Plus first Community Jobs Fayre.

PROUD TO BE INCLUSIVE

Collaboration between the DWP and the Norfolk Community College team led to a Disability Confident awareness event for local businesses.



2019



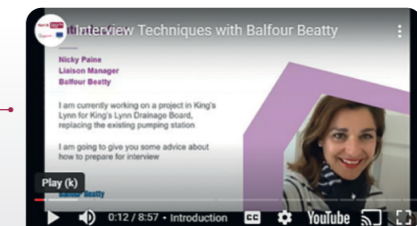
IMPACT - 100 PEOPLE GAINED EMPLOYMENT

The following participant quote illustrates the project's impact: "I have told everybody I know about Norfolk Community College. They really took my case on and supported me. I have secured a dream job with great prospects and earning potential."

SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

During lockdown the Norfolk Community College team continued to provide help to people to focus on their training and employment goals while responding to the impact of lockdown on wellbeing. Innovative activity during this period included Balfour Beatty creating a range of employer insight videos and role introduction films for participants to explore.

2020



IMPACT - PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

April 2021 saw the Norfolk Community College project hit a major milestone, with more than 150 people entering or returning employment and over 1,000 people in Norfolk learning new skills, engaging in job searches and taking part in activities to improve their confidence and wellbeing.

2021



CREATING STEPPING STONE OPPORTUNITIES

A total of 41 local residents have been employed by project's partnership since 2017, helping to extend the reach of the project.



2022



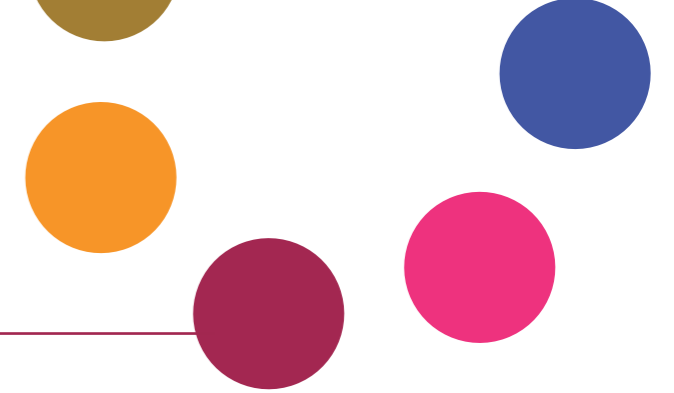
COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Responding to the hardship caused by the Cost of Living crisis has meant essential wrap around support has been adapted by the Norfolk Community College partnership; helping individuals access the support they need to achieve their employment goals.



SPOTLIGHT ON INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Some examples of how the Norfolk Community College project has helped its partners to develop and grow.



Anthony Parke
Head of Housing, Employment and Commercial Services

ACCESS COMMUNITY TRUST



The project has helped to reduce barriers between voluntary organisations and to breathe new life into partnership work. Many people who have been employed by the project have used their new skills to develop their careers. This is providing a pipeline of new leaders who are passionate about partnership working. The result of this is more outward looking services with the skills needed to join-up and problem solve. The encouragement to recruit people with lived experience is also helping to strengthen the bond between local services and the communities they serve.



Stuart Jennings
Projects & Communities Manager

EAST COAST COLLEGE



At the start of the project, East Coast College made a commitment to keeping the partnership open by offering funding to pilot new approaches. These services were shaped by the project's steering group in response to unmet need. The funding was made available by developing and promoting a Dynamic Purchasing System. This DPS enabled groups to register their interest to become part of the project. The availability of the DPS has helped the project to respond to the pandemic and rising cost of living, by providing more support to tackle digital and financial exclusion.



Lou Gardiner
CEO

ACTION COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE (ACE) CIC



The availability of small grants has given ACE the opportunity to test new ways of working with local prisons. Delivering a European Social Fund project has provided them with the confidence to engage commissioners in the criminal justice sector, where their work has included improving employment prospects for ex-prisoners. Learning from this work has supported ACE to secure a contract with New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership as part of the UK Government's Skills Bootcamps. They have also doubled in size since being part of the Norfolk Community College.



Sam Tawn
ESF Project Manager

FUTURE PROJECTS



From the outset, the project has been supported by traineeships. These have been provided by Future Projects, offering stepping-stone opportunities for people with lived experience. Trainees are provided with training and mentoring, and their work has helped to keep the project responsive to local communities. Trainees are paid the Real Living Wage. This supports the project to set an example when engaging other employers. Many trainees have gone on to develop careers in the voluntary sector, supporting partners to recruit highly motivated and skilled staff.



Jo Howes
CEO

DIAL GREAT YARMOUTH



DIAL was one of the first voluntary organisations in Norfolk to achieve Level 3 Leader Status as part of the Disability Confident Scheme. They have been able to build on this work by recruiting an Employer Engagement Worker for the Norfolk Community College project. Their work in this area has focused on inclusion by working with employers to promote disability awareness. It has also helped DIAL to develop a new partnership with Norfolk and Waveney Carers Voice. By working together, they are improving access to employment support for unpaid carers.



Ben Sampson
Head of Employment & Skill

VOLUNTARY NORFOLK



During the pandemic, Voluntary Norfolk used some of their time on the project to help frontline staff keep in touch. This was done using video conferencing with up to 40 staff in attendance. Three years on, these meetings are still well attended by staff from range of organisations including DWP, NHS, housing providers, local authorities, and other voluntary groups. These meetings have helped to shape local services including training. By keeping each other up-to-date, services can be confident that they are addressing gaps, with less time needed for marketing

CASE STUDY MICHAEL'S STORY



When Michael first registered on the Norfolk Community College project in August 2017, he was struggling with a range of personal difficulties. He had been unemployed for a long period of time and was unable to maintain relationships due to personal problems.

By engaging in one to one sessions with the project's Employment Development Worker, Michael attended a range of support sessions; developing new communication skills whilst building his confidence levels – giving Michael a platform to address some of his long standing personal issues. Michael's progress soon gained momentum, as he started a volunteer position at Escape Project Allotments and completed a Level 1 Course in Horticulture. During this period he had even found time to volunteer at his local Mind charity shop.

Throughout this period Michael received specialist support from DIAL with benefits and debt issues.

“ I am so happy with my life right now. I couldn't have done any of this without the ongoing support of the Employment Development Worker. ”

Michael's objectives at the start of the progress were quickly being realised; as his physical and mental health improved, he obtained a volunteer position which suited his passion for being outdoors.

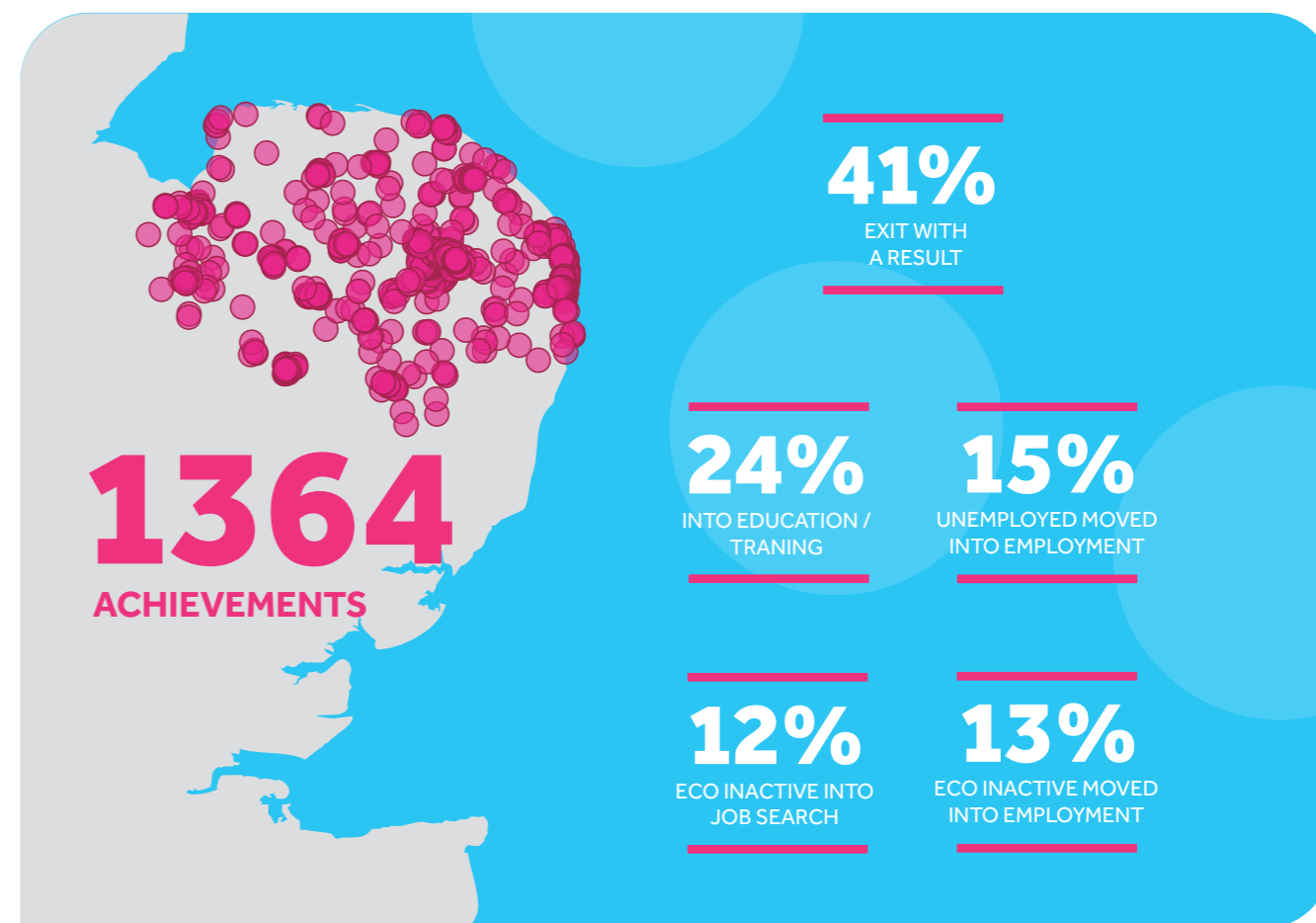
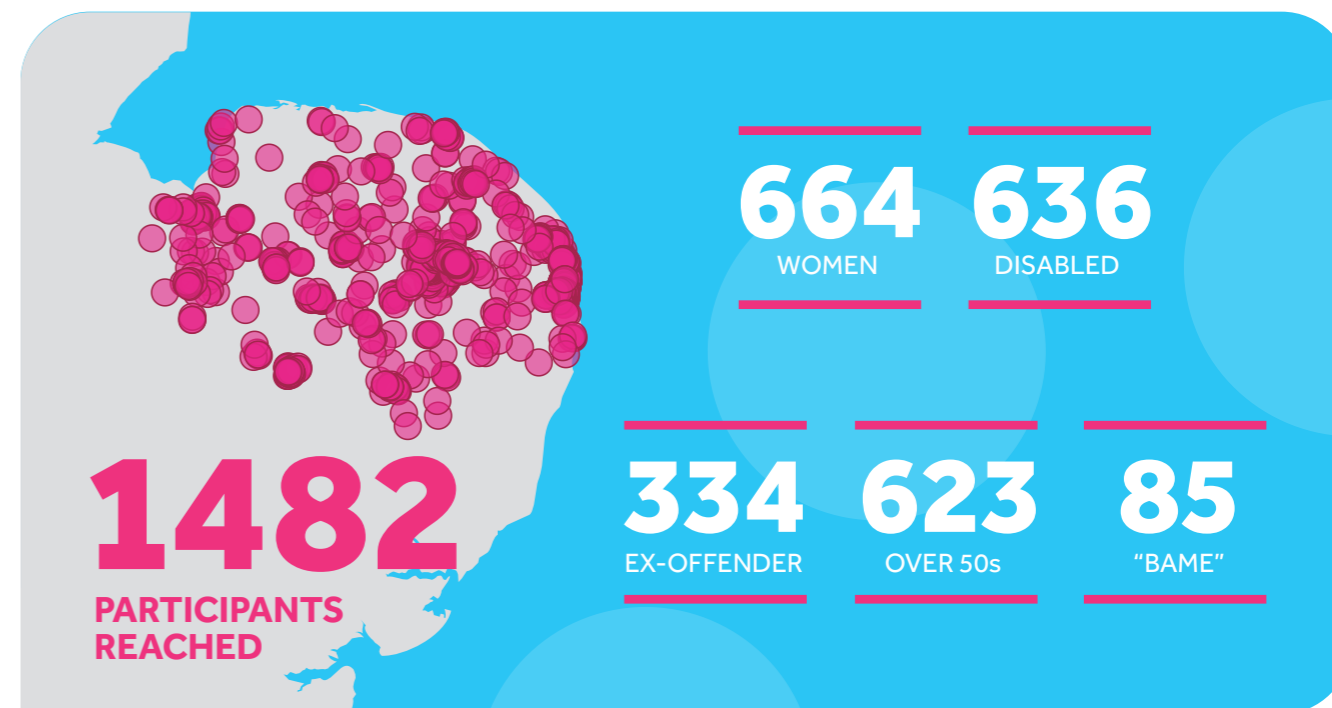
Michael's last remaining objective from the programme was to gain paid employment.

He didn't have to wait too long until he achieved his goal with the project.

Michael said: "I am so happy with my life right now. I couldn't have done any of this without the ongoing support of the Employment Development Worker. I needed that at the beginning. Attending the Confidence and Self-Esteem and Interview Skills sessions. So then I went out and did it. I have been sober for 8 months and have just secured a full time job!"



ENGAGEMENTS & ACHIEVEMENTS



CASE STUDY MARIE'S STORY

Having overcome a range of challenges, Marie is one of Norfolk Community College's brightest stars. Marie first came into contact with the project during one of its regular drop-in sessions at Fakenham Library.

With the help of an Employment Development Worker Marie was able to prepare for her exam, receiving advice on how to manage her anxiety and keep calm under pressure, with her Employment Development Worker even accompanying Marie on the day of her exam to the test centre. A few weeks later, Marie discovered that she had passed her exam with flying colours!



"I never thought I would be able to get through this first hurdle...now I think anything is possible".

Everyone is so down to earth and friendly.

Marie's journey with the Norfolk Community College didn't stop with her exam achievement. The Employment Development Worker continued to support Marie to gain an additional qualification as a Digger Driver, even helping her to secure financial support to fund the course.

With the help of the Norfolk Community College's Employment Broker Marie visited a construction site in order to gain a first-hand insight into the sector and discuss a possible work placement opportunity.

In Marie's words: "The guys from Norfolk Community College have been so helpful. They allow me to set the pace and they understand the disabilities I am living with. I would have been stuck without them. The Employment Development Worker came to my house so I didn't have to worry about my little girl. Everyone is so down to earth and friendly."

CASE STUDY STEVEN'S STORY

Funded through the Norfolk Community College DPS, project 'Springboard' was commissioned to provide individuals with support and practical help to start up their own business or become self-employed.

This is how Steve Whittle – better known as Mr. Kayak! – passion soon became a business reality.

Having been unemployed for a number of years due to a back problem, Steve was unable to work as a builder. He had an idea for a business but was unsure about what steps to take to get started.

After attending a range of business skills workshops and one to one sessions, Action Community Enterprises (ACE) CIC Springboard project team were soon helping Steve paddle his way to success. Over the course of a few months, Steve was provided with training in areas including writing a business plan, finance, website design and digital marketing as he prepared to launch his business.

A few months later Steve proudly opened the doors to his Mr Kayaks shop in Rollesby, selling kayaks, paddleboards and accessories in the heart of the Norfolk Broads.



VALUE FOR MONEY

The project has achieved some very favourable returns on investment based upon its output and results, and how these have been achieved.

This way of working has included a commitment to work with local providers.

SUPPORTING AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Working with partners to develop their confidence and skills to lever other funds. This resulted in more than £3m of new investment.

Investing in local businesses to provide back-office services, such as data management systems and marketing.



Helping skills development in local communities by providing traineeships for people with lived experience.

Raising awareness of the Real Living Wage, and the potential for anchor institutions to create progression opportunities.

SOME MONETARY EXAMPLES

By the end of December 2022, the project had supported 366 people into employment.

The following calculations use the cost benefit figures of Greater Manchester Combined Authority. They assume no other interventions.

| Value Description | Value per person £ | Value based upon 366 participants £ |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Fiscal | 14,395 | 5,268,570 |
| Economic value | 19,812 | 7,251,192 |
| Combined fiscal and economic values | 34,207 | 12,519,762 |

The project has also helped to put money back into the local economy by providing money and debt advice. The following figures are projections for April 2017 to June 2023 based upon an analysis of results over a two-year period.

| Value Description | Actual (2 years) £ | Projection (6.25 years) £ |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Help to write off debt | 97,000 | 303,125 |
| Help to reduce debt | 72,300 | 225,937.50 |
| Help to claim benefits | 57,300 | 179,062.50 |
| Into work following back to work calculations | 146,683 | 458,384.38 |
| Combined values | 373,283 | 1,166,509.38 |

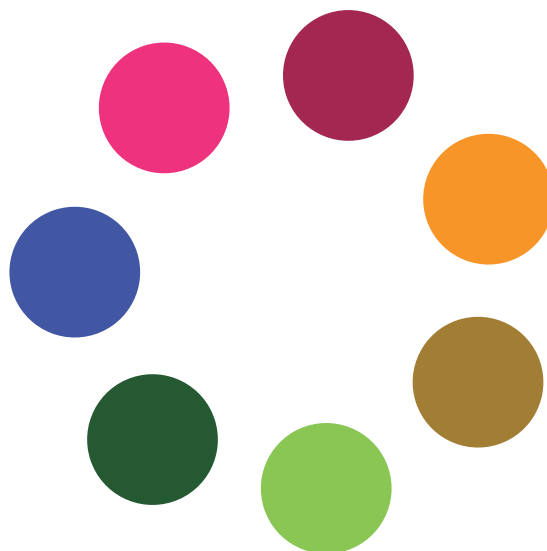


LEGACY

At the end of 2021, East Coast College and their partners were awarded more than £500,000 from the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund.

The evidence-base for this work was directly informed by the Norfolk Community College project, helping to develop ideas around an inclusive economy. Although the funding for this project was only for a year, it has helped to accelerate several next steps, ensuring that the legacy of the Norfolk Community College will continue after the funding comes to an end.

These legacy themes are outline below.



LEADERSHIP

At the start of the pandemic, the project supported the development of a VCSE Group. This provided a space for leaders in the voluntary sector to share experiences of working through Covid-19. Since then, the group has gone from strength to strength, helping to kickstart several new partnerships.

SKILLS

The creation of traineeships has been an important element of the Norfolk Community College project. The training and mentoring provided to traineeships has highlighted the value of skills development in the voluntary sector, and helped to ensure a pipeline of highly motivated staff.

MAINSTREAMING

The project has helped to mainstream wrap-around support within employment related services, providing value for money analysis to reinforce the importance of money, debt, and benefits advice. These are being shared with other programmes and as part of the project's wider evaluation work.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project has encouraged people and organisations to think about how they can work more sustainably by working in partnership with local communities. Some examples of this include working alongside smaller community groups and helping participants to start-up their own groups and networks.

If you would like more information about the Norfolk Community College Project, please contact:

STUART JENNINGS

07976 418269

s.jennings@eastcoast.ac.uk

