



**'NO LIMITS'
PROGRAMME**

Impact Report

South & Vale

2024/2025

No Limits Programme funded by



In association with our delivery partners



**Funded by
UK Government**



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Introduction



SOFEA has been leading the delivery of the 'Green Skills – Inclusive Recruitment Programme', commissioned by South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council, and funded by OxLEP Skills through the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund).

Initially funded through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), OxLEP Skill's Social Contract Programme managed Phase 1 and the Phase 2 extension of the programme from August 2022 to June 2024 as SOFEA was subcontracted to deliver tailored support across the county, in partnership with Aspire Oxford, helping young people and adults overcome barriers to employment, education, and training.

As Phase 2 came to an end, OxLEP successfully secured further funding via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Support for Economically Inactive Residents', commissioned by South and Vale District Council. This marked the start of phase 3, a nine month project, enabling the continuation of No Limits across the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district from July 2024 to March 31st 2025.

The programme focused on promoting inclusive recruitment by engaging individuals furthest from employment, working in partnership with relevant organisations to support progression into green skills training and pathways aligned with the net zero agenda.

As part of the agreement, SOFEA worked in collaboration with Abingdon & Witney College, who delivered the funded green skills courses locally. The aim was to raise awareness of these training opportunities and encourage participation, with a target of recruiting at least 70 individuals (35 per district) during the contract period.

The programme supported individuals in both districts to:



Access green skills training leading to a qualification or completed course



Develop skills for careers in sustainability and net zero industries



Receive person-centred support to overcome barriers to training and employment



Make progress towards long-term personal and professional development

SOFEA played a key role in providing targeted outreach and support on the ground—identifying eligible participants, guiding them through the process, and helping them take meaningful steps towards employment in the green economy. Delivery was completed in line with the branding, performance, and data requirements outlined in the service agreement.

Programme Impact



A total of **19** individuals **have successfully progressed** into employment across key sectors, including:

Retail & Customer Service

Logistics & Warehousing

Finance & Auditing, Care & Hospitality

Education & Training

Construction & Skilled Trades

Technology & Digital Skills

Health & Wellbeing

Voluntary & Charity Sector

Additionally, many participants have taken apprenticeship and vocational training routes, **enrolling in** auditing and finance apprenticeships, British Airways apprenticeships, CSCS training for construction, sports massage therapy courses, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), IT and digital skills training, and work experience placements at SOFEA.

The programme's impact is evident in its key achievements, with **40 individuals becoming work-ready** (double the original target of 20), 50 participants progressing **towards the labour market** (exceeding the target of 30), and **62 individuals taking positive steps forward** (surpassing the goal of 40).

These outcomes highlight the programme's success in bridging employment gaps, equipping participants with essential skills, and creating meaningful pathways to work and training.

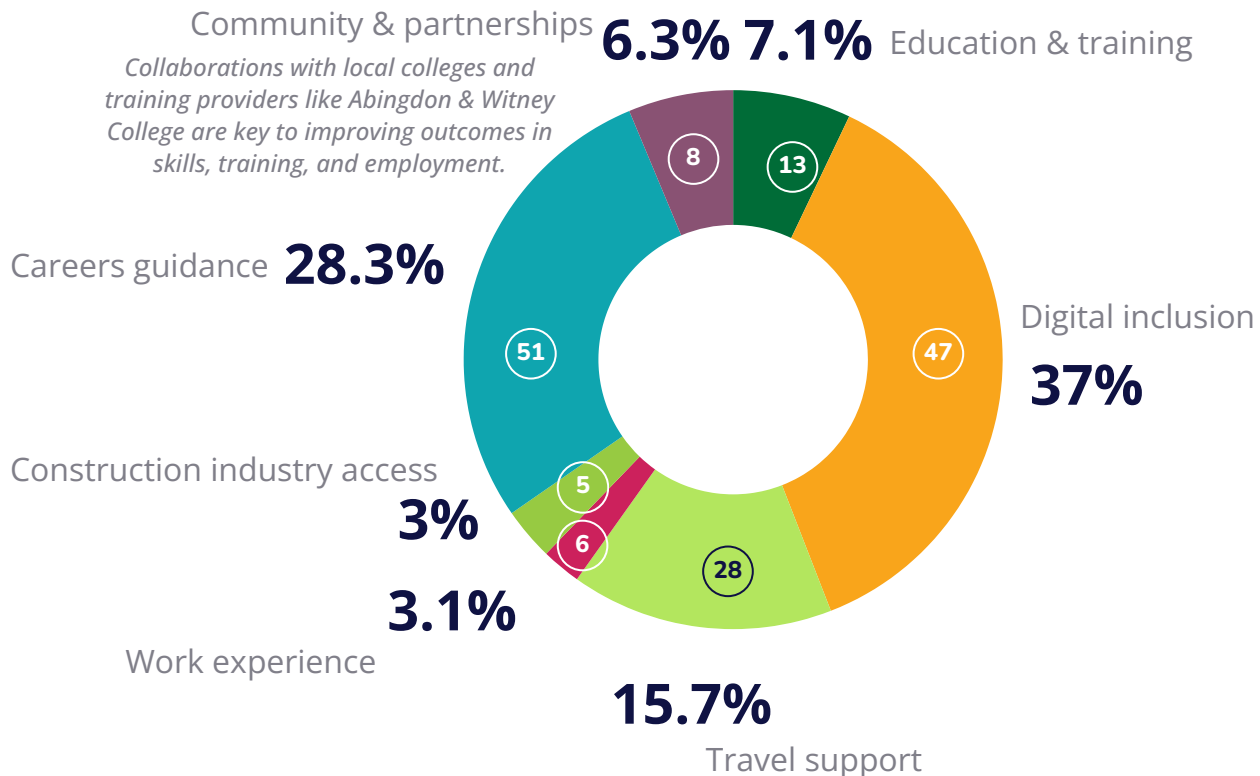




**Support
provided**

Summary of Support & Outcomes

The No Limits 3 programme has delivered tailored employment, training, and financial support through travel or digital devices, ensuring participants can access the opportunities they need.

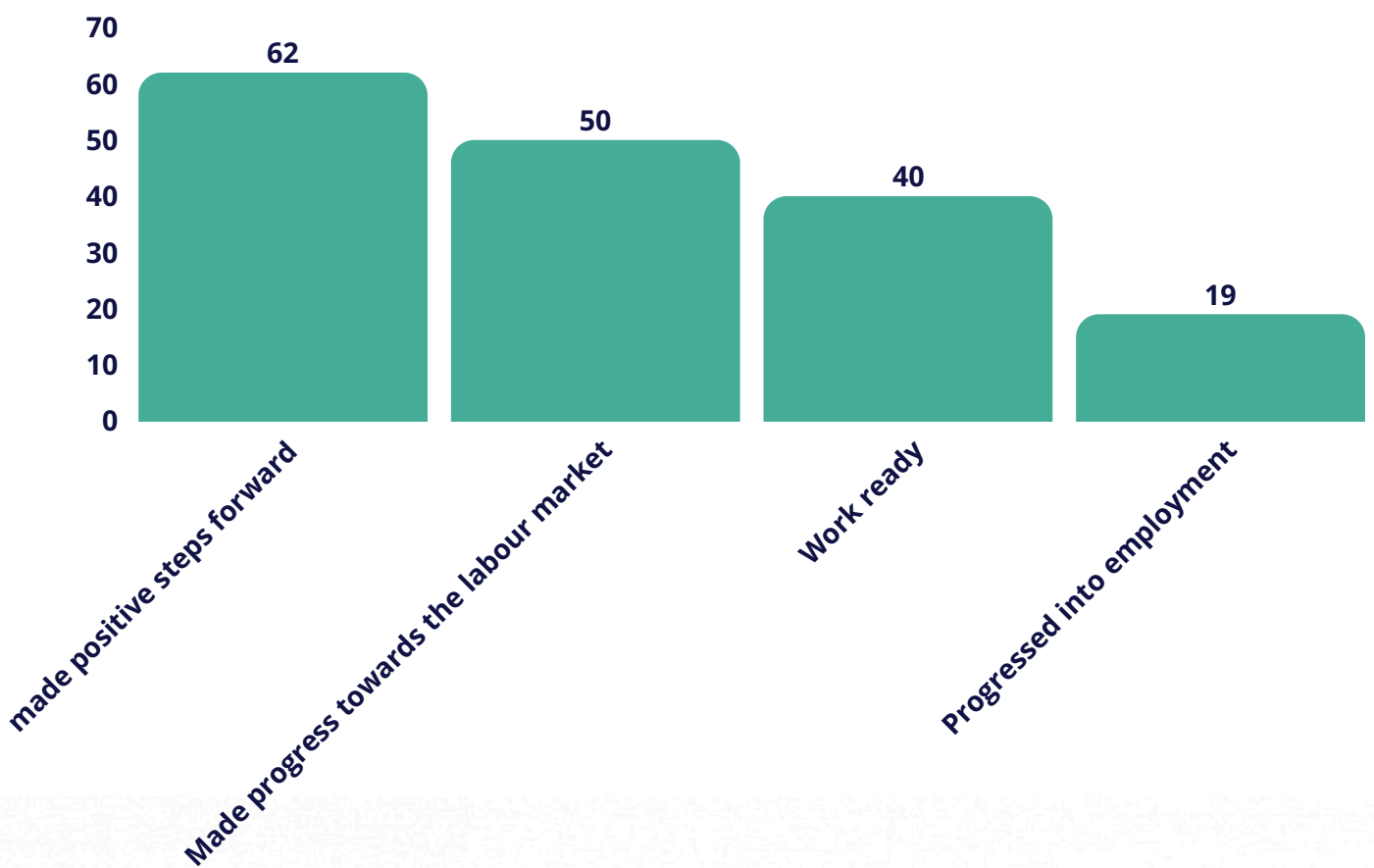


Beneficiary Outcomes

The South & Vale No Limits programme has exceeded all key targets:

- Paid Employment: Target 10 | Achieved 19 (190%)
- Work Ready: Target 20 | Achieved 40 (200%)
- Progress Towards Labour Market: Target 30 | Achieved 50 (167%)
- Positive Steps Forward: Target 40 | Achieved 62 (155%)

These results highlight the impact of personalised support and strong partnerships in helping participants overcome barriers and move toward sustainable employment.



Community & Partnerships

8 organisations

collaborated with 'No Limits'

Oxford Wood Recycling

Restore

Abingdon & Witney College

NHS

Oxfordshire Youth

Aspire – METS programme

The Cornermen

Turning Point

This strong multi-sector engagement has helped individuals develop workplace skills, improve confidence, and gain access to employment pathways.

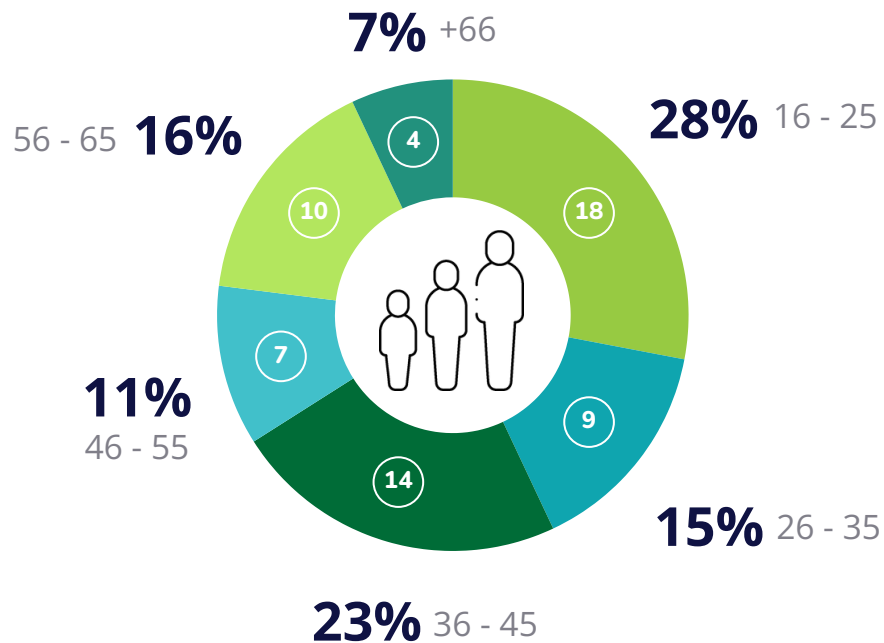




Demographics & Community Support

The No Limits 3 programme supports a diverse group of individuals across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

Age Breakdown

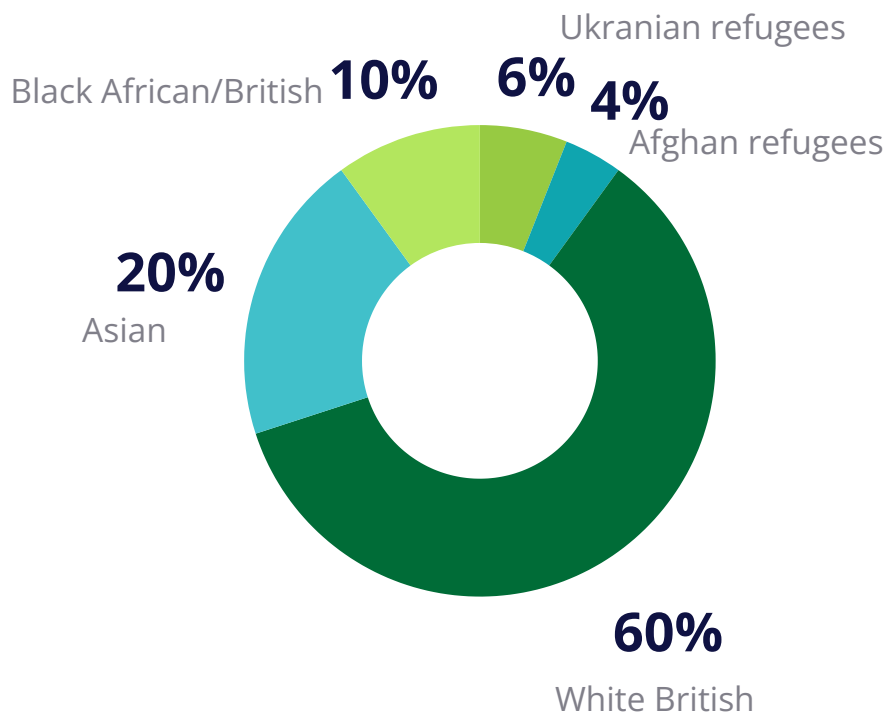


Refugee & Ethnicity

Many participants face unique challenges, including language barriers, qualification recognition, and cultural adaptation.

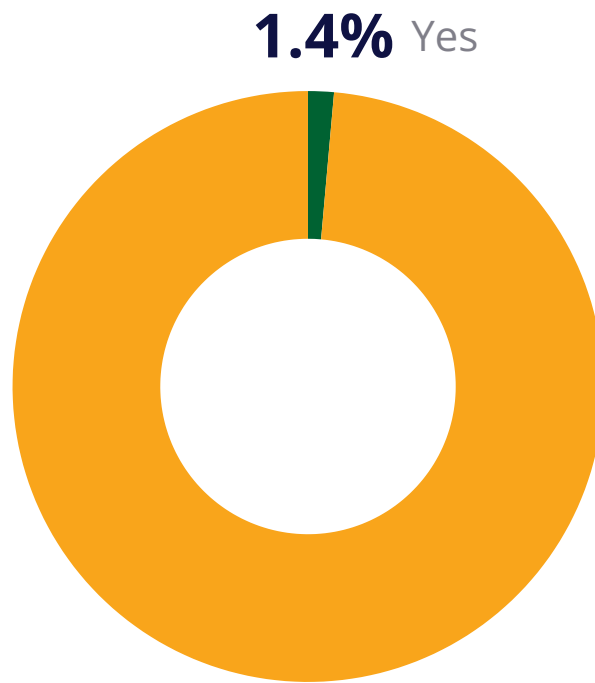
The programme has actively supported:

Refugees/ Ethnic groups



Disabilities

Disabilities Known



98.6% No



Travel and Device Support

Travel Assistance:

Provided to

28 individuals to support access to employment, training, and key services.

Device Distribution:

A total of



38 laptops



5 mobile phones



2 SIM cards



2 Wi-Fi dongles

were distributed, ensuring participants had the necessary digital access for job searching, education, and communication.



Key challenges

Challenges & Barriers to Employment



Participants have faced several key challenges in securing employment or training opportunities:

Personal & Family Commitments

Many individuals, particularly parents, struggle to balance childcare and family responsibilities with job-seeking or training.

Language Barriers

Migrant participants often require ESOL training to improve their English skills before securing jobs in their field.

Qualification Recognition

Many skilled workers from abroad face difficulties transferring their qualifications, requiring additional training to re-enter their profession.

Green Skills Training Barriers

The E39 Green Skills courses are designed for those already in skilled work (e.g., electricians), whereas our participants seek entry-level roles that offer direct employment opportunities. This gap needs to be addressed.



Quality

- Assurance & due diligence

Quality Assurance & Due Diligence



- All clients wishing to participate in the No Limits programme require a data collation form completed. This is to ensure they fit the eligibility criteria to engage with the programmes support and ensures they are consenting to our handling of their data and for it to be shared with funders where required.
- Staff are well briefed on the eligibility criteria for individuals wanting to engage in the No Limits programme. Clients should be 16+, unemployed, live in Oxfordshire (specifically within the South & Vale area). Anybody living within Oxfordshire but outside of these areas will be referred to an Aspire triage worker for Oxford City and West Oxfordshire, and a SOFEA triage worker for Cherwell district.
- Risk assessments have been established, reviewed and monitored for any known or potential risks to delivery of the No Limits programme.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are closely adhered to and monitored. We hold regular meetings with our Safeguarding team to discuss any issues or concerns arise and can contact the team if anything urgent occurs as per our safeguarding policy.



Success stories

Case Study 1



Supporting Digital Inclusion & Employability

SOFEA's Role in Bridging the Digital Divide

Many job opportunities now exist online, but digital exclusion remains a significant barrier for disadvantaged individuals. Through No Limits, SOFEA has provided participants with digital training, laptops, and IT support, ensuring they can apply for jobs, complete online training, and access vital services.

A Work Coach at Didcot JCP highlighted how this support has helped individuals previously left behind due to a lack of digital access.

Case Study 2

Employability Support for E

(December 2024)

E, an Afghan refugee, arrived in the UK in 2021 through the Ministry of Defence ARAP programme. Despite 20 years of experience as a senior auditor, E struggled to find employment due to language barriers and UK qualification requirements.

One-on-one employment coaching

- ESOL, GCSE English & Maths, and AAT Level 2 finance training
- A laptop and financial support for course materials
- Help creating a UK-standard CV and applying for jobs

E secured his first UK interview and, while initially unsuccessful, remains motivated and continues his training and job search.

Case Study 3

Opening Young Minds to Construction – Oxford North Visit



29th January 2025

To inspire young people towards construction careers, 10 participants visited the Oxford North development, in collaboration with Laing O'Rourke.

Key Outcomes

- Gained hands-on experience at a live £800 million construction project.
- Explored careers in engineering, project management, and sustainability.
- Learned about Careys' Construction Bootcamp – a 3-week training programme that leads to CSCS card certification.

Six participants joined the Careys Bootcamp on 27th March 2025, aiming to successfully obtain their CSCS cards and secure construction employment.

This experience challenged perceptions, showcasing construction as a diverse and skilled industry, with real pathways into sustainable employment.

County-Wide Programme Summary

No Limits Phase 3, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and commissioned by OxLEP Skills, was delivered between July 2024 and March 2025 across Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse, and West Oxfordshire. Delivery partners SOFEA and Aspire Oxford provided intensive, bespoke person-centred support to economically inactive residents facing complex and structural barriers to employment.

The overall county-wide programme supported over 245 individuals, helping them build confidence, access training, and take meaningful steps toward employment. Participants benefited from tailored one-to-one guidance, digital inclusion support, building awareness of Green skills courses and providing access to training—particularly in Green Skills and Construction pathways.

Building on the success of the No Limits programme since its launch in November 2022, we are now working successfully with councils across the county on a six-month extension, funded through the second round of UKSPF. Meanwhile, OxLEP Skills is seeking to expand the programme's reach and secure the delivery of the Department for Work and Pensions Connect to Work programme through Oxfordshire County Council.

The positive outcomes, strong engagement, and the learnings from No Limits have demonstrated a clear need and appetite for continued support. As a result, the programme is planned to evolve and develop over a three to four year period with a county-wide focus, ensuring sustained impact and broader access for individuals across Oxfordshire. This continuity reflects both the effectiveness of No Limits and the partnership's commitment to evolving and scaling successful initiatives.



Key Highlights of No Limits Programme County-Wide



53+

Individuals progressed into paid work



130+

Individuals became work ready



80+

Devices (laptops, phones, dongles) distributed



Dozens enrolled in vocational, ESOL, CSCS, and Green Skills courses



Strong outreach through local hubs, partnerships with organisation's like Abingdon & Witney college and Oxford North have played a vital role in connecting participants to meaningful opportunities.

Conclusion & Future Goals

The No Limits 3 programme has had a profound impact on participants, exceeding targets in employment readiness, digital inclusion, and positive engagement.

Moving forward, we could:



Expand access to Green Skills training for entry-level roles with job interviews at the end.



Increase digital support to enhance employability.



Strengthen partnerships with employers to create more work placements.

By continuing to provide practical skills, financial support, and career pathways, No Limits will empower more individuals to achieve long-term employment success.



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→ oxlepskills.co.uk

→ www.aspireoxfordshire.org

→ www.sofea.uk.com