



#FOCUS5



#Focus5 is funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund.

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#Focus5 Latest News

Dear Colleagues and Supporters,

2019 is flying by and at [#Focus5](#) we are excited to share our latest newsletter with you! We have been extremely busy with lots of new referrals, so much so that in Somerset we are currently operating at capacity. You are still welcome to refer young people but please be aware that there will be a delay in them being contacted whilst the team work through their existing caseloads and waiting lists. We realise this is frustrating and thank you for your patience at this busy time.

We are pleased to share below some statistics on the numbers of young people [#Focus5](#) has been helping against a variety of the outcomes set by our funders. You will also see a blog post about our [most recent survey](#), carried out with young people leaving the project and the organisations we work with. We are thrilled that 96% of young people say [#Focus5](#) has exceeded their expectations!

An area we particularly want to focus on is to recruit more 'unemployed' young people as we have so far only seen 43% of the number of unemployed people

we aim to support. These would need to be aged 16-18 and already actively job searching or showing a desire to move into paid employment.

Since January we have been trialling a [school pilot scheme](#), in a handful of secondary schools to support small groups of those most at risk of NEET after GCSE's. When these are all complete we will discuss whether to roll this pilot out further. So far the feedback from schools has been good. Ms Trigg, SEND Nurture Teacher at Bishop Fox's School in Somerset told us; *"The girls have been really positive about it and have found the sessions both group and individual, really useful. I think the small group worked really well. Thank you for all that you have done to support them."*

We are finding that we regularly receive referrals for young people who are either not aware that they have been referred, or are not ready for/not wanting to join the project. Equally some young people are not able to engage with key workers because of the complexity of their needs. If you are referring a young person to [#Focus5](#) we would kindly ask that you ensure they have agreed to the referral and they want to engage with the project.

We would also like to remind you that we have [childcare funding](#) available for any young parents who are keen to get back into education or move into employment. Childcare costs can be paid for the duration of a young person's time on the project.

We have two new key workers to introduce, covering Plymouth and South Devon areas. [Jenny Wheatcroft](#) is a qualified careers and personal adviser with experience of working with young people in the UK and New Zealand. [Mellissa Jones](#) is a qualified teacher, with lots of experience working with young people in a variety of settings and contexts.

Finally we have some inspiring new [success stories](#) from young people on [#Focus5](#) which we hope you will enjoy browsing through on our website via the links below. We are extremely proud of the way in which young people continue

to apply themselves and craft their [#Focus5](#) support in ways that suit their learning styles and long term aspirations.

#Focus5 Young People's Progress



We wanted to share some statistics with you about the progress we are making with young people, because we're really proud of what they are achieving! Statistics have been taken from Q4 2018.

- We have so far helped **347** young people, of whom **309** were economically inactive, **203** lacked basic skills and **136** have disabilities.
- **53** young people have moved into education or training.
- **38** young people have moved into employment.
- **121** young people have reported an increased awareness of their barriers to employment and/or training and **82** people report they have been given strategies to overcome those barriers. **99** young people report that they have made progress in removing those barriers .
- **109** young people have identified specific goals, **82** young people have

reported increased confidence in seeking work or learning opportunities, and **146** young people have created a CV.

#Focus5 Project News



Results are now in from the [#Focus5](#) survey for Q4 of last year and we are thrilled with the stats, which prove the project is really making a difference! 150 young people completed a survey as they exit the project and they gave us a 90% satisfaction rate! They also felt very strongly that the project was better than they had initially expected, with 96% saying support exceeded expectations.

We also surveyed 34 young people who are halfway through their time on the project, who gave us an impressive 100% satisfaction rate for the work we are doing, and 85% of them say the project is helping them a lot. In terms of how they felt we could improve the project, the overriding message is that they would have liked more time with their key workers and more of the amazing support and activities received! [Read more on our website...](#)



The [#Focus5](#) project is reaching out to unemployed young people across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. As yet the team has only had referrals from 43% of the number of unemployed young people they hope to work with. According to [Youth Unemployment UK](#), experiencing unemployment as a young person can lead to emotional problems, reduce a person's life long earning/career potential, create further inequalities between communities, and the financial costs of supporting unemployment reach into billions. If you know any unemployed youngsters, please refer them today! [Read more on our website...](#)



[#Focus5](#) have begun a pilot scheme this year to help young people in secondary schools who are at risk of NEET (not in education, employment or training) to recognise how to improve their mental health and make the right decisions about further education or careers. Debbie Barsby, School Support Adviser for DWP who has been helping deliver a pilot in Somerset has said, *"I am very pleased with how the first sessions have gone and look forward to working with #Focus5 to help deliver the remainder of the pilot programme."*

[Read more on our website.](#)



[#Focus5](#) has funding available to support young parents aged 15-18 with the cost of childcare whilst they take small steps back into education, employment or training. At an age when their peers are still in school or college, or taking their first steps into employment, teenage mums risk being left behind, constrained by a lack of suitable childcare. In fact, childcare is still the single most important factor in enabling young mums to return to education.

We are keen to utilise the childcare funding that is ring-fenced within the project, to help young parents access bespoke activities with our key workers. If you know of any suitable young people to put forward, please let us know.

[Read more on our website...](#)



As his daughter leaves [#Focus5](#) this doting dad shares his thoughts on the project and the support they have both received. "We have been so lucky for my daughter to have been accepted onto #Focus5, it has been a really positive experience for my daughter and also for myself. Since the very first meeting, Louise has been a gift to my daughter who finds it difficult meeting and trusting new people in her life.

Louise made her feel relaxed and comfortable and has been very supportive, kind and caring towards her. She has been a great influence and role model. Louise has been a constant and reliable person in my daughter's life, helping her to feel good about herself and that someone believes in her." [Read more on our website.](#)

#Focus5 Cross Cutting Themes

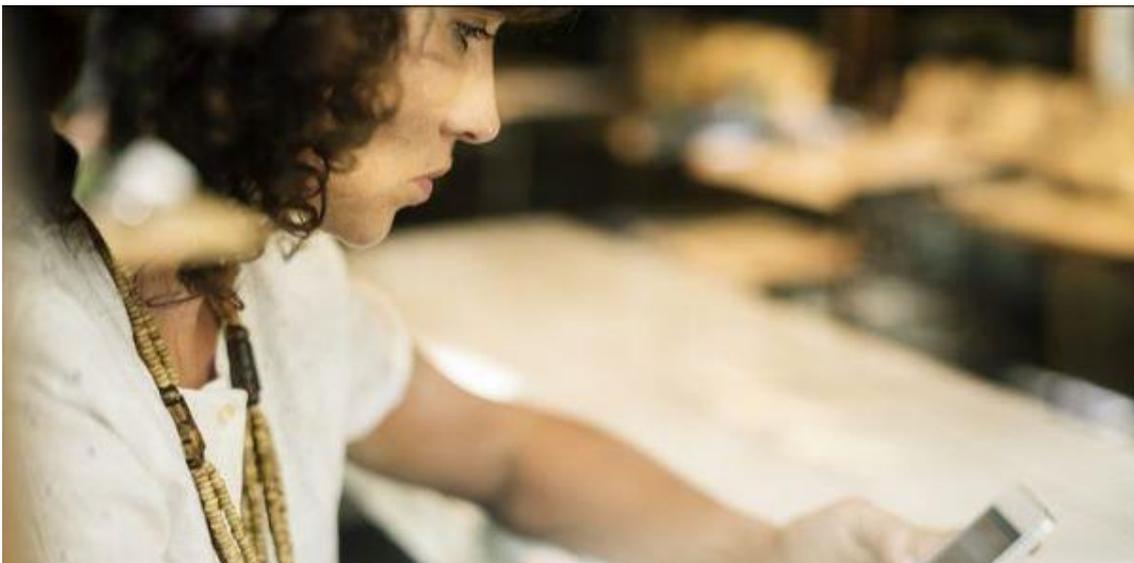


Students in a [#Focus5](#) schools group have been learning about sustainability, one of the cross cutting themes of the project and their key worker introduced them to the Eco Brick movement. The girls took a plastic bottle and filled it with all the non-recyclable rubbish generated across their group sessions together, packing it tightly. They then weighed it to ensure it was at the necessary density and will pass this to our local Eco Brick collection point, to be used in a sustainable project. [Read more on our website.](#)



The recent [Young Carers Awareness Day](#) has sparked much debate about the numbers of young people who are caring for a relative or friend, and the impact this has on their mental health, education and future prospects.

[#Focus5](#) key workers often meet young people who have carer duties at the same time as dealing with their own life or education difficulties and there are thousands of young carers across Devon and Somerset. According to national poverty charity, [Turn2Us](#), women are twice as likely to become carers than men representing a sizeable gender equality gap. [Read more on our website.](#)



Young people and adults with special educational needs, disabilities or anxiety can become independent and remove lifestyle barriers, using the latest 'personal assistant' services and apps, such as [Amazon Alexa](#), [Google Home](#) and [Brain in Hand](#). These apps are helping people create and follow daily routines and instructions, to enjoy a more organised life, reduce anxiety and access **equal opportunities**. Find out how one #Focus5 young person has used all three of these technologies to improve his daily life and to enjoy success on an internship. [Read more on our website.](#)

#Focus5 Key Worker News



We have two new key workers on the team. [Mellissa Jones](#) has joined as the new [#Focus5](#) worker for Plymouth. Mellissa (left) is a qualified teacher with 10 years experience in educational settings. She has a passion for helping young people achieve their own goals and develop new skills. [Jenny Wheatcroft](#) (right) joins as maternity cover for Grace Boyd, and she is covering Devon and Plymouth areas. Jenny is a qualified careers and personal adviser with a wealth of experience working in schools and colleges in the UK and New Zealand.

#Focus5 Success Stories



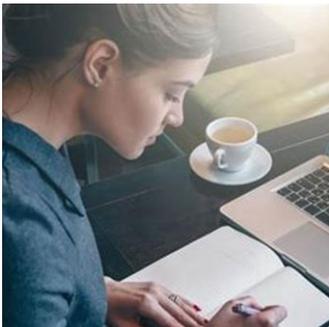
[Apprenticeship in Plymouth](#)



[Internship with Project Search](#)



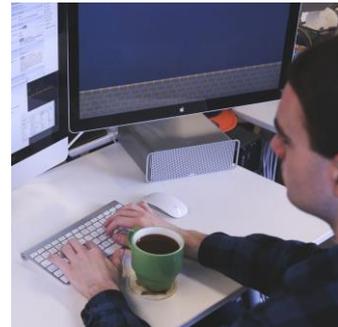
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About #Focus5

#Focus5 is a social enterprise project funded by [The National Lottery Community Fund](#).

We provide tailored support to young people aged 15-18 across Devon and Somerset who need help taking small steps into education, employment or training. The project aims to help young people develop the 5 main skills identified as being gateways to employment; Communication, Customer Service, Organisation, Teamwork and Problem Solving. We help the most socially isolated young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming so. For youngsters currently in education we support those who are isolated from their educational environment such as home educators or those out of education on medical grounds.

Notes to Editors

The National Lottery Community Fund uses money raised by National Lottery players to help communities achieve their ambitions. From small, local projects to UK-wide initiatives, its funding brings people together to make a difference to their health, wellbeing and environment. Since June 2004 it has awarded £9 billion to projects that improve the lives of millions of people. #Focus5 has received funding from The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund as part of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme in England. The Department for Work and Pensions is the Managing Authority for the England European Social Fund Programme. Established by the European Union, the European Social Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support skills development, employment and job creation, social inclusion and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>.

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