



Rossendale Works

Impact Report 2024-25



POWERED BY
LEVELLING UP

Introduction

Rossendale Works is an employment support project set up in 2018 by Rossendale Borough Council and Active Lancashire in response to the growing number of individuals across the borough who were not in education, employment or training.



Rossendale Works takes a unique approach to its support, first making contact with participants through one of its many free, weekly physical activity sessions led by Rossendale Works staff members and local volunteers. We believe that encouraging participants to build movement into their weekly routine is key to ensuring they are motivated and confident enough to access training, qualifications or re-enter and maintain steady employment.

How it works



Individuals who are not in education, employment or training are referred to Rossendale Works by organisations such as the DWP, Job Centre, GP Practises and Mental Health agencies. Participants can also self-refer, and often find us through social media or word-of-mouth.



An individual will then attend one of our free, weekly physical activity sessions. Here, they will meet one of our Support Workers who will have an informal conversation with the individual about their future goals, and support them in making friends within the group to create a safe, welcoming environment that encourages them to return each week.



Once the participants' wellbeing has improved, one of our Support Workers will help identify barriers that they are facing towards employment, education or training. The participant and Support Worker will create a bespoke plan which could involve things like CV writing support, job interview workshops, and access to mental health support.



Participants tend to find employment - including self-employment - or enter some form of training, such as apprenticeships, within 3 months, which is lower than the current national average of 6 months (according to ONS, October 2025).

Our Why

Demographics

Population Estimate (2021)	
CYP (0 - 19)	16,513
Adults	40,697
65+	13,661
Total	70,871

Deprivation Ranking (2019)

91st

Most deprived area
out of 317 local
authorities



Economic status

16 - 64 Year-Olds Who Are
Economically Inactive

9,600 individuals

which is

21.6% of the total
population of Rossendale

Of those who are
economically inactive,
95% say they do not
want to work

"Economically inactive" refers to people aged 16-64 who are not working and not looking for work, or are looking but unavailable to start, distinguishing them from the unemployed (who actively seek jobs). This category includes students, retirees, people caring for family, those with long-term illness or disability.

Excess Weight

% of adults (aged 18+)
classified as overweight or
obese (2022/23)

70%

Physical Activity Level in Adults

% of adults (aged 18+)
classified as Inactive: Less
than 30 minutes per week

27%

Gender

Active: at least 150 minutes a week -
Gender (Nov 2021/22)

Male

67.1%

Female

57.8%



Disability

Physical activity levels in adults - Inactive: less than 30 minutes
a week (Long-term health condition or disability) (Nov 2021/22)

Disability or long term
health condition

44.4%

No disability or long term
health condition

14.6%

% of people who have disabilities
limiting daily activities (age
standardised) (2021)

20%

Outcomes

68

Individuals
supported



14

Entered employment



80+ Accessed training

150+
sports
sessions



77 improved wellbeing

ESOL Courses

As part of the support of offer we run regular, free ESOL courses in the community.



7 **ESOL** courses provided



£507,000
Social Value generated



Working Together —

Rossendale Works has a number of partners across the borough who share our values and mission. Together, our aim is to provide economically inactive individuals from every background with the tools and resources they need to overcome the barriers which they are facing.

Haslingden Community Link

Haslingden Community Link is a community centre which serves some of the most disadvantaged members of the community. Throughout 2025, we have maintained our longstanding relationship with Haslingden Community Link, regularly attending cafes and drop in sessions to meet residents and understand how we can support them; this includes providing them with access to free training and skills courses via Active Lancashire's Learning Zone, and signposting them to Rossendale Works' physical activity and employability support sessions.



Our partnership with Haslingden Community Link enables us to expand our reach within the community, allowing us to meet those who would not otherwise have access to employment or wellbeing services. Our Support Worker, Geraldine, has been able to connect with females that are not currently in employment due to barriers like long-term health conditions, low mental health or changes in family circumstances.

Through these meetings, Geraldine was encouraged to set up several womens-only activity sessions to build on the existing support Haslingden Community Link provides. Sessions include IT Skills Classes, women's-only yoga and women's-only boxing classes.

 **13**
training
courses
delivered

15 women
attended our
boxing
sessions 

and a further
20
attended our
yoga
classes 

— Angela Robert's Story

After being diagnosed with long-term health conditions, Angela became socially isolated and began to suffer with low mental wellbeing. Angela's job centre coach encouraged her to attend community sessions ran at Haslingden Community Link to enable her to socialise with others and hopefully improve her mental wellbeing.

Here, Angela was introduced to Geraldine who helped her integrate within the Yoga class, meeting women with shared experiences to her. Geraldine reflected, "at first, Angela was quite reluctant to get involved and socialise with fellow participants; it's clear that her health condition and unemployment had led her to become quite isolated and low in confidence.

"Over the weeks, Angela slowly began to interact with participants, and opened up to me about the barriers she was facing. I encouraged her to attend some of our other women's-only classes, such as boxing and woodwork, and her confidence soon began to grow."

From here, Angela began to feel less discouraged by her health condition and has engaged in several skills courses to develop her CV. Angela added, "When I first met Geraldine, I felt that employment was no longer an option for me due to my health conditions and age; Geraldine supported me in gaining confidence and helped me to meet women with similar experiences to me.

"Thanks to Rossendale Works, I've taken part in a wide range of activities I never thought would be for me - from yoga to boxing and, believe it or not, woodworking! Now, I'm feeling optimistic about finding part-time employment and am encouraged by the other women who attend these groups, as it has made me realise I am not alone!"



Volunteering Sessions—

Rossendale Works runs a range of volunteering sessions designed to boost individuals' mental health and social skills, while also helping them develop valuable experience to strengthen their CVs. These sessions are structured like part-time jobs, enabling participants to build a weekly routine, understand workplace codes of conduct, and gain practical, hands-on skills that support their personal and professional development.

Bacup Borough Football Club

Earlier this year, Bacup Borough Football Club began renovations on its clubhouse and was actively seeking volunteers to support the work. Spotting an opportunity, the club's Head of Business Development, Jane Pallister, approached Rossendale Works to create a meaningful volunteering experience for its participants. From this collaboration, the weekly Work Party session was established.



Bacup Borough Football Club now welcomes volunteers from Rossendale Works who come together to support a wide range of maintenance tasks, both inside the clubhouse and across the grounds.

In return, participants receive recognition through season tickets and certificates, while gaining practical skills, confidence, and stronger community connections. At the same time, their efforts help preserve a historic community asset that continues to play an important role in Rossendale life.

Across the Bacup Work Parties, the net social value generated for 2025-2026 financial year is projected to be:

£8,439

Development of new
Peer Support Networks

IMPROVED
confidence

SENSE OF
PURPOSE

100% of participants reported the development of skills that boosted their employability.

—Angela Shian's Story

Angela began accessing employment support from Rossendale Works in early 2025, determined to improve her chances of finding work despite a significant gap in her CV. Eager to gain new experience and build her confidence, she was one of the first participants to join the newly created Work Party—a volunteering group formed when Bacup Borough Football Club began renovating its historic clubhouse and sought support from the community.

From the outset, Angela made a strong impression. The Work Party involved a wide variety of tasks, such as removing and replacing old flooring in the clubhouse, maintaining and covering outdoor areas, completing general grounds maintenance and tidying, and refurbishing the changing rooms. Angela approached every task with energy and enthusiasm, quickly becoming a reliable and proactive member of the team.

Danny Thomas, Rossendale Works' Support Worker, was impressed with Angela's dedication to the Work Party, stating: "Angela took on an active role in dividing up roles and keeping fellow volunteers on-task; she approached each week with a sense of enthusiasm, and was incredibly driven. It was clear to us that Angela was ready and willing to work hard to enhance her CV and secure employment.



"We were so impressed with how Angela approached the Work Party that we decided to ask her to volunteer for Rossendale Works' wider projects, and she now supports several of our weekly physical activity sessions. She now provides participants with guidance and encouragement, drawing on her own experiences with Rossendale Works to help other participants' actively engage with our services".

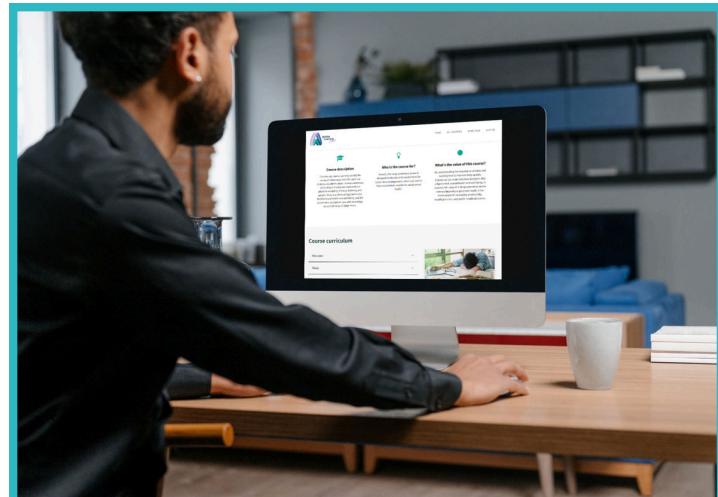
Throughout the renovation project, Angela adopted an almost supervisory role, helping ensure that all tasks were completed on time and to a high standard. She not only completed her own duties thoroughly but also began offering thoughtful suggestions to improve how the team organised themselves and tackled their workload. Her initiative, leadership qualities, and commitment to personal development made her a key asset to both the Work Party and the wider Rossendale Works programme.

Training and Qualifications —

Rossendale Works has been successfully using Active Lancashire's Learning Zone to deliver tailored training to programme participants. This innovative platform gives individuals flexible access to targeted learning opportunities that build skills, boost confidence, and support their journey into employment.

IT Skills

Rossendale Works' Support Workers identified that a significant barrier preventing many participants from progressing into employment was a lack of basic IT skills. Recognising how essential digital confidence has become in modern jobsearching, the team partnered with Active Lancashire's Learning Zone to develop a dedicated Basic IT Skills course.



This tailored programme was designed to help individuals learn how to use essential software such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel—skills that not only enhance a CV but also strengthen overall employability. The course also introduced participants to a range of jobseeking websites and apps, guiding them through how to create profiles, upload documents, search for vacancies, and submit online applications.

By building these core digital skills, the programme aims to empower participants to navigate the job market more confidently and independently, removing a key obstacle in their journey towards sustainable employment.



– Basic IT Skills Course Cohort One

Rossendale Works has been successfully using its bespoke Learning Zone platform to deliver tailored training that supports participants on their journey into employment. A gap in basic IT skills was identified, and Geraldine Coogan began facilitating weekly digital skills sessions at Community Link in Haslingden. These sessions have empowered participants to build confidence, develop essential digital skills, and explore wider employment opportunities, while providing a supportive environment to learn and grow.

Geraldine said, "It's been amazing to see participants gain confidence with technology and realise how much they can achieve. These sessions not only teach practical skills but also open doors to new opportunities and greater independence."

Since the sessions began, participants have reported increased confidence in using computers, applying for jobs online, and completing tasks they previously found intimidating. Many have already applied their new skills in real-world situations, from creating CVs to navigating job portals, demonstrating how the initiative is helping individuals take meaningful steps toward sustainable employment.

Building on this success, Rossendale Works is developing additional courses to further support employability, equipping participants with the skills and confidence they need to progress in their careers and achieve long-term goals.



Physical Activity —

Since opening in 2018, Rossendale Works has combined movement and physical activity with employability support to help participants build both confidence and practical job skills. Physical activity supports mental well-being, resilience, and focus, creating a positive environment where individuals can develop the confidence and transferable skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Non-Contact Boxing

Rossendale Works runs several physical activity sessions each week, designed to boost participants' resilience, improve overall well-being, and provide opportunities to meet like-minded people in a supportive environment. These sessions also serve as a pathway to additional support, helping participants access guidance and resources as they work toward personal and professional goals.



One particularly popular activity is non-contact boxing, which encourages participants to develop confidence, focus, and self-discipline while learning new skills in a safe and inclusive setting. Beyond the physical benefits, these sessions foster social connections, build teamwork, and help participants develop the motivation and mental strength needed to overcome challenges both in and out of the workplace.



68

participants
regularly attend
physical activity
sessions

80%
of participants noticed

improved
wellbeing

since attending physical
activity sessions



After accessing support from Rossendale Works, Tim successfully retrained as a boxing instructor and established his own business, delivering weekly classes and one-to-one training to members of the local community.

Motivated to give back and support individuals in a similar situation to his own, Tim began delivering free weekly boxing sessions for Rossendale Works participants. The sessions are designed to be inclusive, welcoming participants of all abilities, and focus on improving resilience, confidence, and overall well-being.

By providing a consistent structure and routine, the sessions encourage regular attendance and help participants build discipline, motivation, and a sense of achievement.

Beyond the physical benefits, Tim's sessions also foster social connections, create a supportive community, and give participants a safe space to learn new skills while working toward personal and professional growth.

Tim said, "I know how much having support and structure helped me when I was starting out. These sessions give participants a safe space to challenge themselves, build confidence, and see what they can achieve both in fitness and in life."

Paul Becouarn, Project Lead at Rossendale Works, added, "Tim's sessions are a fantastic example of how peer-led support can transform lives. Participants not only improve their physical health, but also gain confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging—key ingredients for moving forward in work and life."



Employment Support

Rossendale Works also offers a range of traditional employment support options, including CV writing support, interview skills preparation and general assistance in seeking and securing employment. Rossendale Works has long-standing relationships with many businesses across the borough, who are keen to employ participants wherever possible - whether it be through temporary, voluntary or full-time employment.

Weekly Support Sessions

Rossendale Works runs a variety of free, weekly support sessions designed to equip individuals with the tools, guidance, and resources needed to progress toward employment. These sessions take a holistic approach, addressing both practical skills and personal development, to help participants build confidence, resilience, and the motivation to achieve their career goals.

One such session is the weekly Breakfast Club, which takes place every Thursday. The session is delivered in a relaxed, drop-in format, allowing participants to have informal conversations with Rossendale Works' Support Workers. These discussions help identify areas where individuals may need additional guidance or support, whether that relates to skill development, career planning, or overcoming barriers to employment.

Following the Breakfast Club, participants are signposted to further targeted support, such as the Skills Hub, which runs every Monday. During these sessions, participants have the opportunity to develop practical skills that are crucial for securing work, including CV writing, interview techniques, and jobsearch strategies. The Skills Hub also covers broader topics, such as identifying reliable online job platforms and learning how to use them effectively. By combining informal guidance with structured skills development, Rossendale Works provides a comprehensive pathway that helps participants take tangible steps toward sustainable employment.



Chris had been struggling with depression and severe social isolation, feeling disconnected and lacking motivation. Everything changed when he began attending Rossendale Works sessions twice a week. The regular routine and supportive atmosphere gave him structure and helped him start rebuilding his confidence. Chris describes the programme as giving him “a reason to get out of bed in the morning.”

With this newfound confidence, Chris took on a volunteer role at the Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary Charity Shop in Bacup, gaining practical experience and reconnecting with his local community. He says, “The only way I can describe looking for a job at almost 50 years old is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope. It takes people like the employees at Rossendale Works to teach you not to give up, but to turn the telescope around! I don't know if Rossendale Works realise just how much they have supported me – a huge thank you to their team for all of their help and encouragement!”



Chris's hard work and determination paid off when he secured a position at a local health equipment manufacturer, where he is now thriving. He continues to attend Rossendale Works sessions whenever he can and has expressed a desire to volunteer in the future to support others facing similar challenges.

Oliver Chadwick, Rossendale Works Employability Officer, said, “Through consistent support and the use of physical activity as a tool to build confidence and wellbeing, Chris was able to overcome significant barriers—not just from employment, but from connecting with others and finding a sense of belonging. Seeing him thriving now is a real testament to what can happen when the right support is in place.”

Social Value

As part of understanding the impact being made in communities across Lancashire, data is collated to measure Social Value. Put simply, Social Value is a measure of the positive impact had on individuals within a place through financial proxy values and evidencing the social impact through stories. A variety of models exist, each with their own merits with the challenge then being the need to identify which is the most appropriate for the work being carried out. Active Lancashire's model has been developed by Social Value Business due to the vast breadth of the work carried out on a day-to-day basis. The model allows for each area of our work to contribute their impact to create a collective social value across the previous financial year at scale covering Lancashire.

The total Social Value figure created by Rossendale Works was

£507,475

For the **169 participants** that engaged with projects delivered by Rossendale Works in the 23-24 financial year, these **key outcomes** were reported:



VOLUNTEERING
at local community
projects



SKILLS
of participants
were developed



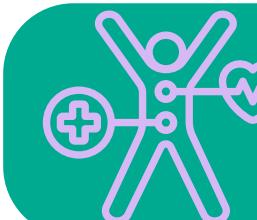
QUALIFICATIONS
gained in a range
of subjects



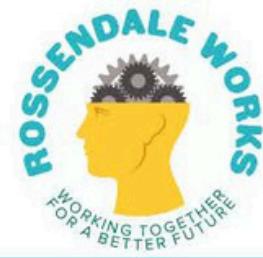
EMPLOYMENT
opportunities
accessed by
participants



ISOLATION
was reduced
amongst participants



WELLBEING
increased for our
participants



Free, Weekly Activities

Designed to help you make friends, learn new skills and boost your wellbeing.



Tuesday

Boxercise and Wellbeing Group

📍 Love Boxing, Unit 3a, Myrtle Grove, Waterfoot, BB4 7JH
🕒 2:00pm - 3:00pm

Wednesday

Football Works 5-a-side

📍 Marl Pits, Newchurch Road, Rawtenstall, BB4 7SN
🕒 1pm - 2pm

Thursday

Bacup Football club work party

📍 Brian Boys Stadium, Blackthorn Lane, OL13 8EE
🕒 1pm - 3pm



Thursday

Your Free Breakfast Club +

Cycle Group Forum (optional)
📍 Trinity Baptist Church, Bacup, OL13 0AL
🕒 10AM - 12PM

Live Position Matching

We will help you find specific live job opportunities with direct links and application guidance tailored to your skills and interests

AI-Proof CV Creation

Make your CV stand out! We'll help you create an AI-proof CV and tailor it for specific positions to beat automated screening systems.

Additional Support

Thanks to The National Data Inclusion Network & The Good Things Foundation, we're able to offer a range of free training courses and, in some cases, provide free devices for those in need.

Sessions are free of charge and open to those of all abilities.

For more information please contact Oliver on **07562630299** or Geraldine on **07465755471**, or email office@activelancashire.org.uk