Talkback's Post-16 Specialist Provision

Annual Report for 2025-2026



A Year At A Glance

100%
Of Learners completed our annual survey

97%
Enjoyed attending their programme

100%
Said staff were supportive and helpful.

2
Supported Interns secured paid employment

1
Supported Intern progressed into further education

92%
Would recommend Talkback to others

Talkback's Post-16 Speciallist Provision

Supporting Learners To Build Their Future

This year Talkback continued to deliver its five progression routes, supporting young people with learning disabilities and/or autism at different stages of their journey towards adulthood.

Each route is designed to meet learners where they are, building confidence, independence and skills while creating meaningful opportunities for progression. Throughout the year learners accessed practical learning, community-based opportunities, work-related experiences and personalised support, helping them develop the skills needed for adult life.

Our Progession Routes

1. **Route to Engagement**
   Building confidence and helping learners re-engage with learning and community opportunities.
2. **Route to Independence**
   Developing practical life skills, travel confidence, personal, social development and greater independence.
3. **Route to Volunteering**
   Supporting learners to contribute to their communities while developing confidence and workplace skills.
4. **Route to Employment**
   Providing meaningful work experience and employability development.
5. **Supported Internships**
   Supporting young people into real workplaces and paid employment outcomes.

This Year's Journey

As you read through this report, you will see examples of learners progressing through these routes, developing confidence, independence and employability skills before moving into volunteering, further education and paid employment.



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The support from staff is fantastic. They will always help you and give you as much as support as they can to help you succeed.

Route to Engagement

Learner Journey: Wiliiam

Starting Point

When William joined Talkback, he lacked confidence, struggled in social situations and had found traditional education challenging. His attendance was inconsistent, and he had little experience of independent travel or employment.

What We Did

William received personalised support to build confidence, improve attendance and develop practical life skills. This included travel training, employability sessions, cooking, budgeting and community-based learning.

What Changed

Over the year, William became more confident communicating with staff and members of the public, learned to use public transport independently and improved his attendance significantly. He also developed his first CV and began preparing for employment.

Key Outcomes

William developed greater confidence, independence and practical employability skills, while improving his attendance and engagement. He progressed into paid employment in a local pub kitchen and is now taking the next step on his Route to Employment.

- Increased attendance and engagement.
- Improved confidence and communication.
- Developed independent travel skills.
- Gained practical life and employability skills.
- Secured paid employment in a local pub kitchen.
- Progressed to Route to Employment



“

I now know how to travel via bus and have started learning how to travel via train.

Route to Independence

Learner Journey: George

Starting Point

George joined Travel Training with limited confidence using public transport independently and lacked the experience needed to plan and complete journeys on his own.

What We Did

Through Travel Training, George learned how to read timetables, plan routes, identify landmarks and travel safely within the community. Staff gradually encouraged him to take greater responsibility for planning journeys and participating within the group.

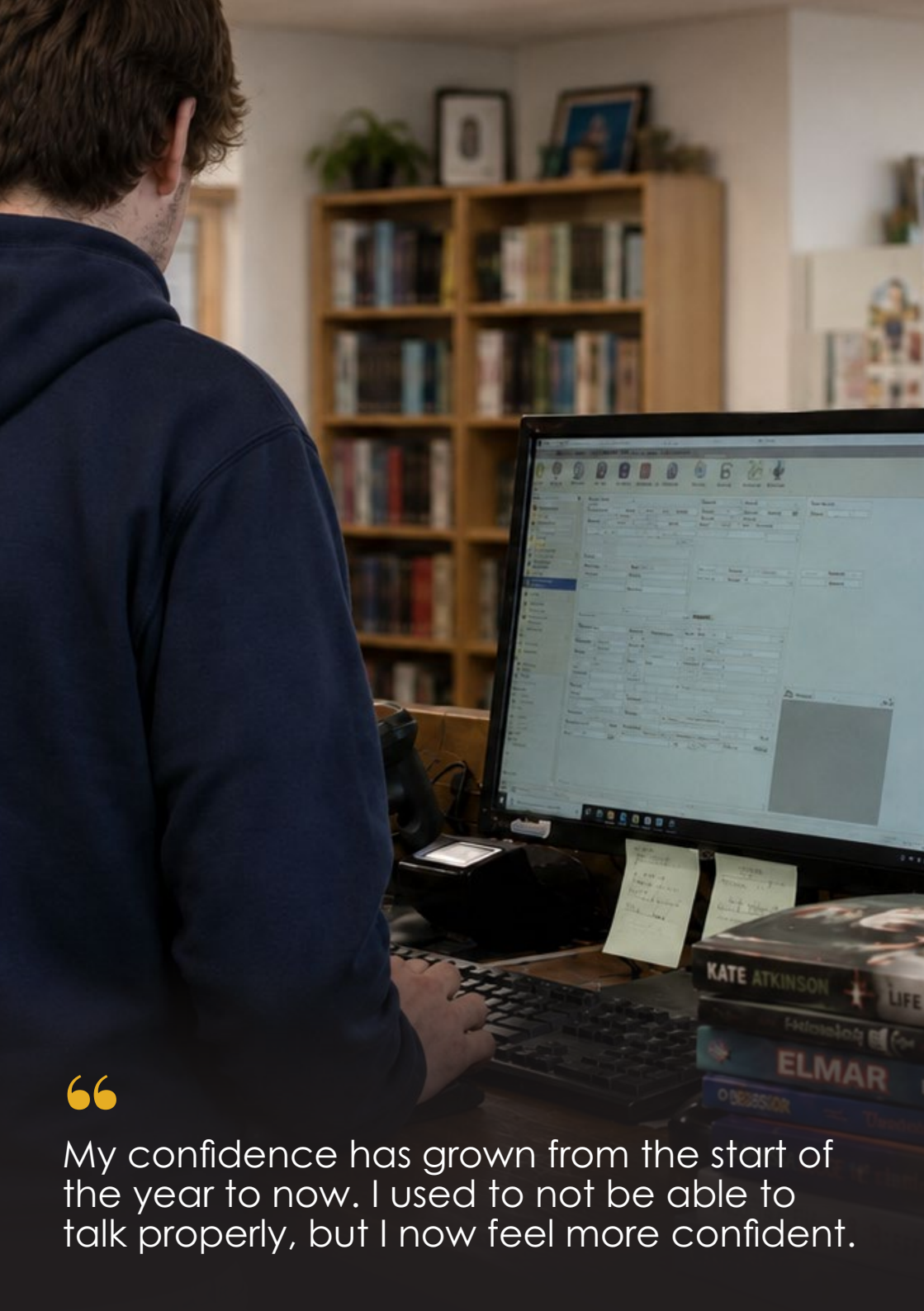
What Changed

George became more confident planning journeys and sharing information with others. He successfully planned bus and train journeys, including a two-bus route to his work experience placement, and began travelling home independently.

Key Outcomes

George developed the confidence and practical skills needed to travel more independently, increasing his access to work experience, community activities and future opportunities.

- Increased travel independence.
- Improved confidence and communication.
- Developed journey-planning skills.
- Increased community participation.
- Demonstrated safe and independent use of public transport.



“

My confidence has grown from the start of the year to now. I used to not be able to talk properly, but I now feel more confident.

Route to Volunteering

Learner Journey: Ben

Starting Point

When Ben started his placement at Florence Nightingale Charity Shop, he found communication with unfamiliar people difficult and relied on support to engage with staff and workplace activities.

What We Did

Staff supported Ben to develop his communication skills through structured workplace tasks and regular opportunities to interact with colleagues. He was encouraged to build confidence, develop workplace routines and take on meaningful responsibilities within the charity shop.

What Changed

Over the year, Ben became more confident communicating with staff and contributing to the group. He also developed valuable workplace skills, including using specialist software to process donated books and completing tasks more independently.

Key Outcomes

Ben's confidence, communication and workplace skills improved so significantly that he was offered a volunteer role without ongoing Talkback support.

- Improved communication skills.
- Increased workplace confidence.
- Developed independent working skills.
- Built positive workplace relationships.
- Secured a volunteer position.



“

I would recommend groups to other students because the staff are absolutely amazing, so kind, friendly, and supportive, and always there to listen to you

Route to Employment

Learner Journey: Joshua

Starting Point

Joshua started his work experience placement at HMV with low confidence and high levels of anxiety. He relied on family support to access his placement and found interactions with customers and unfamiliar people difficult.

What We Did

Joshua attended a weekly placement at HMV, where staff provided tailored support to help him learn workplace routines, develop employability skills and build confidence within a retail environment.

What Changed

As his confidence grew, Joshua began travelling independently by bus. He developed customer service skills, worked increasingly independently and became more comfortable interacting with colleagues and customers.

Key Outcomes

Joshua developed the confidence, independence and workplace skills needed to take the next step in his employment journey, progressing onto a Supported Internship at HMV.

- Increased workplace confidence.
- Developed independent travel skills.
- Improved communication and customer service skills.
- Worked more independently.
- Progressed into a Supported Internship.



“

This has definitely helped me grow my confidence as a person. It took me out of my comfort zone and I feel that I have learnt a lot of new skills

Supported Internship Programme

Learner Journey: Liam

Starting Point

Liam joined the Supported Internship programme with the goal of gaining workplace experience and moving towards paid employment. He wanted to build his confidence, communication skills and understanding of professional working environments.

What We Did

Liam completed placements with the National Paralympic Heritage Trust and Fairhive, gaining experience across administration, finance and IT. As his skills developed, support was gradually reduced, enabling him to take on greater responsibility.

What Changed

Throughout the year Liam developed strong workplace, finance and IT skills and became a valued member of both teams. His confidence increased significantly, and he took on increasingly independent responsibilities across multiple departments.

Key Outcomes

Liam's progress and contribution were so impressive that Fairhive created a bespoke paid position for him following his internship.

- Developed finance and IT skills.
- Increased confidence and workplace communication.
- Became a valued member of workplace teams.
- Worked increasingly independently.
- Secured paid employment.

Feedback

Learner, Parent and Employer Voices

Learners

This year's learner feedback demonstrates the positive impact Talkback continues to have on confidence, independence and wellbeing. Our learner survey revealed that:

97% enjoyed attending
100% found sessions easy to understand
100% said staff were supportive and helpful
91% benefitted from attending
92% would recommend Talkback to others

> My confidence had a huge difference from the start of the year to now.

Parents

The success of the provision is built on strong partnerships with families. Here's what one of our parents had to say:

> Just wanted to say thanks so much for all your help and support with Liam's supported internship. It's been much appreciated.

Employers

Employers consistently recognised learners for their reliability, commitment and personal growth throughout placements and internships.
One employer reflected:

> Liam has been a fantastic team player throughout his internship.

Looking Ahead

As we look towards 2026-2027, we remain committed to supporting young people with learning disabilities and/or autism to achieve meaningful outcomes and positive futures. We will:

1. **Introduce a Year 2 of our route to Independence to ensure learners have the continued support they need.**
2. **Expand Employment opportunities and strengthen employer partnerships.**
3. **Create new volunteering opportunities that build confidence, skills and valuable experience.**
4. **Increase independent travel ability and encourage greater participation within the local community.**
5. **Support learners to build confidence, develop independence and prepare for adulthood.**

The achievements within this report demonstrate what is possible when young people are given the right support, meaningful opportunities and the confidence to believe in their own potential.

Together, we will continue creating opportunities, building confidence and changing futures.

Talkback

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