

venturetrust

**Impact
Report 2020**





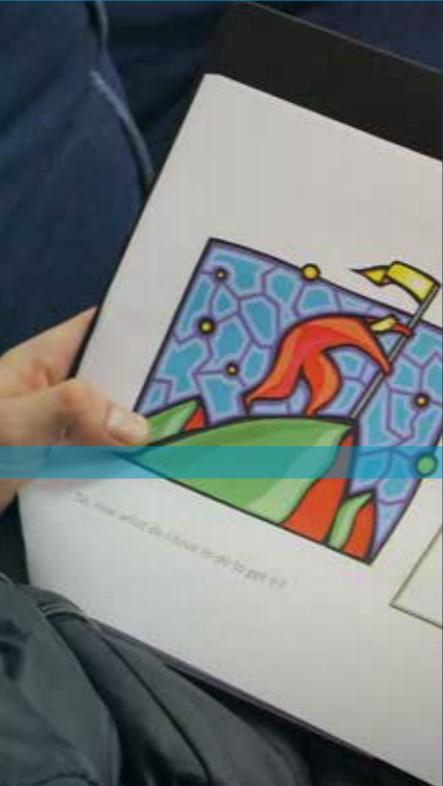
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Venture Trust believes no one should be left behind struggling with adversity, harm and vulnerability. That is why we are supporting people to gain the life skills, stability and confidence needed for a positive future.



Venture Trust is a personal development charity supporting people, aged 16 years and over who are struggling with complex circumstances to overcome barriers to realise their potential. Our strengths lie in the relationships we forge, our developmental approach and the powerful positive impact of being outdoors and amongst nature.

As we were developing this report, we were yet to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Scotland will come through this, but we must ensure that the inequality that already existed in our communities doesn't grow. There is a very real danger that too many people in living poverty and particularly vulnerable to socio-economic impacts of the pandemic will see opportunities fade into the distance. We will need a renewed focus on wellbeing, inclusion and future employment.



Over the last 3 months we've focused on adapting and learning so that we could continue to support people struggling before the crisis hit. We're working hard to be a support. The commitment from the Venture Trust team with support and insight from funders and delivery partners has made this possible. As a result, we've been able to focus on doing our best work and helping people stay well, connected and ready to access local services or employment opportunities.

Resilience in a time of crisis asks much of all of us. We're reflecting on what's been achieved; where we need to improve so more people can thrive, and how we support each other with compassion and kindness. Also importantly how evidence and the life experiences of people we aim to help informs a coherent and collaborative response. Together we can meet the challenges for the future and shape a recovery that brings lasting positive change for the people we support.



“The life that I have now is brilliant compared to what it was like. I thought I was a failure and that I was going to die in that horrible existence of addiction, prison, violence and fear.”
Venture Trust participant

Overview

At Venture Trust we want everyone to succeed and to continue to do so throughout their lives.

At any stage in life, people can struggle, and it becomes about surviving not thriving. By recognising the impact of trauma and inequality, each person can benefit from individual support led by their goals. Many people we work with are surviving outside mainstream support, are unemployed, or they may have never been in employment. Each circumstance can hinder their chances of a positive future.

We maximise people's strengths, equipping them with hope, stronger foundations and the resilience they need to succeed. We recognise that taking the time to invest, now, helps people to feel happier, healthier for the long term. Together, we can tackle a cycle of harm and inequality which leaves some people in the margins of society.

“The staff at Venture Trust are excellent, they are positive and realistic with clients and are clearly focused on ensuring the best outcomes for all. I have yet to meet a client that I have referred to Venture Trust who has had a negative experience and I think this is because they empower clients and stay with them throughout their journey.”

Tony Arthur, Volunteering Project Manager,
Step Together

Overview

2019-20 in numbers:

We met and worked with **729** people

817 people referred to us

62 young people now cycling

7,711 hours of face to face activities (= 45 weeks)

82% improved their employability

213 trekkers

72% improved their resilience, confidence and mental wellbeing

159 into employment, training, education or volunteering

7 employability courses

61 staying in employment, training, education or volunteering for at least 3 months

3,763 face to face activities (those were the days!)

22 wilderness journeys

74% improved their stability and reduced their risk of re-offending

We worked with over **300** partners and referrers

Overview

2019-20 was a busy year!

Our intensive developmental support showed its value again, with outdoor learning acting as a catalyst for participants to confront the difficulties in their lives and make plans to move forward. Our participants achieved great things, making real improvements in getting into jobs or training and discovering how to realise their potential.



The Venture Trust approach

Referral and assessment

When people are referred to us, we meet them, find out about their lives and decide together whether our support will be of benefit. If we are able to help people we assign them an outreach worker and they start Phase 1.

560 people assessed this year.

Phase 1: The participant and outreach worker start to work on the barriers to healthy happy lives we identified in Referral and Assessment and prepare for the wilderness journey. **290 people began Phase 1 this year.**

Phase 2: Once an individual is ready, they're off on their expedition! For 5-10 days they will be away from home with our Development Trainers, doing intense one-on-one and group work aimed at understanding themselves and thinking about the changes they want to make to their lives. **213 people started a journey this year.**

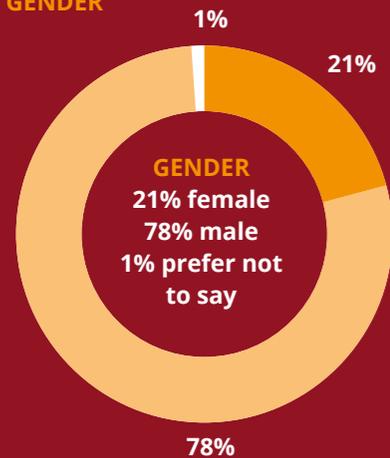
Phase 3: Following the journey and individuals reconnect with their Outreach Worker. Everyone leaves the journey with an action plan; over the next 6 months they will work on achieving the goals they set themselves to build a better life. **183 people pursued their action plan this year.**

Arc'teryx was founded upon a desire to connect people with the outdoors. As advocates for the transformative power of nature we seek to collaborate with those who share our purpose. Venture Trust is an invaluable partner in this work. Applying a thoughtful and diligent approach, Venture Trust has been able to inspire many wonderful stories of personal growth through connection to nature. We're proud to be considered a partner in their journey.

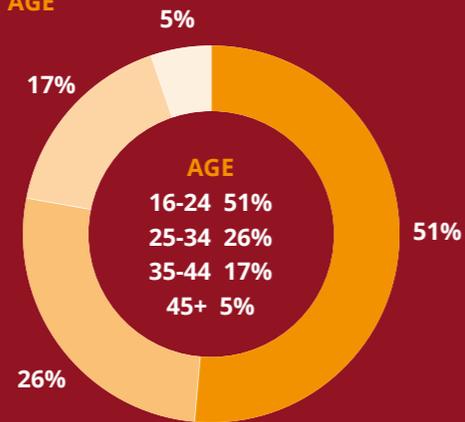
Dan Walker, Social Impact Lead,
Arc'teryx Equipment

Who we worked with

GENDER



AGE



SIMD

52% came from the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland of participants

85% came from the 50% most deprived areas of Scotland of participants





BARRIERS TO POTENTIAL

People come to us dealing with a wide range of issues linked to deprivation. These are the barriers to potential that we work together to overcome.

The most common barriers people face are:



Of course, our participants don't just face one of these problems. On average, people come to us with 5 separate barriers to reaching their potential.

Employability

Getting into employment can feel like a very distant prospect for many of the people coming to us. Lack of qualifications and low skills, a history of offending and little experience of role models in permanent work can be significant barriers to people seeing permanent employment in their future. We work with people to build the fundamental skills of employability, to gain qualifications and to create CVs that will open the door to work.

In 2019-20:

We worked with 313 people needing support towards employment

141

entered the final phase of our service with an action plan to find work

96%

finished with improved employability

54%

of those in the final phase of our support achieved a positive destination



“Believing in my own worth, I think I’ll be able to go out and get the job that I want [instead of thinking] I’m not good enough for it. I want to use the skills I’ve developed.”
Venture Trust participant

Change Cycle Our vocational employability programme

- 6 courses in 2019-20
- 62 started our Change Cycle programme
- 61% of Change Cycle participants got a positive destination
- 94% of Change Cycle participants achieved a recognised qualification



“I was homeless at 16. My education suffered and I was struggling to find a job. Venture Trust’s programmes helped me get my life stable and gain employability skills and confidence. Now I’m an apprentice vehicle technician.”
Venture Trust participant

Wellbeing

We work to improve wellbeing and a sense of belonging. A crucial element is to improve mental health long term.

With support our participants can tackle social isolation, the underlying causes of alcohol or drug misuse or the stress of living in poor quality housing. The people we support show positive self-confidence, improved relationships and stability.

In 2019-20:

Supported
188
on Wilderness Journeys

We worked with
600
people with poor mental wellbeing

Had
3,120
face-to-face activities with them

71%
of people improved their resilience; confidence, mental wellbeing and ability to deal with challenge

91
got into work, training, education or volunteering



The logo for Venture Trust, featuring the word "venture" in a lowercase, sans-serif font and "trust" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font, both in white. The logo is set against a dark purple circular background that is part of a larger graphic design consisting of overlapping circles and lines in shades of purple and magenta.

“ I wasn't really living. My home had become my prison and I sank into a deep depression. But with Venture Trust I began to see my own potential. I realised I could make changes in my life. ”

Venture Trust participant

“ My life had become a long, black, endless hole. Venture Trust put edges to that and a light at the end which made it no longer an abyss, but a tunnel I could get out of. ”

Venture Trust participant

Criminal Justice

We work in the community to prevent the harm of crime. By addressing hidden pressures and seeing the potential in everyone we can build safer communities.

Living with the constant pressure of inequality, life in care, or in traumatic circumstances can have a negative influence on people's lives. It often leaves them isolated from their communities, pulled towards crime and feeling unable to take part in society. Reducing crime in the community helps draw people back into society. Preventing crime is good for us all. For people, communities and the economy. If we want to reduce crime and help people to feel safer, we must look at what actually works.

“
The clients that I have working with Venture Trust speak about the value that they get from it, and their sense of being treated like a person - not a number or an offender.
Carolyn Wilson,
East Lothian Justice Social Work Services ”





In 2019-20 we:

Worked with **442** people who had previous experience of the justice system
- 349 came to us with a court order
- for 30, work with Venture Trust was a condition of their court order

“
The client was successful in securing employment with a local garage and has had the longest period of stability in his adult life. He is no longer involved with Justice Services and the partnership working with Venture Trust, Justice Services and local supports combined to help him move on with his life in a positive manner.
”
Iain Pemble, Midlothian Justice Services

We meet regularly, with
2,106
face-to-face activities

64%
left with a reduced risk of re-offending

130
went on a Wilderness Journey

89
completed the journey

59
found work, education, training or volunteering

Summary

Our participants have achieved so much this year.

Together we have hiked and biked, camped out, spoken out, shared cups of tea, bacon rolls, canoes, time and stories. Some of our participants got into work or education; some have found themselves more confident, more calm, more able to build positive relationships. Some just have a better sense of themselves. Our thanks go out to everyone who has worked with us this year for all that they have achieved.





As we write this report, we are still in lockdown and looking towards an uncertain future. Every aspect of our society will change as a result of coronavirus - not least our approaches to community justice, wellbeing and the world of work. There will be many challenges ahead; people living in deprivation will find opportunities shrinking and risks increasing. We must work together to ensure that everyone benefits from recovery and that inequality does not become entrenched as we emerge from this crisis.

Venture Trust will always be here to work with people affected by inequality. That is why we are supporting people to gain life skills, stability and confidence in order to make a happy, healthy life a reality.



How to get involved

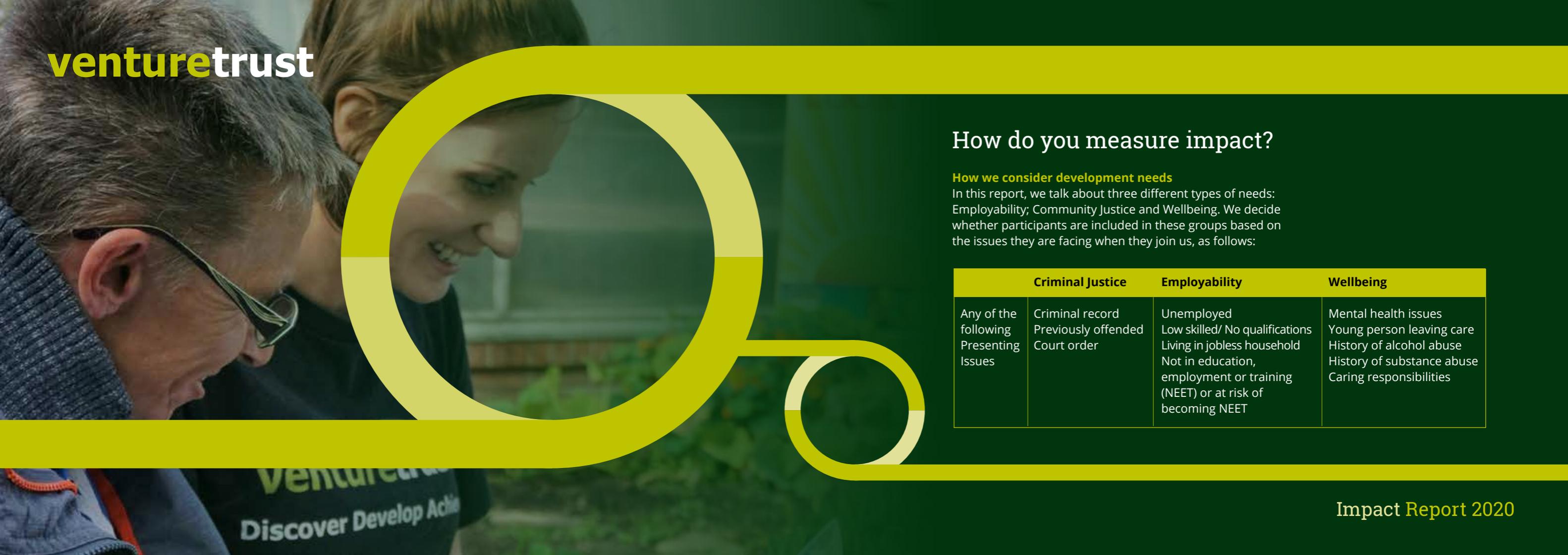
We always welcome support and involvement from anyone. If you've been inspired by the success the people we support and want to be involved in the work we do, please get in touch:

hello@venturetrust.org.uk
www.venturetrust.org.uk

 @venturetrust

 /venturetrust





How do you measure impact?

How we consider development needs

In this report, we talk about three different types of needs: Employability; Community Justice and Wellbeing. We decide whether participants are included in these groups based on the issues they are facing when they join us, as follows:

| | Criminal Justice | Employability | Wellbeing |
|--|---|--|--|
| Any of the following Presenting Issues | Criminal record Previously offended Court order | Unemployed Low skilled/ No qualifications Living in jobless household Not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET | Mental health issues Young person leaving care History of alcohol abuse History of substance abuse Caring responsibilities |

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Discover Develop Achieve

How do you measure impact?

Measuring progression

To measure the progress, we regularly check in and monitor a series of measures covering changes in their attitudes and behaviours. There are 11 separate measures, making up three different factors: Employability; Stability/Risk of Re-offending; Resilience. The factors are constructed as follows:

| | |
|--|--|
| Resilience | Mental wellbeing; Confidence; Dealing with challenge |
| Stability | Attitudes to negative behaviours; Relationships; Self-care; Managing strong feelings |
| Risk of re-offending (for Community Justice participants only) | As above plus Peer influence |
| Employability | Ability to set goals and work towards them; Personal responsibility; Give and receive feedback; Accept the opinions of others; Time management |





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Positive destinations

After participants progress on, we follow up with them to find out if they achieved a positive destination - entrance into employment, education, training or volunteering role. We record both first positive destination, and positive destinations sustained over 3 or 6 months to represent longer-term success.





About Venture Trust

We are a registered charity, based in Edinburgh, supporting people in Scotland and the UK, struggling with complex life circumstances.

We are passionate about enabling people who want to make changes in their lives for a better future. For our participants, our support represent an opportunity - a chance to boost confidence, motivation and aspirations, and to develop the skills to make their ambitions reality.



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Our vision

Everyone, irrespective of their past, can achieve their potential for a healthy, happy and fulfilling life. By 2024, we aspire that more people, ready for change, build the foundations to thrive and succeed for the long term.

Our mission

To help people to realise their potential by providing life-changing personal development. By offering intensive learning and development in communities and the Scottish wilderness, we support people to gain life skills, stability and confidence. Our work aims to end cycles of disadvantage and adversity for individuals, their families and in communities.



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Venture Trust is a registered charity in Scotland (SC038932) and England and Wales (285891). Registered office: 71 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4BE



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