



SURF Awards Shared Learning Workshop

Removing barriers to employability

7th May 2026

Meet RTWS

Who We Are

- ▶ Routes to Work South is a registered charity established in 2005, working across South Lanarkshire to support people affected by unemployment and wider disadvantage.
- ▶ We are South Lanarkshire's employment champion, delivering locally embedded, person-centred employability support across all four localities, including rural communities.
- ▶ We operate as a small to medium-sized organisation with 45 staff, the majority of whom live within the local authority area, giving us strong community insight and connection.

Meet RTWS

Who We Support

- ▶ Individuals facing multiple and complex barriers
- ▶ Those not engaging with traditional employability support

How We Work

- ▶ Client-centred, flexible support shaped around individual need
- ▶ No fixed pathway – progression guided by the person
- ▶ Focus on barrier removal, not just employment outcomes

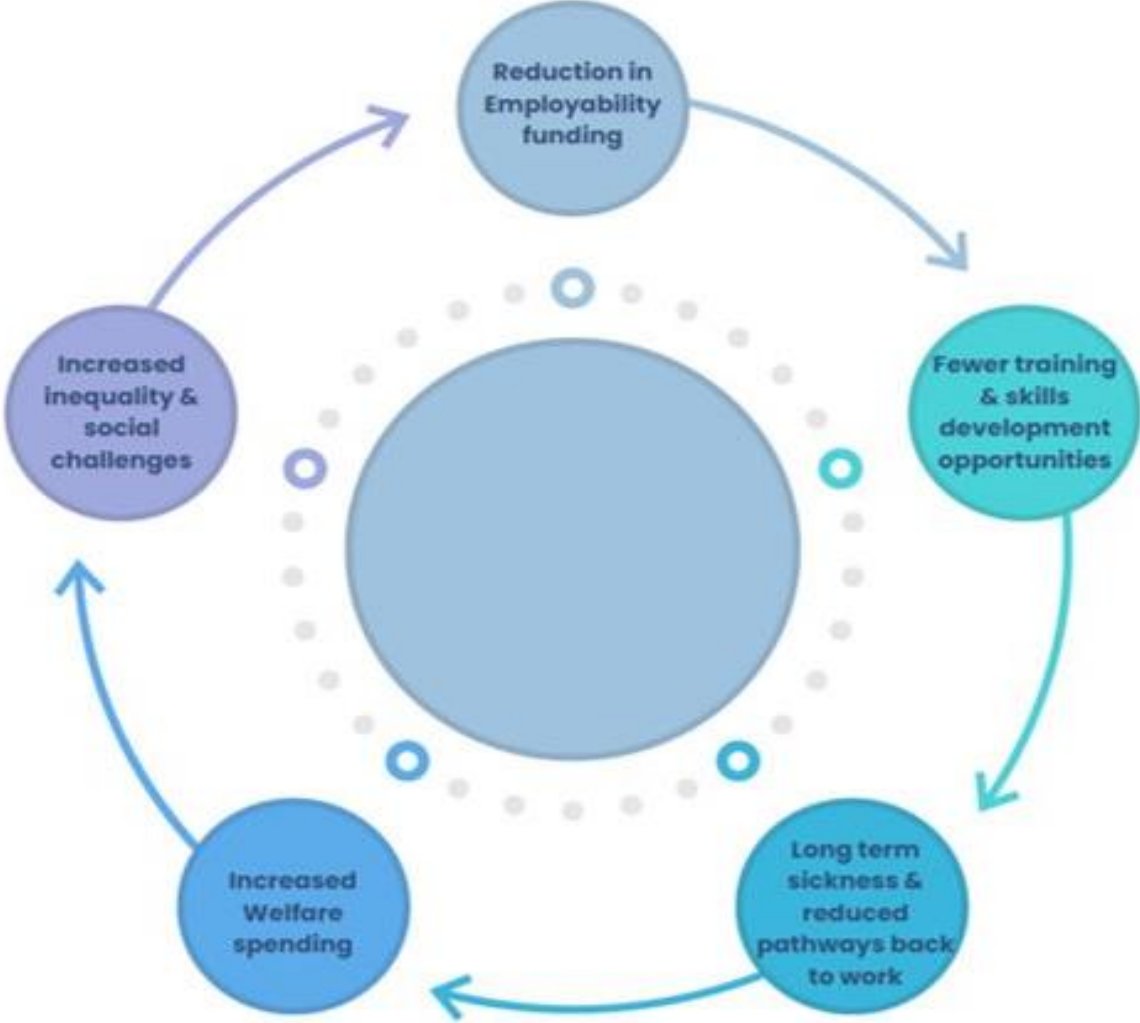
Working with Partners

- ▶ Close collaboration with local services and agencies
- ▶ Joined-up support to reduce fragmentation
- ▶ Acting as an honest broker to connect people to the right support

Our Focus

- ▶ Rebuilding engagement and trust with services
- ▶ Addressing underlying barriers to progression
- ▶ Supporting sustainable pathways into employment, training, or education

Challenges and Opportunities



Responding to Local Needs



- ▶ Economic inactivity is at its highest since 2004
- ▶ People who have disengaged from services for longer than 12 months only have a 1 in 23 chance of ever returning to the labour market

Collaboration that creates change



Overcoming Barriers



- ▶ 72% reported they felt socially isolated
- ▶ 68% reported low confidence and a lack of self-belief
- ▶ 61% reported financial insecurity
- ▶ 12% had experienced homelessness
- ▶ 78% keen to develop new skills
- ▶ 69% have a long-term goal of moving into Further Education, Training or Employment

Delivering Improved Outcomes



132 clients have registered and engaged with the service.



49 clients have gained new qualifications and skills.



55% of clients have already progressed into positive destinations including training, volunteering and employment.



51% of clients have benefited from tailored health and wellbeing interventions, including 1-2-1 life coaching, counselling and CBT sessions.



70% of clients report improved confidence and self-belief.



WIN clients have put in over 300 hours of Volunteering time.

Delivering Impact

“Because of WIN everything changed for the better - it has changed my life”

Alexandra

“The building confidence course helped me speak openly for the first time in 5 years”

Joseph

“For the first time in a long time, I actually feel supported.”

Chloe

“My confidence has grown, my mental health is better and I'm gaining new skills”

Chris

“WIN has exceeded all my expectations - I feel comfortable, supported, and positive about the future.”

Ryan

The Future of WIN

Growing Recognition

- ▶ Attracting national attention, with the Scottish Government visiting to explore WIN's impact
- ▶ Recognised as an innovative response to rising economic inactivity

Why the Model Works

- ▶ Wellbeing-first, person-centred approach
- ▶ Focus on removing barriers to engagement
- ▶ Strong local partnerships and flexible delivery
- ▶ Successfully reaching individuals not engaged in traditional services

Our Vision

- ▶ Co-produced, community-led growth
- ▶ Continuous evolution as community needs change
- ▶ Strengthening partnerships and introducing new interventions
- ▶ Staying true to core principles: *engagement without pressure & barrier removal*

Questions & Answers

