



# Annual Impact Report

2022 - 2023

Stepping Stones NI

[steppingstonesni.com](http://steppingstonesni.com)

# Everyone deserves an equal opportunity to develop and grow

This year we celebrated 25 years of Stepping Stones NI making a positive impact in our community. It has been a fantastic year for us with much to celebrate including awards, a new social enterprise and funding secured to create more employment and development opportunities for people with learning disabilities and barriers to learning and employment.





# Impact *snapshot*

276

People with a disability or health condition received employment support

73

People supported to secure paid employment

63

People with learning disabilities benefited from our social enterprises

## Projects

## Details

## Outcomes

### Employment Academies

Academies aimed at labour market employment gaps working with premiere employers across industries such as construction, manufacturing, retail, hospitality and catering, IT and customer service.

- 12 Academies since April 2022
- 50 Referrals
- 36 Jobs

### Prosper

Partnership with four other disability focused organisations securing UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment for 2 years.

- Strong partnership with Triangle Housing Association AEL, Appleby Trust and Compass Advocacy Network
- £2,255,000 secured to March 2025

### Navigation House

New horticulture and wellbeing social enterprise at the historic Navigation House for people with learning disabilities to gain new skills in horticulture and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

- Project commenced 1st February 2023 - lease signed with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
- Well-being retreat with 40 participants

### YOU Service

Youth programme for 16-24 year olds supporting personal development, future planning and employment.

- 35 young people participated
- 14 young people progressed to education & training
- 4 young people gained employment

# Our year in review

I am delighted to report that 2022 - 2023 was another extremely successful year for us with targets exceeded, funding secured and organisational growth.



In this reporting period (1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023) we continued to deliver our range of services providing greater opportunities for people with disabilities and barriers to develop new skills, qualifications, employability and their overall health and wellbeing.

January 2023 saw the beginning of our 25th year delivering services in Northern Ireland. We have so much to celebrate and are extremely grateful for all of our friends and supporters over the years.

2022 - 2023 was a challenging period being the final year of ESF funding due to Brexit, presenting our organisation and many others with funding uncertainty. I am pleased to report that, through a collaborative partnership with four other disability focused organisations, Stepping Stones NI was successful in our bid for UKSPF, securing funding investment for the next two years.

This year also saw five award wins for us including Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council: Business Awards 2023 - Winner of Best Social Enterprise, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council: Business Awards 2023 - High Commendation for Best Company to Work For, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council: Mayor's Community Awards 2023 - Transforming Lives, National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards 2023: Sporting Chance Award (Disability Football Team) and the National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards 2023: Outstanding Contribution for myself as Chief Officer of Stepping Stones NI.

Overall, it was a great year for us with our final ESF programme targets exceeded by 186% and 73 people into employment through our employment support programmes. We signed the lease for Navigation House with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and opened the doors to our new horticulture and wellbeing social enterprise.

We continue to be driven by our core vision and mission to improve the lives of people with a disability and barriers to learning employment through opportunity to advance through learning, qualifications and employment.

*Paula Jennings*  
Chief Officer

## Key Highlights...

### Navigation House

This year we added a sixth social enterprise to our portfolio. In February 2023 we secured the lease from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for Navigation House - our new horticulture and wellbeing hub.

### Prosper

Together with our four Prosper partners we secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to create more opportunities for people with barriers to develop and gain employment,

### Targets Exceeded

Our final ESF targets were exceeded by 186% with 73 people gaining employment (target exceeded by 200%) and 276 people with a disability or health condition gaining employment support (exceeding target by 126%).

### Celebrating 25 Years

This year marked 25 years of Stepping Stones NI. We are proud to celebrate our impact and achievements and to thank all those that have made our organisation what it is today.

# Impact

**338**

training units  
delivered

**100%**

Employer  
satisfaction

**1024**

soft skills outcomes  
achieved

**100%**

Trainee  
satisfaction

**12**

New  
academies

**100%**

Parent / Carer  
satisfaction

**142**

courses to 10  
community groups

**95%**

Staff  
satisfaction



## Funding summary

**£5,673**

Donations & Legacies

**£392,571**

Trading Activities

**£1,309,431**

Charitable Activities

# We'd like to thank all our staff, volunteers funders and supporters.

## Together, we create a lasting *change*



### Acknowledgements

With special thanks to our funders, employers and customers who choose to support us and believe in our vision and plans to make a positive impact on the lives of people with learning disabilities and barriers to employment and learning.



Department for  
**Communities**

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department for  
**Commonities**



Department for the  
**Economy**



South Eastern Health  
and Social Care Trust



Funded by  
UK Government

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UP**



Stepping Stones NI  
39 Seymour Street  
Lisburn  
BT27 4SY  
T: 028 9266 7124  
E: [info@stepping-stones.org.uk](mailto:info@stepping-stones.org.uk)  
W: [steppingstonesni.com](http://steppingstonesni.com)

