

2024/25



IMPACT REPORT



Our Year In Review

*"We deliver exceptional outcomes that transform lives
and strengthen our communities"*

2024/25

As I look back on 2024/25, my heart is full. This year has reminded me of why we do what we do at Stepping Stones NI and why we love what we do. Stepping Stones NI is People, Potential, Purpose, and Passion, our 4 Ps. It's about the transformations that happen when we believe in creating real, lasting impact.

Through the dedication of our teams this year, **201 individuals stepped into meaningful employment**, and **98 people with learning disability and barriers to learning were supported** through our social enterprises and youth service. Each journey and story has been unique. I have seen confidence blossom, skills flourish, and lives changed for a better future.

Our six social enterprises are places where the magic happens every day. They provide real-life working environments, where friendships are forged, strengths are discovered, and where **inclusion isn't just a word—it's lived and breathed**. We are thankful for our partnership with SETRUST and proud to support every person who walks through our doors with their own dreams for the future. a learning disability and barriers to learning.

I am incredibly grateful for our fantastic employer partnerships, which work alongside us to create opportunities for employment, dignity, and belonging. Our partnerships with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council have been absolutely vital in creating these life-changing connections through the delivery of Labour Market Partnerships, and I am thankful for their commitment to inclusive employment for people with a disability.

To our remarkable staff and volunteers—you are the heartbeat of everything we do. Your compassion, dedication, and unwavering belief in every person you support make all the difference. To our parents and carers—thank you for trusting us with your loved ones' journeys. To our employer partners—thank you for seeing the potential in everyone we support. To my Board of Trustees, thank you for supporting me.

Yes, the challenges facing our disability sector are real and pressing, but so is our determination. **We will continue to deliver quality services, champion genuine inclusion** with the brightest futures for people with a learning disability and barriers to learning.

Why? Because **everyone deserves the chance to thrive**.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

With gratitude and hope and lots of pride!

Paula Jennings

Chief Officer, Stepping Stones NI



Our Impact

531

People with a disability or health condition received employment support.

201

Jobs secured for people accessing our employability service.

79

People with learning disabilities benefited from our social enterprises.



307

Accredited qualifications gained by 176 participants.

100%

Employer satisfaction.

19

Participants on our Youth Service.

100%

Trainee satisfaction.

32

New academies.

100%

Parent / Carer satisfaction.

142

Courses to 10 community groups.

Key Highlights

- Secured Year 3 UK Shared Prosperity Funding as part of the Prosper Consortium.
- Won Labour Market Partnership contracts with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.
- Provided catering services at Lisburn Civic Centre.
- Created meaningful social impact across our communities.
- Delivered services for people with learning disabilities through our social enterprises and Navigation House.
- Developed successful partnerships with Hendersons Retail, EE, OCS, Premier Inn, McDonald's, Foot Anstey McKees, HCK, Haldane Fisher and more.
- Celebrated our Chief Officer winning *Leader of the Year* at the Social Enterprise NI Awards and being Highly Commended at the Social Enterprise UK Awards.
- Hosted our Annual BBQ and Christmas Trainee Party.



Projects

Details

Outcomes

Prosper	Innovative pre-employment academies and training courses delivered with industry-specific companies, leading to paid jobs for participants reducing economic inactivity.	• 393 people supported • 154 people gained employment • 32 industry-led academies • 192 accredited qualifications
Youth Service	Youth programme for 16–24 year olds supporting personal development, future planning and employment.	• 5 gained paid employment • 13 progressed to education or training • 19 referrals to the service • 12 accredited qualifications
SPARKS	Delivered in partnership with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, the SPARKS programme supported people with disabilities to improve numeracy skills through specialised bootcamps.	• 42 participants • 11 gained an accredited OCN qualification in numeracy • 100% satisfactions rate
Thrive	In partnership with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Thrive 2 supported people with disabilities or long-term health conditions to access qualifications, work placements and employment opportunities.	• 40 people recruited • 16 people into employment • 37 qualifications gained • 32 employers engaged • 100% satisfaction Rate
Disability Employment Programme	Working with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, the disability employment programme supported local people with disabilities or health conditions into work, improving their employability and skills through tailored training and employer partnerships.	• 56 referrals to the Programme • 26 people gained paid employment • 55 accredited qualifications • 100% satisfaction rate

Income Generated 24/25

£ 2,253,774

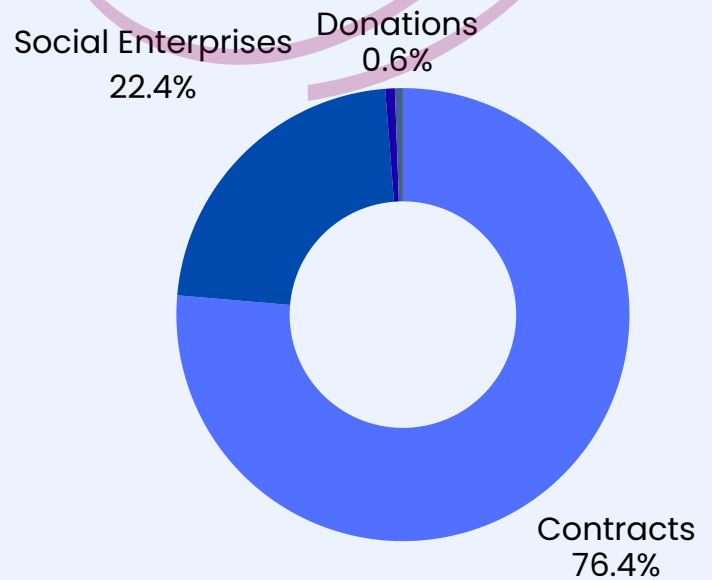
Our income is generated through a mix of match-funded programme contracts, revenue from our social enterprises, and donations.

Funding Summary:

- Donations & Legacies: £12,752
- Charitable Activities: £1,721,006
- Trading Activities: £504,585

Key Highlights:

- Income increased by 7.9%
- Trading income rose by 11.6%
- Staff numbers increased by 20%



"The service that Stepping Stones NI provides is invaluable to young people and their families. We cannot speak highly enough of the staff. Five Stars!"

Parent Of Trainee.



Acknowledgements

With thanks to our funders and supporters:



"The new experiences Stepping Stones NI has given me are things I didn't think I would ever get to experience."

Youth Service Participant.



Funded by
UK Government



Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council

LCCC
Lisburn &
Castlereagh
City Council



South Eastern Health
and Social Care Trust

The
Rank Foundation
a pebble in the pond

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