

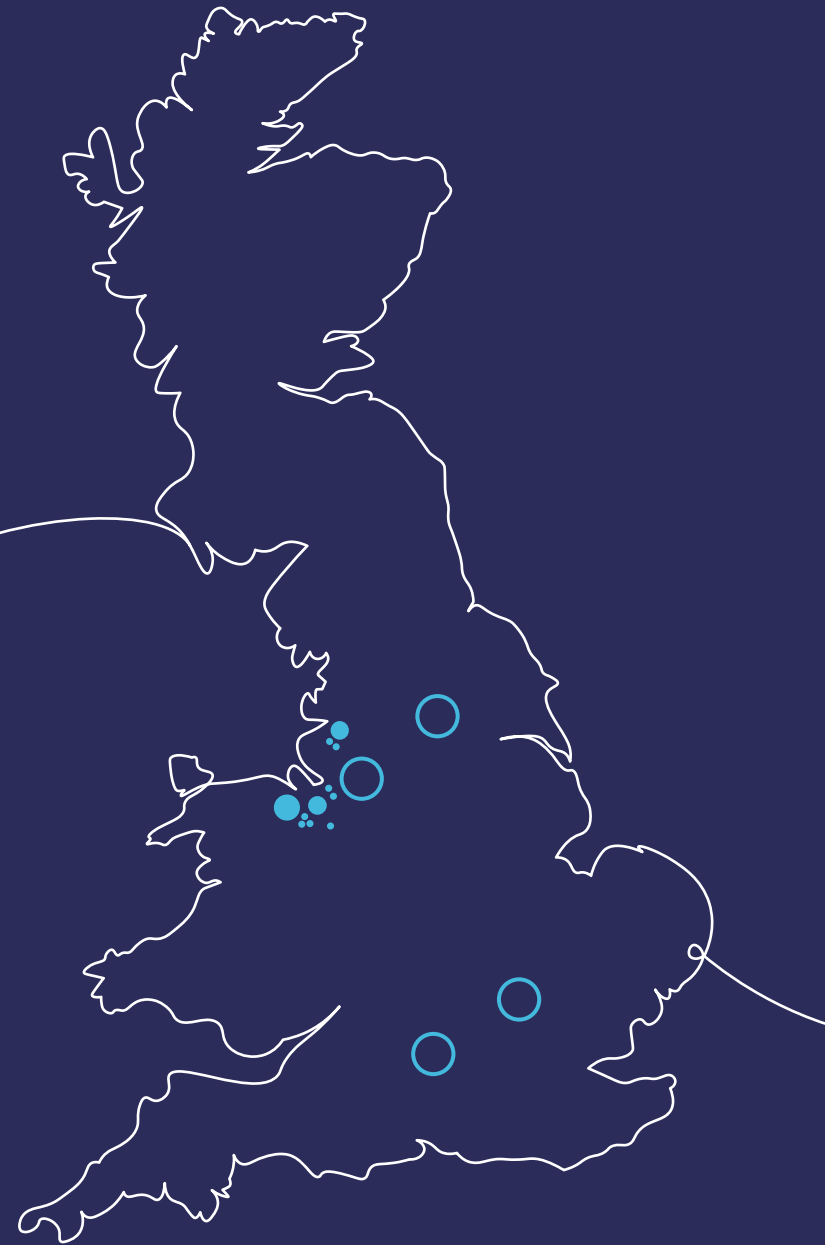


the connectives

DELIVERING SOCIAL VALUE

APRIL 2022–JULY 2024

INDEPENDENTLY ANALYSED AND PREPARED BY THE CONNECTIVES



DELIVERING OUR WORK. GENERATING OUTCOMES. CHANGING LIVES.

Here at the Progress Group (TPG), we change lives via each of our businesses. We inform, inspire, influence, teach, coach, train and transform the lives of the individuals we support and communities where we work.

We know that together our work means more, delivers more and effects a greater change, but to fully understand the impact of this, we commissioned The Connectives to provide an independent assessment and enumeration of the social value generated by our Group between March 2022 – July 2024.

Across our group, we support tens of thousands of individuals every year and work with thousands of employers and Local Authorities. Our education, training and staffing solutions are life changing. They are developed and shaped to meet the needs of industry and the people working within them, and we are continually evolving to meet those ever changing demands. We believe in our solutions, feel their impacts and see the incredible difference we make.

This report demonstrates the impact of our combined work and how the activities delivered by each of our subsidiaries is greater than the sum of the parts. It evidences our reach, our deliverables and the clear impacts we are having as a family of businesses. It shows how we are a purpose driven, outcome focused organisation.



TOGETHER WE ARE TRANSFORMING LIVES

£70,806,000 OF SOCIAL VALUE
GENERATED COLLECTIVELY



360

students supported
with Progress Schools



2,173

prison inmates engaged
in training



18,011

young people supported
by Progress Careers across
100 schools



131,056

vocational qualifications across 120
courses delivered to adult social care
by Flourish



146

GCSE passes within
Progress Schools



510

schools engaged with Attachment
and Trauma Training via Flourish



3,243

adult learner achievers at
Complete Skills Solutions



600+

webinars delivered by Flourish

IMMEDIATE COST SAVINGS TO THE PUBLIC PURSE, WITH SIGNIFICANT LONG-TERM GAINS

Through our education and training delivery, we are driving immediate cost savings to the public purse, which will also translate into long-term gains with those individuals becoming more socially and economically prosperous.

Activity	Savings per person/unit	No. of people/units	Attribution	Deadweight	Value of savings (£)	Source
Cost of alternative provision after a permanent exclusion from school	7181	165	100%	10%	1,066,379	Misspent youth (2007) and New Economy Unit Cost database
Formal part time training undertaking part time education or having done so in the last year increases levels of well-being	4740	156	90%	20%	532,397	Lifelong Learning and Wellbeing: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Adult Learning and Subjective Wellbeing, 2009
Reduction in educational underachievement costs because of tackling NEET numbers	6514	9170	50%	18%	24,192,018	Public finance costs of a single generation of NEETs not in education, employment, or training. Report: Estimating the Cost of Child Poverty in Scotland
Someone moving into employment will produce a net saving to the state comprising of reduced benefit payments and increased tax intake	28420	301	75%	19%	5,196,810	Whitebarn 2014: SROI Report - Charmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups



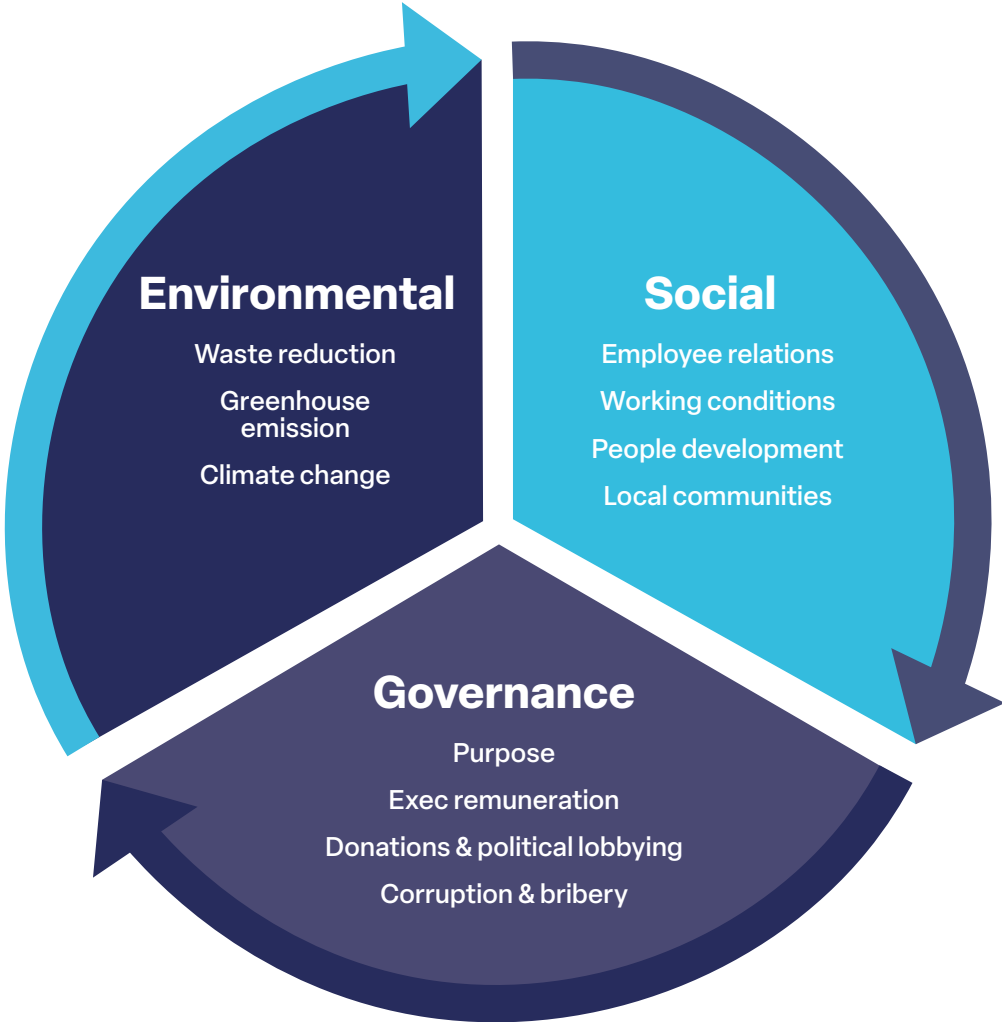
OUR ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPACTS

As part of our latest set of social accounts, we also analysed our Environmental, Social and Governance impacts of our business.

The questions we asked ourselves were

- How lightly are we living in the world?
- How are we treating our people and communities?
- How is the business being managed and led?

ESG MEASURES



OUR FINDINGS

Environmental	Social	Governance
EV Scheme launched Colleagues able to purchase electric cars via salary sacrifice scheme	Employee Relations Employee consultative committee established extending staff engagement	Purpose Stated purpose mission and values in service of positive social change
Cycle to work scheme Hybrid working reducing travel	Working Conditions Placed in the Times Top 100 Best Places to Work – medium sized business – 35 measures scored by employees Life assurance provided Flexible hours on Fridays TPG pays staff who are foster carers whilst they attend training	Executive remuneration Committed to paying all staff the Living Wage. Analysis of salaries across the Group show that the highest salaries are no more than 9 times the lowest salaries
	People Development Growing talent through apprenticeships – 7 in the reporting period Leadership development – invested an average of £3500 per colleague on professional development, in order to help build stronger cohesive teams where people know their part in the organisation's success Closed the business for one day for our fourth all colleague conference to give colleagues a chance to reconnect with each other and refocus on our purpose and priorities	Donations & political lobbying Active engagement with government via ministers to lobby for positive change in the education, health and social care sectors. Members of APPG on AP Lobby MP's where the Group has offices or schools in their constituency; Metro Mayors, councils and local authorities
	Local Communities Donations totalling £79,270 to local community organisations come from each part of the group TPG's willingness to partner and support the communities it serves is evidence of the organisation living into its mission	Corruption & bribery Policy in place and reviewed regularly NED external and Board Advisors for rigour



THE KEY CONCLUSIONS

We continue to support cost savings to the public purse and deliver value for money by

- Reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training by helping to progress them into positive opportunities
- Supporting young people who have been excluded from mainstream, or who were not thriving within a mainstream setting, to become active citizens post 16
- Moving adults into or closer to a sustained job in their local labour market
- Providing education opportunities for prison leavers that builds confidence, a positive self-image, empathy, and the ability to be an active citizen and thereby reduce recidivism
- Addressing the workforce crisis in social care by developing the workforce to drive excellence in care
- Putting control into the hands of the people who want to directly purchase their care services via affordable and reliable shift cover

OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACTS

Increased £'s
in pockets that can be spent in local communities

Increased £'s
spent with local supply chain partners, supporting sustainable local economies

Skilled workforces
able to meet the demands of UK PLC

Confident, creative
and innovative young people ready to shape society

Happier, healthier families and communities

THE STORY SO FAR...

April 2022 – July 2024 has been a period of consolidation and development across The Progress Group. We have closed one business due to shifts in the market as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and invested in two new businesses who have now, along with Grey Matter Learning, come together under the one brand, Flourish.

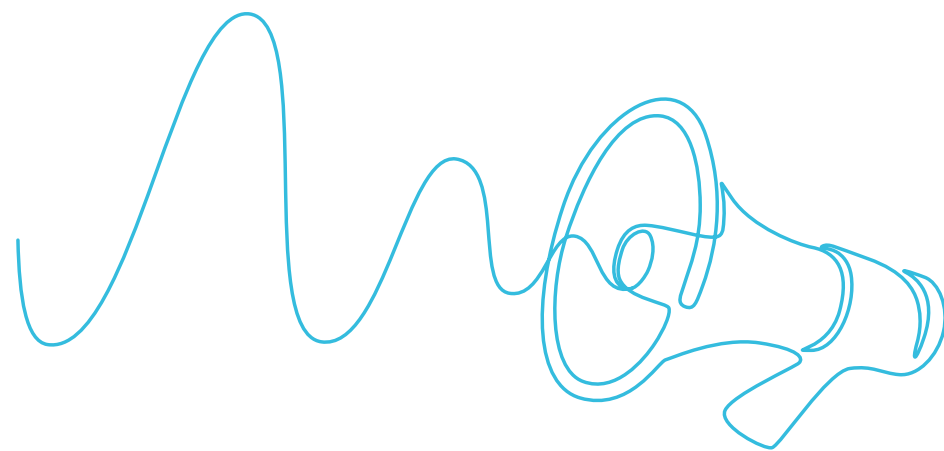
We have innovated and invested significantly to become a tech-led, digital first business, bucking the trend in the education and health and social care sectors to improve service quality and customer experience.

We have overhauled our curriculum at Progress Schools, introducing the three tiered Build, Grow, Launch approach that provides a solid core of essential, ambitious, and fundamental knowledge in key academic areas. This is coupled with creative skills, life lessons and wider opportunities to help our pupils become more confident, resilient, and independent.

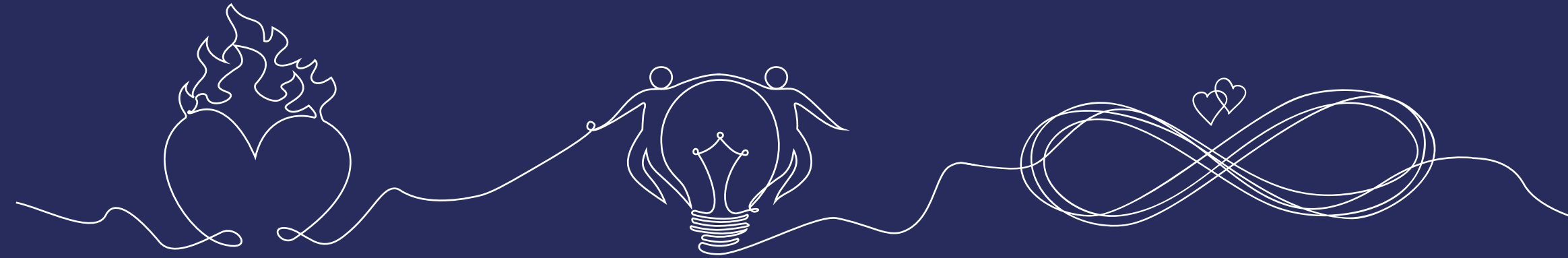
Complete Skills Solutions have expanded their sector specific adult training offer to support more individuals. Their ever growing prison education programme has provided greater opportunities for prison inmates and their Stepping Stones programme has delivered a broad range of transferable skills and knowledge to those living in West Yorkshire.

And at Progress Careers, in addition to helping attract new professionals into the sector and investing in them via apprenticeships, tackling this skill shortage head on, they have also continued to deliver an exceptional service, boasting a 100% recommendation rate.

And never ones to stand still, we have built on our previous work to create a truly collaborative culture where colleagues come together and share learning for the benefit of the group. We have invested significantly in our colleagues and our benefits packages for them. This has resulted in us achieving the accolade of being named with The Sunday Times Best Places To Work for medium sized businesses. And finally, we have won more awards. Progress Careers were named Most Supportive Employer, Flourish received a Workforce Development Award and Complete Skills Solutions picked up a Learner of the Year Award.



THE CHALLENGES FACING US



The Progress Group

The Progress Group, like many UK businesses, faced significant challenges, which were reflective of global trends and domestic conditions. But despite these challenges, we still grew our groups of businesses, enabling us to support more people

Economic pressures

- › Inflation, interest rates, and cash flow
- › Access to affordable debt, financial planning and stability

Talent retention and workforce well-being

- › Struggled to attract and retain skilled workers
- › Mental health and employee wellbeing particularly in sectors like health care, and education, where the Group is prominent
- › Competitive employee benefits and workplace culture improvements are necessary to address these challenges

Regulatory and market adjustments

- › Changing regulatory landscapes in health and education as criticism of CQC and Ofsted is leading to a review of their practices

Cybersecurity threats

- › Data breaches, phishing, and IT disruptions
- › Threatening customer trust and exposing businesses to fines and reputational damage

To remain resilient, we focused on proactive risk management, improving workforce support, enhancing cybersecurity, and investing in our people

Progress Schools

Alternative education providers like Progress Schools faced pressing challenges as they navigated an increasingly complex educational landscape

Funding shortfalls

- › Funding pressures remain a significant hurdle. The per-pupil funding for APs has not kept pace with inflation or growing demand
- › For example, AP students receive £10,000 in place funding, significantly higher than mainstream students, but this amount has remained static since 2015/16. Rising costs and increased demand for places have exacerbated the financial strain

Rising demand

- › There was growing need for AP services, due to issues like rising exclusion rates and higher numbers of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Resources and capacity are limited, leading to difficulties in accommodating these students across the AP system

Educational outcomes

- › Only 5% of AP students achieved strong GCSE passes in English and Maths compared to 64% in the mainstream sector, highlighting the need for services like Progress Schools

Curriculum flexibility

- › The national curriculum model is not the only way to provide good education, many pupils in AP achieve better outcomes through vocational and enrichment activity and may be better placed to meet local skills demands as a consequence

Safeguarding and support services

- › Delays in accessing external services, such as mental health support, can leave vulnerable students without adequate care placing an additional burden on staff

Staffing challenges

- › Recruitment and retention was a persistent challenge across the education sector, including APs. High workloads, low pay relative to responsibilities, and burnout are prevalent

Off rolling and accountability

- › Practices like off rolling, where schools encourage students to leave to improve performance metrics, place additional pressure on APs

Addressing these challenges requires some systemic reform, including

- › Increased funding
- › More robust mental health and SEND support systems
- › Improved educational strategies to close attainment gaps



Progress Careers

UK careers advice providers faced several key challenges

Funding constraints

- Budget limitations restricted the scope and quality of careers advice services, especially in schools. Progress Careers is providing excellent quality services but with funding constraints
- Providers are struggling to meet the increased demand for guidance due to limited financial and staffing resources in schools

Mental health and wellbeing issues

- The mental health crisis among young people is compounding challenges for careers advisers, who find themselves addressing mental health concerns alongside career planning

Employer engagement and labour market mismatches

- Careers advice has struggled to align to evolving job market demands. Employers and educators must communicate effectively about skill requirements, if young people are to be prepared to secure and perform well in-demand roles

Diversity and inclusion gaps

- Many graduates report feeling disadvantaged in their job searches due to ethnicity, social class, or other personal characteristics, highlighting the need for tailored advice and support to promote equity in employment opportunities

Digital barriers

- Digital exclusion is still a problem for some families, particularly in less affluent areas, limiting access to opportunities and services

Complete Skills Solutions

Specialist training providers like CSS are facing a challenging operating environment

Funding constraints

- Reduced budgets and delays in funding allocations are creating financial strain. Providers have had to manage tighter budgets, limiting their ability to invest in resources, staff, and technology

Staffing shortages

- Attracting and retaining qualified staff, particularly fields such as STEM and vocational training, is a critical issue

Demand-supply imbalance

- Some providers are finding it hard to meet employer demand for upskilling and reskilling workers in areas such as green technologies and digital innovation. A mismatch between available training programs and workforce needs intensifies this challenge. CSS has done well to address this challenge during the reporting period

Flourish

Formerly GML, AC Education, My Work Mode. Social care and education training organisations are facing some challenges including

Workforce recruitment and retention

- 8.3% vacancy rate, equating to over 30,000 unfilled positions
- International recruitment has been impacted by changes to visa regulations
- Pressure on existing staff and can compromise service delivery quality

Financial constraints

- Local authorities funded contracts may fail to cover the full cost of services
- Inflationary pressures have forced some providers to withdraw from contracts or cease operations

Demand exceeding capacity

- An ageing population and growing care needs means demand for trained professionals in health and social care has outstripped supply
- Integration between health and social care systems remains poor, causing inefficiencies and delays in patient care

Technological adaptation

- Flourish must incorporate awareness of tools such as remote monitoring and wearables into programs to ensure that professionals are prepared for modern care environments

Evolving policy and political landscape

- As an election approaches a possible change in government could result in a reduced emphasis on privatisation, but uncertainty makes long-term planning difficult for training organisations

Pay and career development

- Pay for care workers is often lower than comparable roles in the NHS, impacting job satisfaction and retention. Training organisations face challenges in promoting the sector as a viable and rewarding career path

Flourish is addressing these challenges to support workforce growth and retention. Collaboration between training providers, policymakers, and employers will be crucial for the sector's sustainability

WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

Centralised leadership

Shared purpose and values:
Every part of the Group knows what and how they should be contributing

Shared policies and procedures:
Ensures consistency and contributes to a shared culture



Economies of scale

Pooled funds and resources: Creates more intercompany subsidiary opportunities

Supply chain savings: Via Group purchasing

Better services received via effective contract management

Cross service referrals

Customers could tap into various training and employment opportunities available throughout the Group

IDENTIFYING THE OPERATING CONTEXT'S

To fully understand the operating context's facing The Progress Group during this reporting period, numerous steps were taken by The Connectives.

Consultation

with leadership and delivery colleagues

As a result...

the key benefits of a group-model were identified, as well as the key challenges impacting each subsidiary during the reporting period

By understanding these

operating contexts, we can understand the significant progress made despite these changes



A DEEPER DIVE INTO PROGRESS SCHOOLS

Who are we?

Progress Schools works to tackle stigmas and challenge perceptions to bring lasting change to current social norms. As a nationally based, alternative education provider with numerous independent secondary schools located throughout England, we provide high-quality, supportive, and inspirational teaching to young people at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Our bespoke approach to alternative provision supports our students to either return to mainstream education or progress into a positive destination when leaving us in Year 11.

The core outcomes and impacts

- Reduced persistent truancy
- Looked after children supported through education
- Reduced lifetime costs of permanent exclusions
- Reduction in educational underachievement costs by tackling NEET numbers
- Increased completion of formal education
- Improved youth confidence

£1.48 SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR EVERY £1 SPENT

£12,814,900 MINIMUM SOCIAL VALUE



CORE OUTPUTS

The core outcomes and impacts

380

students supported between 2023 – 2024

689

hours of engaging and lobbying MP's around AP provision

42%

average improvement of 42% across all schools

1903

days of placements undertaken in vocational environments

12

apprenticeships commenced (3 completed, 2 on programme)

540

hours of support to 3 university student placements

146

GCSE passes across PS AP settings – 50% pass rate compared to 67.6% in UK mainstream setting

165

of these showed improvement through reductions in suspensions

30

students reintegrated to mainstream education*

* This is not a stated aim of AP but helpful to understand that some students can transition back to mainstream schooling





A DEEPER DIVE INTO PROGRESS CAREERS

Who are we?

Progress Careers delivers a transformational Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) service that works in harmony to enhance a school’s career programme.

Their dedication to a people-first culture sees them collaborate, innovate, and elevate aspirations that enable young people to forge sustainable career paths, empowering them to make their own life choices.

Together we can do more, to be more.

The core outcomes and impacts

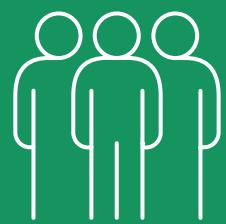
- Increased employability
- Increased understanding and access to online employment and training opportunities
- Improved youth confidence
- Increased ability and appetite to participate in life

£21.98

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR EVERY £1 SPENT

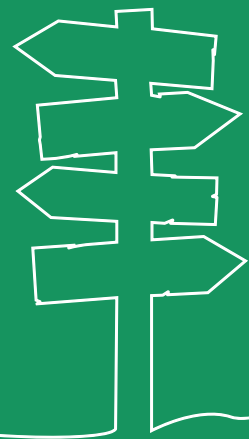
£32,354,419

MINIMUM SOCIAL VALUE



CORE OUTPUTS

18,011 young people supported across 100 schools in the reporting period



Young people progressed into	380 entry level qualifications	2,187 level 1 qualifications	3,701 level 2 qualifications	10,734 level 3 qualifications	
Young people progressed into	670 other 6th form college	3,135 6th form college	2,654 school 6th form	9,545 FE college	652 entry level qualifications
Top 5 destination sectors for young people	950 health and social sciences	1,960 construction	1,511 engineering	6,524 A levels	703 other
In addition, young people has achieved	146 employment	324 NEET	80 employment with training		





A DEEPER DIVE INTO COMPLETE SKILLS SOLUTIONS

Who are we?

Complete Skills Solutions works with a wide range of partners and employers to support individuals who want to develop both personally and professionally. Their core delivery, which is funded via the Adult Skills Fund, is aligned to the skills agenda and supports those who are out of work or looking to climb the career ladder.

Their prison based support enables inmates to engage in learning and development whilst within a prison setting, promoting positive interventions to motivate offenders whilst offering new opportunities for those soon to be released. Complete Skills Solutions also deliver provision using UKSPF funds, helping those hardest to reach to gain new, transferable skills.

£8,848,968

FUNDED DELIVERY

£5,162,426

PRISON DELIVERY

£5.21

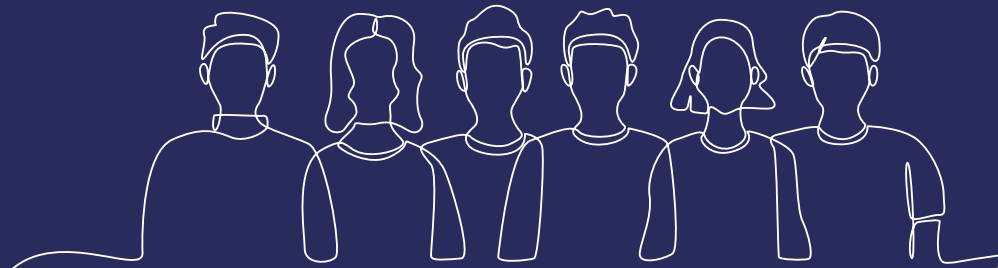
SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR EVERY £1 SPENT

£14,011,394

TOTAL SOCIAL VALUE GENERATED



CORE OUTPUTS



Funded delivery

3243

achievers

2624

level 1 (80.9%)

2419

male (74.5%)

378

level 2 (11.6%)

824

female (25.5%)

10

level 3 (0.4%)

156

entry level (4.8%)

282

learners with LLDD (8.7%)

Prison delivery

2173

starts

8

level 1

1965

male (90.4%)

14

level 2

208

female (9.6%)

13

13 other

1551

learners

95%

pass rate

2017

achievements

35

courses offered





A DEEPER DIVE INTO FLOURISH

Includes AC Education, Grey Matter Learning and MyWorkMode

Who are we?

Flourish works with the adults and children’s social care and education sectors to deliver training and staffing solutions. Via our suite of Click products, we are passionate about creating a connected community where everyone thrives.

From our impressive portfolio of online courses, our interactive programmes and our online shift cover marketplace, we are redefining what recruitment and training looks like, one click at a time.

The core outcomes and impacts

- Increased understanding and access to online employment and training opportunities
- Competent, confident and capable foster carers
- Improved success rates and longevity in foster carer matches
- Improved school attendance
- Improved educational attainment
- Increased employability
- Happier, healthier families
- Improved confidence

£8,470,815 ADULT SOCIAL CARE MINIMUM SOCIAL VALUE

£29.42 ADULT SOCIAL CARE SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR EVERY £1 SPENT

£3,154,472 CHILDREN’S SERVICES MINIMUM SOCIAL VALUE

£3.02 SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR EVERY £1 SPENT



CORE OUTPUTS

Children’s social care

20,400
participants

40
average attendance
40 staff per school

173
other organisations
received training

98
additional schools
registered to commence
A&T training

510
schools engaged in
Attachment and Trauma
training in the period

156
L3 diploma registrations

132
face to face learning
sessions delivered

616
webinars
delivered

135
courses offered all in
child development
and safety

Adult’s social care

120
online training courses

131,056
vocational
qualifications delivered

70+
local authorities



HOW DID WE ARRIVE AT THE NUMBERS?

A combination of Social Accounting and Audit (SAA), and social return on investment (SROI) methodologies have been used to identify, measure and report on the social value generated by The Progress Group.

SAA is a framework used to assess and report the social, environmental, and economic impacts of an organisation's activities. It aims to enhance accountability and transparency by evaluating how an organisation contributes to societal goals.

The methodology involves several key steps

- 1. Stakeholder Engagement:** Identifying and involving stakeholders to understand their concerns and expectations
- 2. Setting Objectives:** Defining the social, environmental, and economic objectives that align with the organisation's mission, vision, and values as well as stakeholder interests
- 3. Data Collection:** Gathering quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, interviews, and other tools to measure performance against established objectives
- 4. Analysis:** Assessing the collected data to identify trends, outliers, impacts, and areas for improvement
- 5. Reporting:** Preparing a social audit report that communicates findings, highlighting both achievements and challenges
- 6. Continuous Improvement:** Using the insights gained to refine practices, set new targets, and enhance overall performance. When effectively applied, the process of social accounting can act as an effective strategic management tool, informing each part of the business, where and how, it is generating the most positive social impact

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT METHODOLOGY

- SROI is a principles – based approach but focused upon the financial/numerical assessment of performance
- It uses financial proxies to evaluate social benefit (agreed or created proxies)

It ensures allowance is made for

- Attribution – the individual outcomes that have been secured because of the support from each part of the group
- Deadweight – the achievements that would have happened without intervention from The Progress Group
- It allows us to create a £:£ ratio showing the social benefit achieved for every £ spent on services across The Progress Group

OUR KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Creating Social Value continues to run through the DNA of our Group now – every subsidiary is positively contributing to social change
- Our increased level of activity has translated to increased social value for individuals and communities
- Our appetite to increase our online offer chimes with customer demand and is positively supporting the delivery of our social value activity



OUR KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- We still need to gather data more effectively – our PowerBI systems should enable us to have up to date information quickly and easily in future
- Next, we want to focus more on how we sustainably operate each part of the group as socially, economically, and environmentally responsible employers using insights from our colleague consultative committee





£70,806,000



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