



Spotlight on

Employment Learning & Skills

Learning plays a vital part in unlocking our potential. Building skills and aspirations for people of all ages helps to enrich our lives and enables us to flourish at work, at home and in the community.

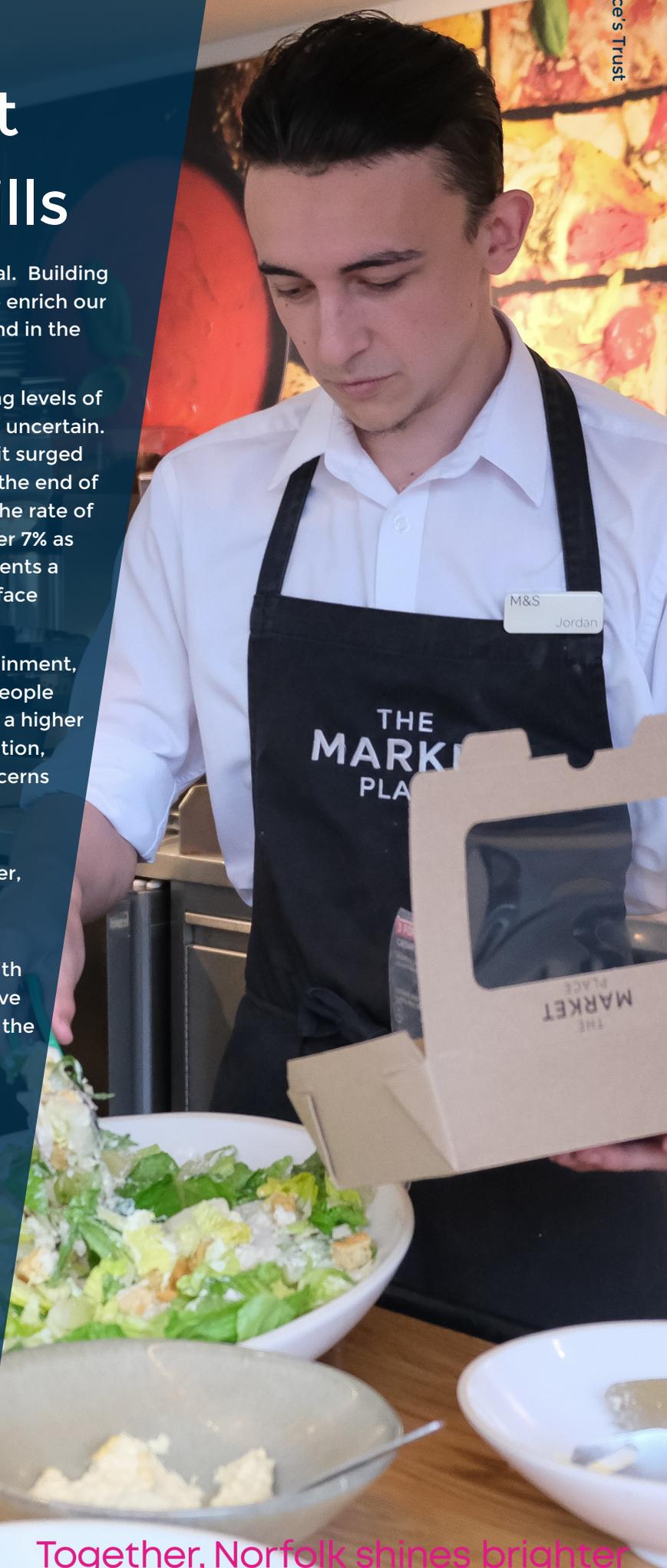
Covid-19 has brought with it the threat of escalating levels of unemployment, and for many job security remains uncertain. Figures show that people receiving Universal Credit surged from 3million in March 2020 to almost 6million by the end of the year. Bank of England forecasts suggest that the rate of unemployment may peak at an all-time high of over 7% as job protection schemes come to an end. This presents a stark picture for all, but particularly for those who face exceptional challenges in entering the job market.

Norfolk falls behind the region for educational attainment, with fewer people achieving a degree, and more people leaving education with no qualifications. There are a higher number of NEET young people (those not in education, employment or training) in the county, raising concerns about engagement with learning post-16.

The prolonged disruption to education may disadvantage our children and young people further, throwing exam results and future aspirations into uncertainty.

Child literacy is a significant problem in Norfolk, with some of our communities seeing 1 in 4 children leave school unable to read. Children born in areas with the most serious literacy challenges have some of the lowest life expectancies in England. The National Literacy Trust has found that children who enjoy reading and writing are happier with their lives and are three times more likely to have good mental wellbeing.

Low skills and unemployment are often concentrated in our most deprived communities, compounding the challenges people can face in moving out of poverty and improving their life chances. Community support plays a vital role in bridging these gaps, and the charities we fund are able to offer flexible, bespoke support to overcome complex personal barriers to education, employment and life-long learning.



Together, Norfolk shines brighter



The Prince's Trust Live Learn and Earn programme aims to help young people aged 16–25 access employment through real-life work placements and tailored support to build confidence and work readiness. Young people taking part are NEET (not in education, employment or training), and many are affected by complex home lives, physical or mental health issues and other personal challenges. With links to local employers, there is a real chance of a job upon completion, supported by up to 6 months of mentoring.

Merchants Place is a community learning and advice hub for people living in the Cromer area. The 'Yes we can' project started in 2017 for adults with very low literacy and numeracy skills. Originally planned as a short course, demand has remained high, and it has now expanded to cover IT skills and wider wellbeing support for those taking part.

4.8%

of young men aged 16-17 in Norfolk are NEET (4.5% in the Eastern region)

Open Road West Norfolk provides training towards a range of accredited qualifications in motor vehicle maintenance and construction skills for those who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) or have been excluded from school, with referrals from local schools, alternative education providers and other support agencies. Open Road aims to offer a 'second chance' for young people who have had difficulties with learning, and have low aspirations and self-esteem. Many come from families with multi-generational unemployment.

29%

of people in West Norfolk have no qualifications (the national average is 22%)

Norfolk Reading Project aims to improve poor child literacy in Norfolk - in some areas of the county 1 in 4 children leave school unable to read. The project provides volunteers who listen to

70%

of Norfolk children reach expected standards in writing at Key Stage 2 (78% nationally)

children read one-to-one in the classroom. Volunteers are trained in phonics, proven to be most effective for children facing the greatest reading challenges.

Attleborough Lighthouse offers a range of positive youth and community activities, including 'IT made simple' which matches older people with young volunteers to help them understand and get the best from their digital devices. The project has been extremely successful, with all participants gaining practical and personal skills, and overcoming some of the perceived barriers between the generations which have caused tensions in the local community.

About with Friends supports an adult membership with learning disabilities and Autism in North Norfolk. It offers supported living, social activities and a work skills programme that supports members to gain work experience placements within a range of different settings that provide valued support and services for local people. Projects include a gardening service, a professional catering operation, a charity shop, community café and lunch clubs for older people. Members can work towards accreditation as they build skills and confidence.



Just 17% of all adults with a learning disability in England are in paid work



Visit our website to find out more about our work, or talk to our team on 01603 623958 / shinebrighter@norfolkfoundation.com

www.norfolkfoundation.com

Registered Charity Number 1110817
Company Registration Number 05234236