



2019

IMPACT REPORT

my AFK
working with disability



A letter from my AFK's Chairman Mark Lewis and Chief Executive Graham Duncan

We are delighted to share our latest Impact Report, our first under our new name my AFK - Working With Disability.

Over the past 27 years Action For Kids has grown significantly as an organisation and, whilst we remain true to our roots funding hard-to-get mobility equipment, we also now provide training, work experience, job coaching and supported employment opportunities.

Our ethos is to encourage disabled young people to gain the confidence and ambition to make their own decisions about their lives and futures. We believe that supporting individuals to develop their mobility, personal and independent living skills is an essential part of helping them to succeed.

This year, thanks to the generous support of our funders, corporate partners and supporters, we have changed 143 lives through our mobility equipment scheme, funding or part-funding 78 new pieces of equipment and carrying out vital maintenance work on a further 65 powerchairs we'd previously funded.

This year we also supported 225 young people with learning disabilities and/or autism, aged 14 to 25, preparing them for paid work and greater independence after they leave education.

On behalf of the Trustees, we would like to thank everyone who has supported us with time, funds or partnerships in 2019. With your ongoing commitment, we are able to support more disabled children and young people than ever.



Mark Lewis, Chairman



Graham Duncan, Chief Executive

My story: a message from our Ambassador Marcel Fearon

Marcel is a former trainee at my AFK, who secured his job at Arcadis design and consultancy firm while he was part of our Life and Work Programme.

Some of the things I like to do in my spare time are watching films, going for a walk and popping in for a chat at the barber shop. I'm very sociable and enjoy seeing people and keeping busy.

I first started coming to the Life and Work Programme in 2014, where I learned job interview skills and did work placements. When I left I was 25, which is the age limit, and I already had my paid job at Arcadis.

I did work experience at Hornsey Vale Community Café, Slaughter & May and then Arcadis, where they offered me a paid job. I work in the post room at Arcadis. I deliver parcels around the building, stock the paper and organise the meeting rooms. I really enjoy it.

I have been an Ambassador for my AFK since 2018. Some of the highlights for me at my AFK have been going on visits, selling cards in the community, the Christmas Party and our recycling project. I made a speech at the House of Lords for my AFK in November 2018 and really enjoyed that.

I would definitely recommend anyone with special needs come to my AFK if they want to get a job!





my skills

We believe that including employability skills and purposeful work experience in the school curriculum will improve chances for students age 14-19 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), helping them gain paid work when they leave full-time education.

As part of my AFK's **Education and Training Programme**, learners produce a toolkit called 'my Profile' which helps them think about themselves, where they are and where they want to be. my Profile also provides a record of their interests and aptitudes, as well as what jobs they could do. This toolkit is then shared with parents and teachers to help develop a plan for once they leave school.

We put learners at the centre of this process so their aspirations, confidence and skills grow as they get ready to move onto the next stage of their lives.

In the UK there are around 800,000 people of working age with a learning disability, of which only 6% have a paid job.

(Source: Mencap)

1. ENGAGE LEARNERS

2. RAISE ASPIRATIONS

3. LEARN SKILLS



6. DEVELOP & EMBED SKILLS

5. GAIN WORK EXPERIENCE

4. PRACTISE SKILLS

We provide real work experience in our office and at our partner bike shop and café, Bikes For Good Causes, as well as our award-winning Edible Garden Project. This is often the first time learners have experienced life outside of the home or school.

This year we worked with 171 students from 35 schools over eight London boroughs. Learners gradually develop not only skills valued by employers, such as communication, teamwork and problem solving, but also a desire to get paid work.



Skills in 2019

171 students supported by my AFK's Education and Training Programme

91% of students improved their employability skills

81% of teachers said their students were more employable after attending sessions at my AFK

83% average improvement score in self-advocacy skills

Employability skills development

Self Management: up 14%

Teamwork: up 13%

Problem solving: up 12%

Motivation: up 11%

Communication: up 6%



my work

With the right support, people with disabilities and/or autism can work, earn money and enjoy the independence that brings. Trainees can join our **Life and Work Programme** from the age of 18 up to 25. Our goal is to help young people develop key employability skills, support them into paid work and give them the confidence and skills to maintain it.

We have a large variety of partners who have provided both work placements and paid work to our trainees. These include retail, hospitality, leisure and fitness, media and creative, law, finance and childcare organisations. If a trainee shows an interest in a particular area of work, we will endeavour to find a partner who will collaborate with us to provide work experience placements and opportunities for paid employment.

Work in 2019

- 100% of young people said they enjoyed their work placements
- 34 young people gained employability skills in our training sessions
- 25 employers provided work placements, trials and jobs to trainees
- 44 trainees completed work experience placements
- 31 employers participated in Disability Awareness Training
- 17 young people learned to travel independently
- 11 trainees gained confidence and skills on a residential trip
- 9 young people moved into paid work

88% of trainees who found a job through our Life and Work Programme are still in paid work a year later!

Lukas' story

Lukas was referred to my AFK by his mum when he was 16. She wanted him to have something purposeful to do which would help him adjust to leaving school and going to college.

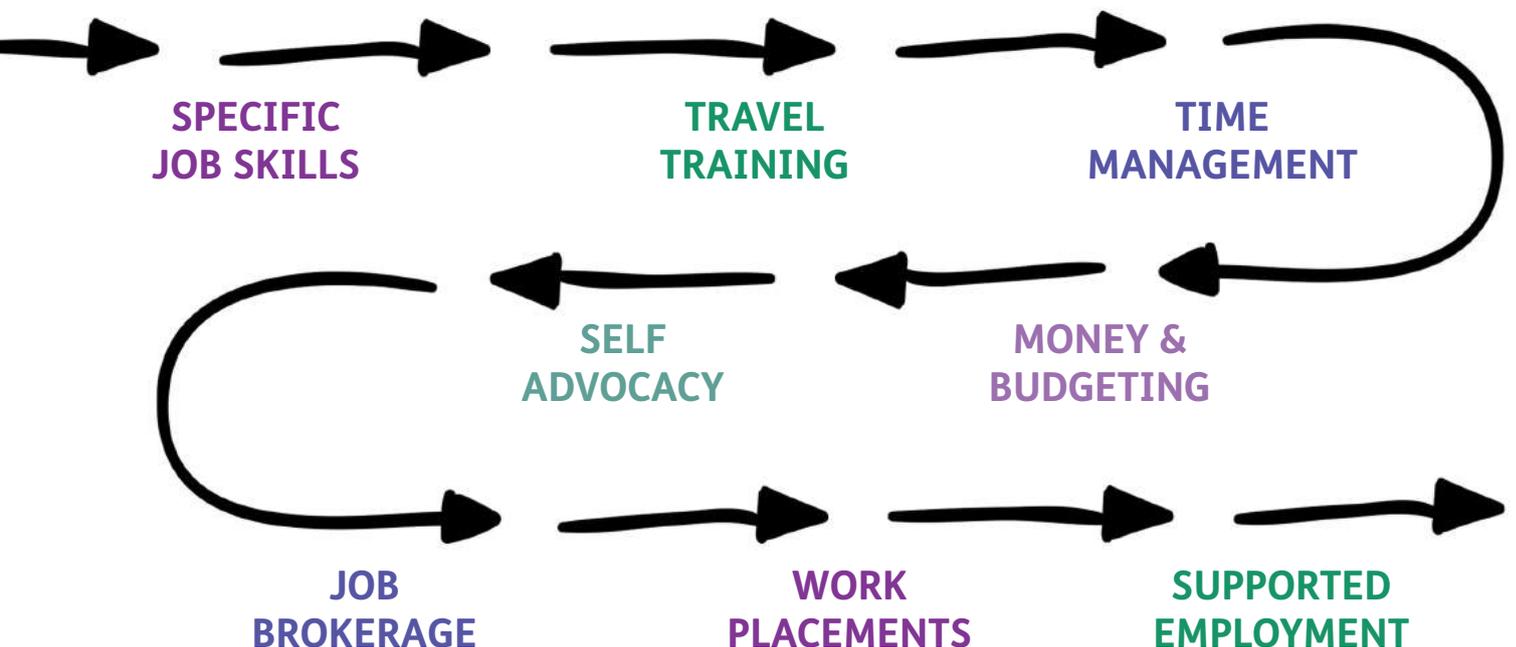
Lukas is on the autistic spectrum and can struggle to work in a group and focus on a task. Our team worked with him to find out his interests and help him feel comfortable at my AFK.

Our partners at Bikes For Good Causes offered Lukas a work placement in the café, where he learned about customer service, problem solving and teamwork.

Lukas joined the Life and Work Programme when he turned 19 and soon secured his first paid job at a supermarket, where he impressed his managers and progressed well before moving on to another job.



DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR WORK AND LIFE





my mobility

We believe if equipment exists to make a disabled child or young person's life more comfortable, independent and fulfilling, then it should be available to them. This is why we fund specialised equipment to children and young people up to the age of 25 through our **Mobility Equipment Service**.

We think that all children should get the chance to be children—to play with their siblings and friends, gain confidence and improve their development. But young children outgrow their equipment quickly and, with replacements costing thousands, it can soon become unaffordable for many families. By funding and maintaining mobility equipment, we give children and young people the freedom to move, learn, work and play more independently. Partnering with other funders and equipment providers allows us to maximise the number of beneficiaries we can help.

Mobility in 2019

- 27 trikes for young children
- 19 powered wheelchairs
- 7 buggies
- 8 manual wheelchairs
- 5 car seats
- 4 power packs for manual chairs
- 4 risers for powered wheelchairs
- 1 all-terrain manual wheelchair
- 1 walker
- 1 other bespoke equipment



“Isabelle’s running bike is an amazing piece of equipment and exactly what she needs. Unlike her walker, it is so light and allows her to experience moving quickly under her own power. We use it whenever possible...the ability to do physio whilst doing a fun activity and being outside is amazing!

- Isabelle’s mum

Jamie's story

Jamie Green is a PhD student in Modern Languages at Oxford University. He applied to my AFK for a new manual wheelchair in 2018, plus a power assist pack, to give him the flexibility and independence he needed to continue his studies.

“I'd had my trusty manual wheelchair since I was 16 and just about to start sixth form in the autumn of 2010. It had done well, but was definitely showing its age. The paint was peeling off, I couldn't push properly without catching my hands on the brakes and self-propelling over hilly terrain was impossible. In other words, it was time for a change.

“My first port of call was my local NHS wheelchair service. I was initially really excited about getting a new wheelchair for the first time in years, but the first and only appointment I attended quickly dampened any enthusiasm I had. I was asked hardly any questions about what I was looking for and the conversation immediately focused on what they could afford, rather than what kind of wheelchair would best suit my needs.

“I did some research into charities that might be able to help and my AFK leapt out straight away. I was asked about my life and why this particular wheelchair was important. It was immediately obvious that my AFK were treating me as an individual with individual requirements. I was talked through the application process and a few weeks later I got some surprising but brilliant news—I'd gotten funding for my dream wheelchair!”



“As soon as I rang my AFK, I knew they understood my needs.”



my voice

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can sometimes feel ignored, or that their views aren't taken seriously. Our **Advocacy Project** is designed to help young people make their voices heard. We aim to teach all our students and trainees how to self-advocate to ensure they are equipped to make decisions and understand that what they want is important in situations that affect them.

At my AFK, we believe strongly in both self-advocacy and co-production. Co-production supports advocacy by valuing young people's contributions and involving them in designing and delivering the support and services they want. In 2018-2019, young people designed and administered a User Centred Survey, which they used to gather feedback on my AFK services.

In March 2019, two of our trainees were invited to present evidence to the Education Committee's SEND Inquiry at the House of Commons. Simran and Kashi spoke about their experience of support for school leavers with SEND and answered the committee's questions about their aspirations and employment opportunities.

Simran told the committee:

"I think a lot of the time [professionals] see the disability before the person, so they judge us on what they think we can do, not our qualifications and what we've achieved."



Advocacy in 2019

212 young people completed sessions demonstrating their ability to self-advocate

225 young people demonstrated decision-making abilities

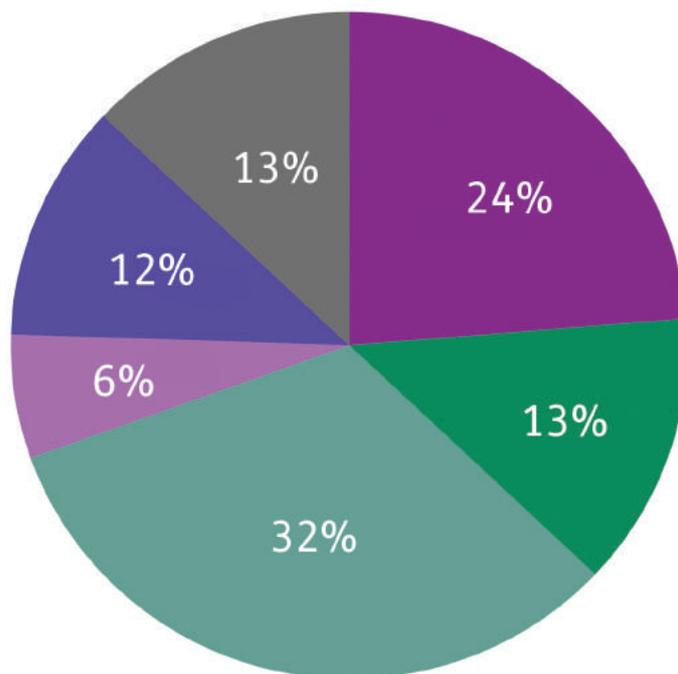
150 young people are now able to identify their personal strengths

76 young people were able to identify situations in their own lives where decision-making is important

Finances: year ending 31 March 2019

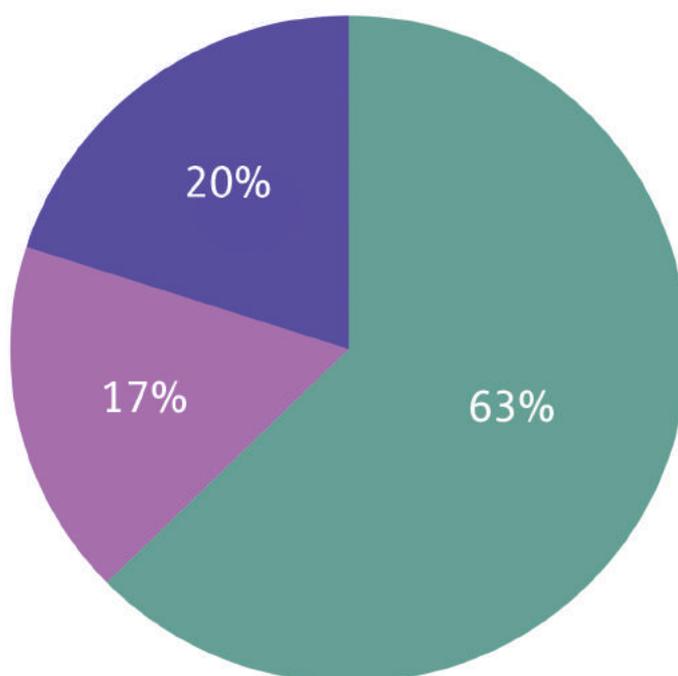
Income: £2 million

- Corporate Partnerships
- Events & Community
- Trusts & Foundations
- Legacies
- Individuals
- Other



Expenditure: £2 million

- Service Delivery
- Fundraising
- Mobility Services



* Figures not audited at time of print

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