

HARROGATE

Skills4Living Newsletter

Welcome to our 2024/25 summary newsletter!

Our Social Enterprises

In 2024, we introduced a variety of new Harrogate Chocolate Factory products that delighted our customers. Our Halloween and Christmas chocolates brought festive joy, while the launch of our Oat Milk Bar catered to the growing demand for dairy-free options. We're thrilled with the response and can't wait to continue creating innovative treats.

We also made significant progress on food safety and quality. We started working towards SALSA accreditation, a crucial step in maintaining our high standards. Our efforts were recognised when we received a 5-star rating from an environmental health inspection—an achievement that reflects our dedication to cleanliness and safety.

Our team grew too, with five learners earning their Level 1 Food Hygiene certificates. We also hosted several open-day workshops, giving visitors the chance to experience chocolate-making first hand. Though we no longer offer school tours, we've treasured the opportunities we've had to share our passion for chocolate with younger audiences in the past.

In addition, we had another successful year at the Christmas markets, where we had the chance to spread festive cheer and offer our chocolates to the public. Our Easter eggs also continued to be a favorite, and we're grateful for the ongoing support of our customers.

One of our proudest achievements in 2024 was winning the 'Large Social Enterprise 2023 Award' at the SEYH event at York Hospitium. This award recognises the hard work and dedication we put into making a positive impact through our social enterprise, and we are incredibly honoured by the recognition.

The Harrogate Chocolate Factory Café also saw growth in 2024. Sales were up by 5% compared to the previous year. A big part of our success has been the regular groups using our upstairs space, including craft, sewing, and art groups who meet regularly for creative activities and socialising and also our new sensory garden.

We also welcomed a new local bread supplier, Baltzersens, who now provides us with fresh bread and pastries daily. This addition has been a hit with our customers, and we're excited about the quality they bring to our menu.

During the Christmas season, we extended our hours to offer a warm space for people to meet, have a coffee, and unwind during a busy time of year. Looking ahead, we're excited to grow a small kitchen garden in our sensory garden, where students can plant herbs and other ingredients to use in our café menu. We're also thrilled to now be using our own chocolate for our hot chocolates and mochas, and we plan to incorporate more of our chocolate into our menu through 2025.

As we reflect on 2024 and look forward to 2025, we are full of gratitude for the support we've received. We're excited for another year of creativity, community, and growth.



Harrogate Chocolate Factory is our social enterprise where we're doing a small bit towards creating a fairer and more equal world.



01423 593719



skills@hs4lc.org.uk



www.hs4lc.org.uk



No.9 North Park Road
Harrogate, HG1 5PD

Skills Bridge Programmes

Over the course of 2024, Skills Bridge has delivered education, employment and information, advice and guidance services to 65 unique people of all ages.

At our education centre at North Barn, 23 learners have been engaged in employment-focused sessions delivered across 2 programmes: Supported Internship (1 year) and The Employment Pathway (up to 3 years). Three learners continue to receive bespoke education built around their individual learning needs.

As part of their learning, five learners completed their Level 1 food hygiene certificates, two challenged themselves by successfully completing a leadership course, and one successfully achieved a Level 2 qualification.

In July the group enjoyed a residential trip to Snowball Plantation near York and made the most of the shopping opportunities on their Christmas market outing to Leeds.

66% of our July Supported Internship leavers moved into a positive destination (Voluntary Work/Further Education) and 100% of our December graduating cohort moved into employment.

Over in the café and chocolate factory 12 learners, including a group from St Peter's School in Boston Spa, have been developing their skills for employment. All the learners receive job coaching and the opportunity to work towards the Level1 qualification in food hygiene, as well as gaining valuable experience in a real-world work environment.

The 'Our Hive' service has constantly developed and in addition to offering job search and job aide/coach support, now offers information, advice and guidance and has guided 5 families through the EHCP application process, celebrated 3 participants achieving employment and has successfully advocated for others around benefits and reasonable adjustments.

The successful bid to be part of the Rise to Thrive programme enabled the 'Our Hive' service to become part of a larger family of organisations, all dedicated to moving people closer to employment or improving the skills and prospects of those already employed. Participants have enjoyed work experiences through the Chocolate Factory and Café, improved their maths and English skills, accessed wellbeing services and acquired knowledge of the use of health-related apps.

Employers are vitally important to our work and throughout 2024 the team have maintained constructive relationships with The Old Swan Hotel, Suzie Junes, The Rudding Park Hotel, The Homeless Project, NY County Council, Yorkshire Cancer Research, the Ripon Workhouse Museum and the Harrogate Hospital. From February some learners will be enjoying new exciting opportunities at Harrogate Town FC.

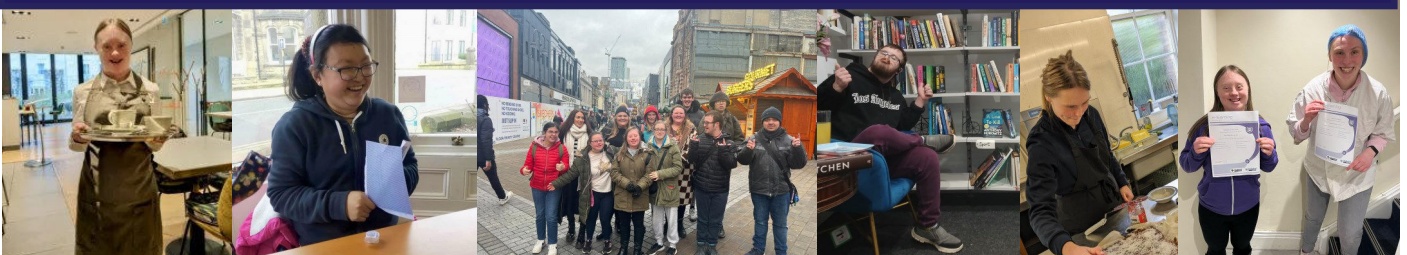
Our work with employers was strengthened further by the development and delivery of Learning Disability Awareness training to The Rudding Park Hotel and NN Power Limited. More companies have expressed an interest in learning from this training and we hope to have more sessions booked during the year.

Socialising and forging new friendships remain at the very heart of Skills Bridge and our fortnightly social clubs have provided a warm, safe and environment for these alliances to flourish. A year of movie nights, karaoke and discos ended with a few Christmas drinks at Revolucion de Cuba. We look forward to hosting more user-led social nights in 2025 in collaboration with Artizan.

The amazing dedication of the Skills Bridge team and the talent and joy of our learners has made all this possible, and we look forward to strengthening more peoples' lives, in many more ways in 2025.



We are an established charity working for the benefit of adults with learning disabilities and autism.



01423 593719



skills@hs4lc.org.uk



www.hs4lc.org.uk



No.9 North Park Road
Harrogate, HG1 5PD

Special mentions to:



RUDDING PARK
— HARROGATE —

Keep up-to-date with our latest news by visiting our blog and following us on social media!

Our Care Homes

As we reflect on the year 2024, we remember two dearly loved residents, Konrad and Miles, who sadly passed away after long illnesses. Their absence is felt daily by staff and residents.

This year also marked a significant milestone for us as we successfully accommodated a respite placement at Brackenley. We welcomed a complex young man who needed a safe space while his family enjoyed a holiday, further demonstrating our commitment to providing compassionate care by skilled staff when and where it is required.

Our international staff continue to impress with their dedication to professional development. Many have made remarkable progress, achieving two Care Certificates and working towards a Level 3 diploma. Their commitment to learning is great to see and supports our intention to be a Lifelong Learning Organisation.

Residents have made great strides towards their personal goals, with our care software allowing us to measure success. We are proud to report that 83% of personal goals across both homes were achieved successfully over the past 12 months.

Exciting developments are on the horizon as we build a new team of care staff for our supported living venture at Little Wonder House. This addition to our portfolio of services aligns with our intention to meet the needs of our community and adds yet another dimension to our range of provision. We remain committed to providing the highest standard of care.

Our team believe that our residents are at the centre of what we provide.



01423 593719

skills@hs4lc.org.uk

www.hs4lc.org.uk

No.9 North Park Road
Harrogate, HG1 5PD

Awards and Achievements

The Matrix Standard is a unique quality standard designed for organisations to access and measure their advice and support services. It looks at how we offer information, advice and guidance which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals.



We are pleased to announce that having been jointly awarded the Matrix Standard in 2023, the Day Centre and Skills Bridge passed their first year Continuous Improvement Check in September 2024

The EiC is an outcome-based framework, demonstrating an establishment's commitment to improving and sustaining improvements in the quality of care and service users' experience.



We are thrilled to announce that we have maintained our Excellence in Care accreditation for the seventh consecutive year. The recent report highlighted our highly motivated, self-driven, and empowered teams at both homes, who display tremendous empathy and support for all residents.

Inclusion is vitally important to us. We encourage active participation and engagement within the local community.

Our Day Services

2024 was another successful year for the Day Centre in which our service steadily grew and operated at almost full capacity for the entirety of the academic year. We welcomed new and returning learners and demonstrated our flexibility to provide temporary placements alongside our regular provision when the need arose.

The wide variety of activities delivered by our dedicated staff team remained central to the Day Centre's success and was delivered through group and bespoke 1:1 sessions. The breadth of activities reflected the interests of our learners and once again expanded to encompass feedback from their Learner Questionnaires. Established favourites ran alongside the introduction of themed Arts and Crafts and new courses such as Swimming, Movement and Relaxation, Life Skills for Independent Living, Reading and Creative Writing and Singing and Karaoke (the latter being a request from a learner who wanted to improve his reading skills through music).

In 2024 we were proud to unveil our first pictorial timetable comprised of photographs visually representing course content. This received an extremely positive response and enabled learners to make more informed course choices. Another development which was positively received was the introduction of Star Outcomes, an evidence-based tool designed to support positive change and greater wellbeing which we hope to develop in the future.

The success of the Day Centre would not be possible without our dynamic staff team who ensure everyone's needs, individual learning aims and interests are met. Their flexible and imaginative approach to creating and delivering course content, underpinned by their proactive commitment to overcoming barriers, ensures that the Day Centre is a safe, supportive and caring environment in which our learners flourish.

We're on a mission to provide the best person-centered care and support services we possibly can.



01423 593719

skills@hs4lc.org.uk

www.hs4lc.org.uk

No.9 North Park Road
Harrogate, HG1 5PD

Our CEO says...

Writing this article for the annual newsletter always fills me with gratitude as I reflect on the incredible work HS4L has done and the challenges we have faced together. More than anything, I am inspired by the unwavering dedication of our staff, the resilience of our beneficiaries, and the kindness of our supporters.

Last year presented its share of difficulties, particularly as the cost-of-living crisis continued to affect many of us. Yet through it all, our community has demonstrated remarkable strength and unity. We have persevered, adapted, and grown even stronger in the face of adversity.

Looking back, I am immensely proud of the compassion and commitment our staff have shown. Every day, they go above and beyond to make a meaningful difference, ensuring that each moment is as fulfilling as possible for those in our care. The awards and accreditations we have received are a testament to this dedication—well-earned recognition of the passion and excellence we strive for daily.

This past year was especially poignant for our care homes, as we said goodbye to beloved residents who faced their illnesses with courage. They were cherished members of our community, and their memories continue to inspire us. Their spirit lives on in the compassionate care we provide every day.

As the landscape of health and social care evolves, so too must we. It has been heartening to see our overseas staff embraced so warmly into our teams, bringing new energy and dedication to our mission. Looking ahead, we remain hopeful that financial stability will improve for many, allowing us to further recognise and reward our incredible staff for their invaluable contributions.

One exciting development this year is the onboarding of our new supported living team, who will be providing person-centred care to six new tenants at Little Wonder House on Ripon Road. This journey has had its challenges, but the result is truly rewarding—creating a space where individuals can live independently while staying connected to the local community.

Flipping through the pages of this newsletter and seeing the joyful moments captured on our social media, I am reminded of the depth and breadth of what we do. This past year also marked the 30th anniversary of our charity, a milestone we are celebrating with an exhibition of beneficiary and staff portraits taken over the last eight months. We hope this exhibition, launching in March at our café, will showcase the heart and humanity behind HS4L.

I hope you find this newsletter as uplifting and inspiring as I do. Thank you to our dedicated staff, our generous supporters, and everyone who plays a role in making HS4L a beacon of care and compassion. Together, we are making a difference—one person, one moment, one day at a time.

Sincerest thanks,

Hadyn Moorby-Davies

Our vision is to reduce inequalities, overcome barriers and help people lead fulfilled lives.



01423 593719



skills@hs4lc.org.uk



www.hs4lc.org.uk



No.9 North Park Road
Harrogate, HG1 5PD