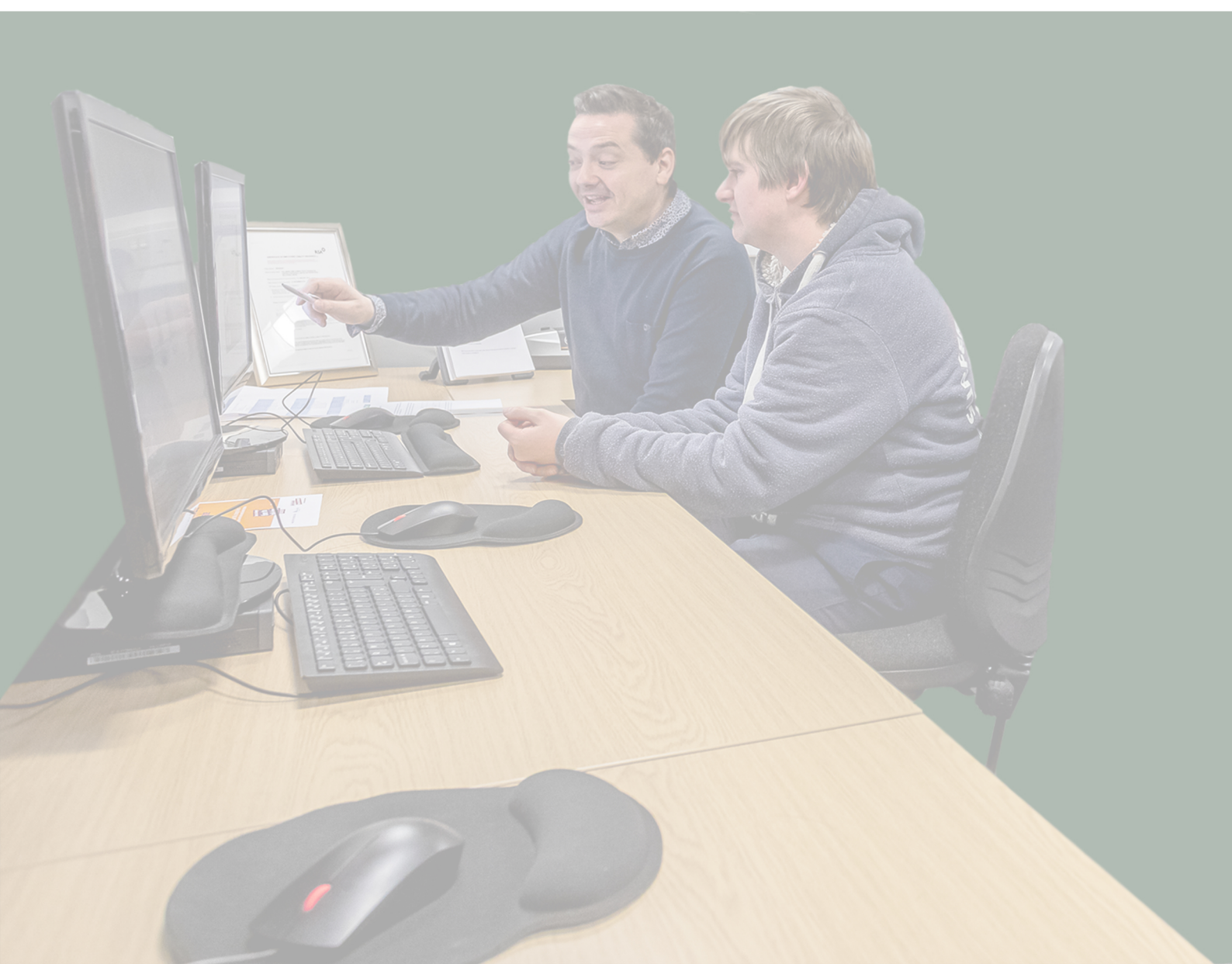


# **2021 TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT**



# Chair's Statement

**Helen Ruelle, chair of the Board of Trustees**



The Covid pandemic continued to make its presence felt throughout 2021, whether that was changing guidelines around distancing, mask-wearing and working from home, staff shortages, or a challenging employment landscape.

At Acorn, the requirement to isolate goods for 72 hours led us to develop a temporary donations drive-through facility. It worked so well that we applied for Fiscal Stimulus government funding to make this a permanent feature, with the addition of relocating all our behind-the-scenes operations. The idea was to create a new purpose-built collections, deliveries and processing centre for Acorn Reuse.

In April we heard the welcome news that our £800,000 bid had been successful. Construction work started in August and it will be fully open early in the spring of 2022, freeing up more retail space, generating more income and providing better facilities for staff. And, most importantly, it will create 10 more jobs and up to 60 training opportunities for people who have a disability or long-term health condition.

Early in the year we were still dealing with the after-effects of the first Covid winter and Acorn was closed until the first week of February. It was only in April that Acorn Training & Development projects were getting back up and running. We took on an extra support worker to expand the number of therapeutic projects to reduce the waiting list for our service.

In September we recruited a third person to our 14-21 Service to cope with an increase in the number of young people presenting with mental health issues arising from the pandemic.

On the employment front, we are very mindful that employers themselves have had substantial challenges, and we know that some employers have been cautious about taking people on for work experience. In these circumstances we found the internship scheme very useful, giving our clients paid opportunities to show off their skills and talents.

While our prime objective is always our clients, who have a disability or long-term health condition, we are committed to finding ways to protect the environment, stating in our Business Plan our aim to be carbon-neutral by 2030. To this end we made some significant strides over the year, including replacing plastic bags with biodegradable cardboard boxes for our kindling produced at the Woodshack. In addition, towards the end of the year, 130 solar panels were installed on the roof of the building which houses the Acorn café. It will save us up to £6,000 per year on electricity and it means that we should save 20.67 tonnes of CO2 every year, which is equivalent to 949 trees planted – every year.

2021 also saw many fantastic fundraising challenges, including the inaugural Great Acorn Reuse Bargain Hunt, two runners who completed marathon distances, and our own staff member who undertook a recumbent handbike marathon. The Great Upcycling Challenge in conjunction with the Harbour Gallery Jersey was also a success and we were delighted to welcome antiques dealer Adi Higham from The Bidding Room – he is a true ambassador for everything Acorn!

We were privileged to show the Rt Hon David Blunkett (pictured right) around Acorn in October, when we told him all about the work we do to support people with disabilities. Lord Blunkett was in Jersey to speak at the Embrace Our Difference evening at which initial findings of a survey into disabilities were announced.





# Chair's Statement

We are, as always, grateful to all the employers, funders and agencies who support us, and also to our loyal customers who continue to make Acorn such a huge success. As trustees, we continue to be incredibly proud of the resourcefulness, commitment and determination shown by all staff.

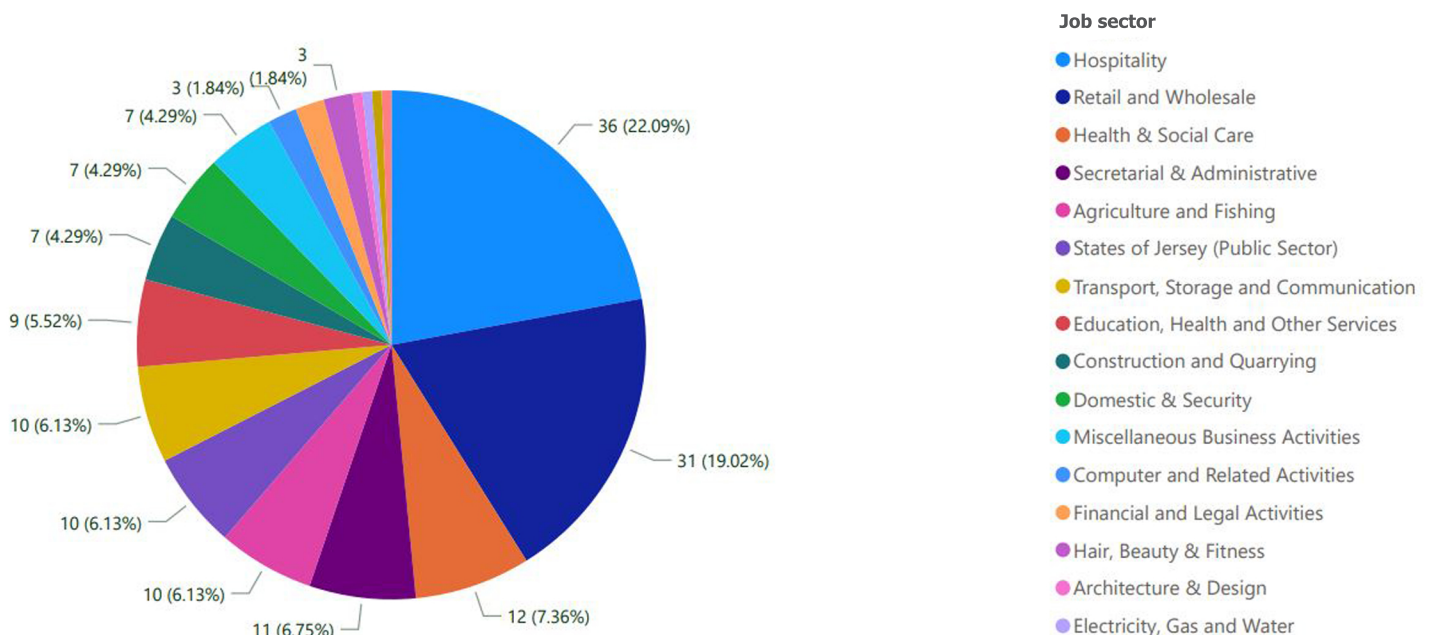
In the Jersey Charity Awards, organised by the Association of Jersey Charities, we were acknowledged in the Large Charity category for 'outstanding leadership demonstrated by JET management during a period of adversity and unprecedented change'. And it is our Executive Officer, Jocelyn Jacques, together with the senior management team at JET, who have demonstrated that outstanding leadership. The Board of Trustees would like to record our thanks for all they have done to ensure that JET and our clients continue to thrive in these most challenging times.

Jocelyn (pictured) has announced that she will be retiring in 2022. It is almost impossible to find the words to convey the enormous contribution that she has made to JET. She has transformed and led the organisation with her passion, dedication, immense knowledge, empathy, kindness, humour and selflessness. People often say that Jocelyn and JET are synonymous, and by that I think they mean that Jocelyn embodies the culture, values and ethos of JET. They cannot imagine JET without her. She will certainly be missed enormously. We wish Jocelyn all the very best for her retirement and the Board thank her for her outstanding service.



## New employment placements by sector in 2021 = 163

**JET Employment Placements by Sector**



**As with previous years the main sectors are hospitality and retail.**

# Who We Are

The Jersey Employment Trust (JET) is an independent charitable trust that provides a specialist employment service for people who have a disability and/or long-term health condition.

We have three main service delivery areas: the Employment Service, the Acorn Training and Development Service, and the Acorn business group known as Acorn Enterprises.

Acorn Enterprises comprises Acorn Reuse, Acorn Nursery and Acorn Woodshack. As a social enterprise, Acorn's sole purpose is to provide realistic employment and an appropriate training environment for people who may require additional support.

## Board of Trustees

Helen Ruelle, chair  
Chris Leck, treasurer  
Carl Howarth  
Lorna Pestana  
Steph de la Cour  
Nikki Withe  
Matt Tabb  
Jason Laity

## Find us on:

Facebook:  
Jersey Employment Trust, Acorn Enterprises  
LinkedIn:  
Jersey Employment Trust  
Instagram:  
jerseyemploymenttrustservices, acorn\_enterprises

Registered with the Jersey Charity Commissioner: No. 158  
Member of the Association of Jersey Charities: No. 157



## Objectives 2020 – 2023

### JET

1. Maximise and promote our clients' potential capacity to move towards employment.
2. Provide a quality, professional recruitment and information service for employers.
3. Contribute to the wider Jersey community and develop sustainable environmental projects for our clients.
4. Maintain effective governance, quality premises and resources which are fit for purpose whilst strengthening our financial position.
5. Enhance our working environment to ensure that staff feel valued and have rewarding careers.

### Acorn Enterprises

1. Improve the employability of people who have a disability or long-term health condition and develop working partnerships with other charities and community organisations to achieve greater social good.
2. Assist in the protection and preservation of the environment and promote the concept of reduce, reuse and recycle waste.
3. Ensure there are more jobs and opportunities by increasing the financial viability of Acorn Enterprises.



# Employment Service

The Employment Service supports individuals with every aspect of finding and sustaining paid employment. The service is tailored to meet a person's unique requirements and can vary from developing an employment action plan, interview coaching, arranging work experience or internships, to intensive one-to-one on-the-job support. The range of people who come to us has become much more diverse, as are the types of employment opportunities they seek.

Job retention is a large part of our work, supporting both the individual and the employer to overcome any barriers in the workplace.

We are already seeing a significant increase in the number of people who have mental health issues because of the Covid pandemic. We have all had to adapt our working practices; working from home continued to be prevalent in many sectors; and there were several redundancies due to downscaling of operations.

We are mindful that employers have had substantial challenges, and some have been cautious about taking people on for work experience. In these circumstances we found our internship scheme very useful, giving our clients paid opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge and providing the employer time to assess whether the client would be a good match for the company.

The Employment Service operates from the Oakfield Building on the Highlands College campus and our Job Club premises in Kensington Place.

\*We are grateful for the support of the Association of Jersey Charities, the Jersey Community Foundation and the Greville Bathe Fund.

**354 people supported by the Employment Service in 2021**

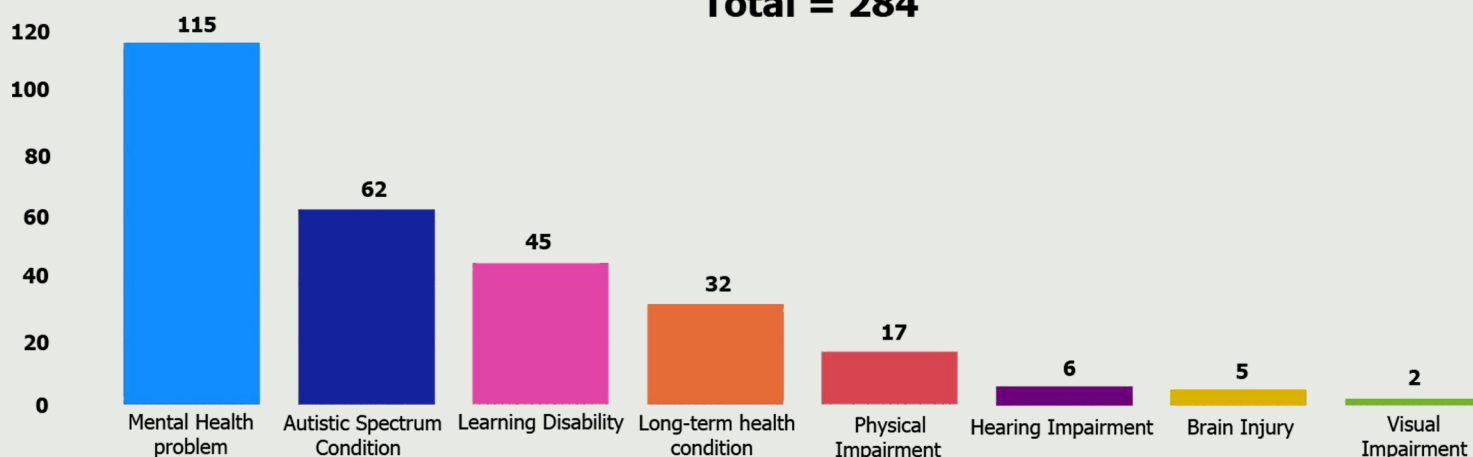
**163 new jobs sourced**

**121 jobs retained and maintained (total of 284 jobs supported in the year)**

**74% job retention rate, where people have retained employment for more than 6 months**

## JET Total Supported Employments by Primary Disability in 2021

**Total = 284**



# 14-21 Service

The 14-21 Service, which is part of the Employment Service, works with young people who have a Record of Need or identified additional requirements before they leave full-time education. We attend school reviews, offer employability/work awareness training, and we ensure that young people have a smooth transition into JET when they leave education through joint working with schools and coordination with other services.

In 2021 the 14-21 Service worked with 64 young people from all secondary schools. Due to Covid restrictions, we had no access to schools for parts of the year. These education figures are in addition to the 31 young people worked with through the JET active caseload as most young people are not formally referred to the service until they leave full-time education.

In September we recruited a third person to the 14-21 Service to cope with an increase in the number of young people accessing our service, many of whom present with mental health issues arising from the Covid pandemic. The additional post has already allowed us to provide more transition work within schools and additional support for our job-seeking clients.

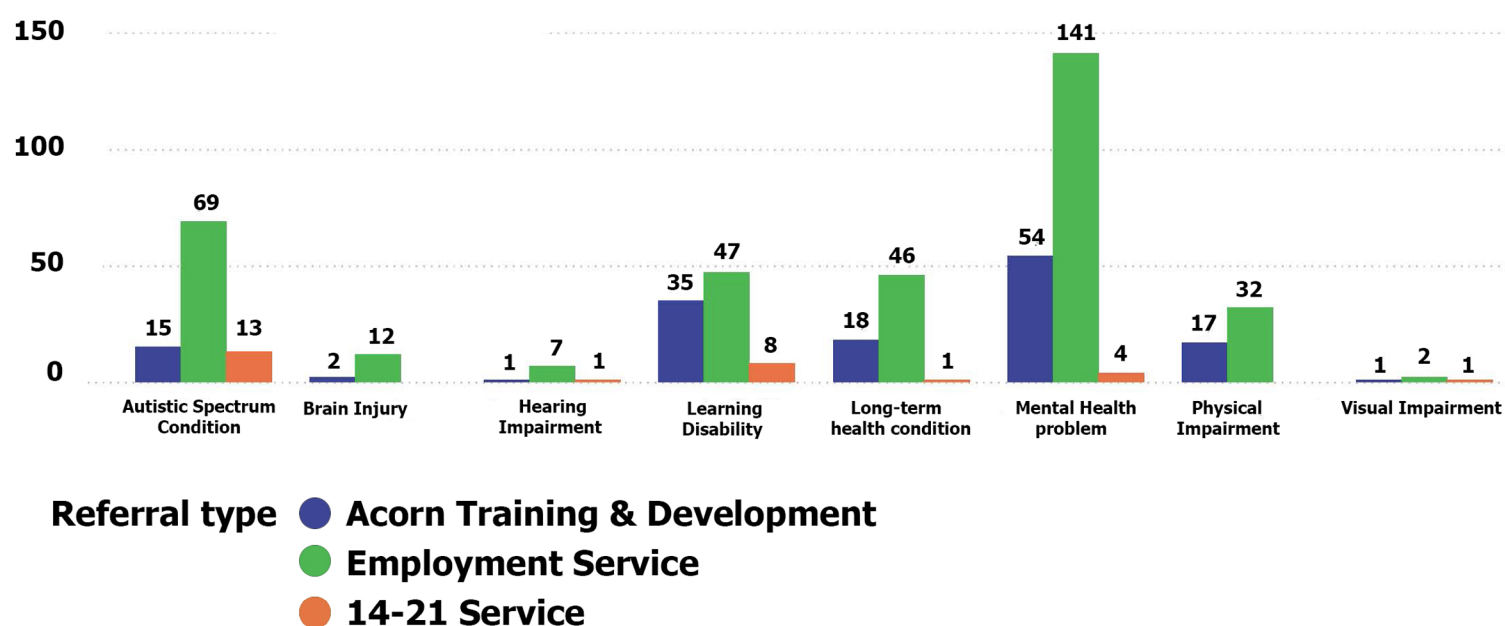
With the increasingly difficult and very changed post-Covid employment landscape, we urge employers to consider school-leavers who have a disability or long-term health condition and to support them with their employability and personal development through work experience, training or paid work.

Several of our younger clients have struggled to gain paid opportunities in the digital and IT sector. These young people have gone through the education system and gained relevant qualifications but are being rejected as they have little in the way of appropriate work experience. We are working to set up digital traineeships to counteract this.

\*The 14-21 Service is supported by the Lloyds Bank Foundation for the Channel Islands.

## Total number of referrals in 2021

**Employment Service: 354. ATD: 143. 14-21 Service: 28.**





# Acorn Training & Development

The Acorn Training & Development Service (ATD) provides pre-employment services for people who are at varying stages of their work journey. We support individuals to develop the skills and confidence required for progression onto independent volunteering or onto JET's Employment Service.

ATD often works with people with complex needs who are furthest away from the labour market and who can be unsure what, or even if, paid employment is right for them. Training projects include textiles, wooden gifts, furniture upcycling and jewellery. Our garden allotment provides a therapeutic environment and is extremely beneficial to those who struggle with their mental health. We also refurbish many of the memorial and public benches around the Island.

The three business units at Acorn also provide realistic working environments, which we use for further training and work experience.

The ATD team are experienced in supporting individuals with complex health issues, engaging in a very person-centred way. Through creating a supportive and positive environment where people can learn new skills, clients build confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to reach their full potential. Our staff are also skilled at referring on to other support services, where appropriate.

The Community Volunteering Service, also run by ATD, enables people to volunteer with charities and not-for-profit organisations. In 2021 we supported 61 individuals in community placements, with a view to people volunteering independently or progressing to the employment team.

Early in 2021 we were still dealing with the after-effects of the first Covid winter. It was only in April that projects were able to run once again on the Acorn site. In September we took on two new support workers to expand the number of therapeutic projects on offer and greatly reduce the waiting time for individuals requiring support.

Despite all the challenges, the ATD team have continued to be creative in sourcing new opportunities for clients and in October started a Reuse packing project and an electrical/scrap metal project, which not only provides new training but has many environmental benefits for Jersey.

During the year we were delighted to win a special lockdown award in the 2021 Insurance Corporation Conservation Awards for the work done by one of our client groups, which had involved learning about an area of the south coast, cleaning beaches and litter-picking.

\*The ATD service is grateful to the Lloyds Bank Foundation for the Channel Islands, the Jersey Community Foundation, Sir James Knott Trust, the Association of Jersey Charities and the Co-op Community Fund for their support in 2021.



# Acorn Reuse

Acorn Reuse goes from strength to strength. The challenges and new ways of working brought about by the Covid pandemic led us to plan a new purpose-built collections, deliveries and processing centre.

In April we heard the welcome news that we had been awarded just over £800,000 from the Government of Jersey's Fiscal Stimulus fund for this project and work started in August. It will be open early in the spring 2022, freeing up more retail space, generating more income and providing better facilities for staff. It will create 10 more jobs and up to 60 training opportunities for people who have a disability or long-term health condition.

**33 paid jobs**

**16 independent  
volunteers**



Acorn general manager  
Steve Pearce in the new  
donations centre

**In the UK  
women wear an item  
of clothing an average  
of just 7 times**



Supported by  
**GEOMARINE**

**ACORN**

Save your pennies, save our planet.



# Acorn Reuse

Although we were closed for the whole of January 2021 because of the Covid restrictions, with the resultant loss of income, our loyal customers have continued to support us and Reuse has been bigger than ever in 2021, with 366,911 kg of donated items saved from the waste stream.

In March, working with Jersey's Climate Conversation, we set up a living room in the Royal Square to raise awareness of the savings to the environment by reusing furniture and fashion, instead of throwing it away. A month later, display boards and banners went up at Acorn, sponsored by Geomarine, to show the importance of reuse in protecting the environment.

We have introduced a new sorting system for scrap metal, dividing metals into aluminium, stainless steel, brass and copper and breaking down electronic items to their component parts. It means we can accept more items from members of the public, rather than turn them away.

Lockdown in 2020 had led us to change the way we worked, which unexpectedly proved to be more efficient. As a result, we closed our depot at La Collette to allow us to consolidate and expand our Trinity site.

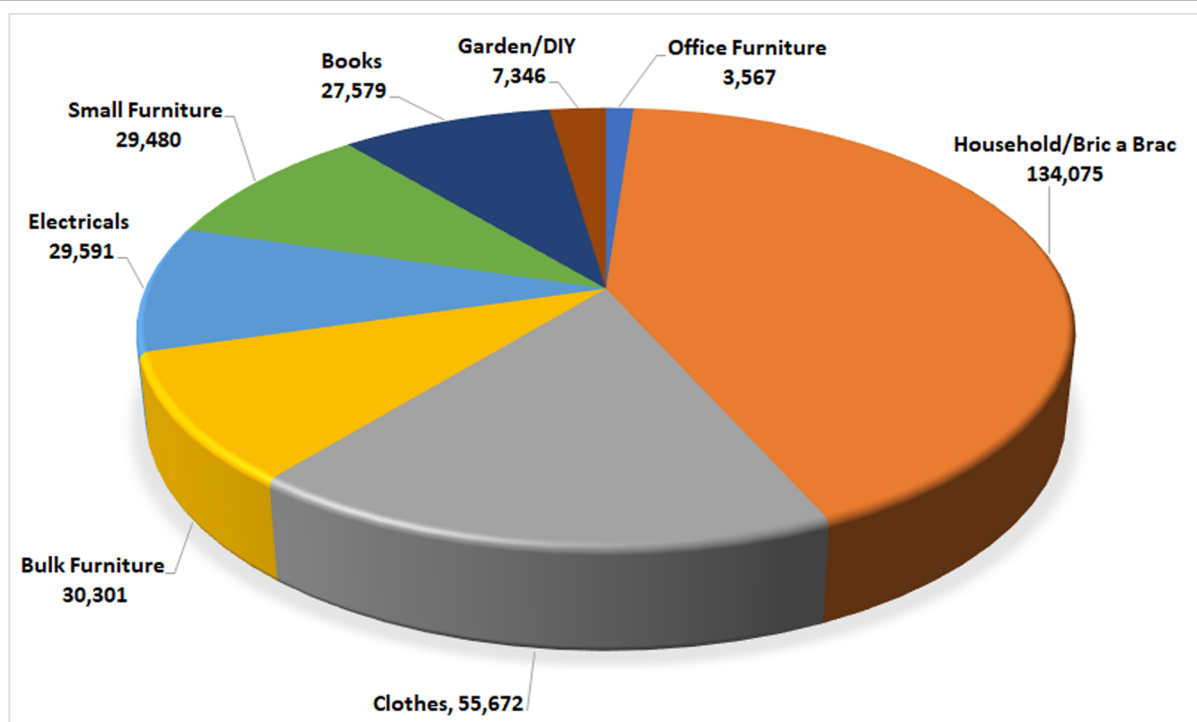
In addition to providing training and employment opportunities for people who have a disability or long-term health condition, Reuse provides low-cost goods for families on low incomes and in 2021 we donate items to several other charities.

In 2021 we were also pleased to welcome back teams of CSR volunteers at Acorn, something that had been put on hold during the pandemic.

\*Acorn Reuse is generously supported by the Roy Overland Charitable Trust, the Lloyds Bank Foundation for the Channel Islands and the Sir James Knott Trust.



## Donations by type in tonnes 2021





# Acorn Nursery

The Acorn Nursery specialises in the production of bedding plants but also sells a range of perennials and shrubs. Although sales are year-round, our peak seasons are April-June for summer bedding and September-November for winter bedding.

As well as selling directly to the public, Acorn services several contracts, including the Merton Hotel, St Brelade's Bay Hotel, and 100,000 plants a year for the Government of Jersey. The Growth, Housing and Environment Department is responsible for many of the parks, gardens and flower borders around the Island, and Acorn's plants can be seen at Coronation Park, Howard Davis Park and the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens.

The nursery uses biological control in all its greenhouses to minimise the need for any form of chemical sprays, and it recycles all the pots, labels and compost wherever possible.



In the spring of 2021, the plant nursery enjoyed its best season ever. We grew more herbs and vegetables, as well as pollinating plants, in response to a noticeable shift in people wanting to have a greater connection with nature. We sold 14 varieties of tomatoes, 12 varieties of peppers, courgettes, cucumbers, pumpkins and sweetcorn. We also extended the range of perennial plants, ensuring that we grew as many bee and wildlife friendly plants as possible.

Tasks in the plant nursery include pricking out, potting up, and tending the plants to keep them in their best condition. The work not only teaches the clients new skills, but also fosters a sense of self-worth in everyone who works in the greenhouse, boosting their confidence and wellbeing.

The Rotary Club of Jersey kindly supported a trial of 10,000 biodegradable pots (pictured) for certain herbs and vegetables. Although a bit fiddlier to handle, the biodegradable pots were well worth it for the saving to the environment, and we will be repeating this system in 2022. It will be extended to all our small geraniums, which will equate to a further 10,000 plants grown in biodegradable pots. If this trial is also a success, other plant groups will follow, significantly decreasing the amount of plastic used in the nursery.





# Acorn Woodshack

The Woodshack timber-recycling project benefits a wide cross-section of the community. We source perfectly good serviceable timber, which we de-nail, clean and cut to size for sale to the public or which we make into something else. We also upcycle and reuse wooden furniture and create bespoke items, such as tables and bookshelves.

The Woodshack prides itself not only on utilising 100% waste timber but also being a zero-waste operation. With the acquisition of a briquette machine and wood burner two years ago, it doesn't waste anything. Even dust and sawdust is collected to make chemical-free briquettes. This in turn generates an income as it is sold to the public.

The Woodshack makes up to 7,000 bags of kindling every year. In 2021 we trialled compostable cardboard boxes with the intention of phasing out plastic packaging, thanks to the Rotary Club of Jersey. It was successful, with dozens of customers returning to make use of the discount for refilling their box.

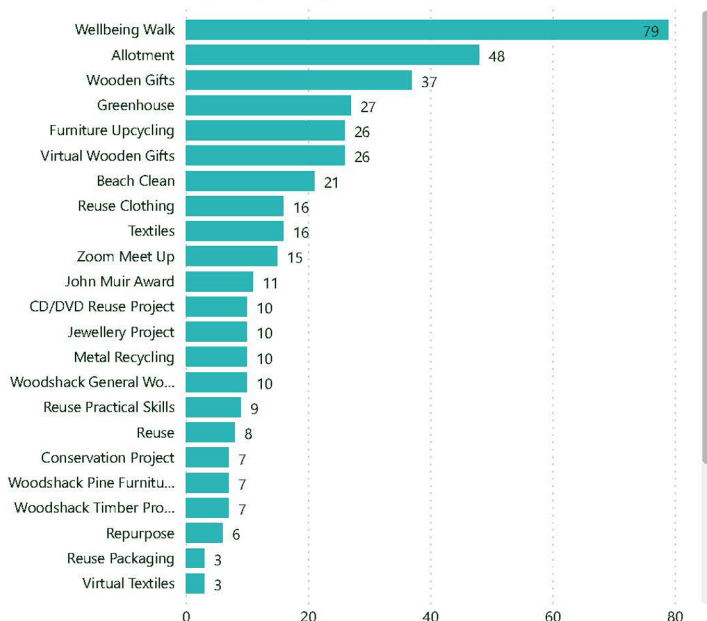
\*We are grateful for the support of the Association of Jersey Charities, the Rotary Club of Jersey and Condor Community Fund.



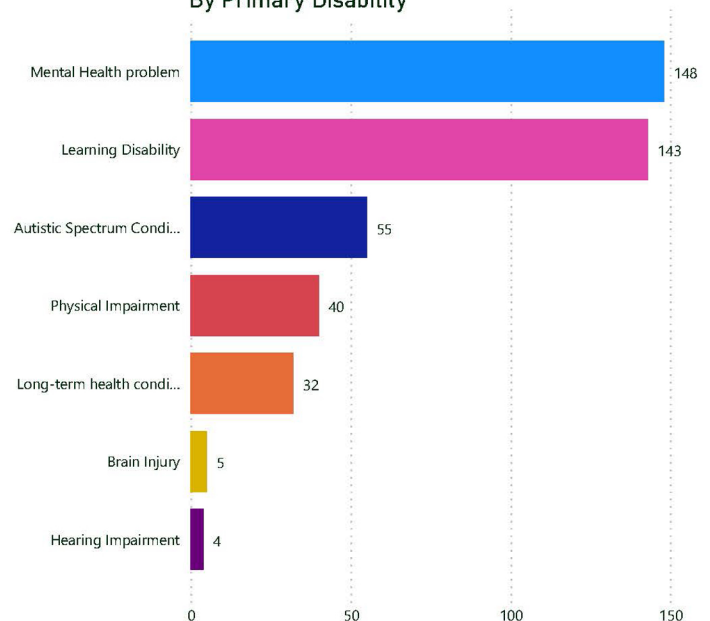
**10 paid jobs**

## JET Project Placements in 2021: 335

By Project Type



By Primary Disability





# Thank you

We had a lot of fun in 2021 with some events at Acorn as well as individual fundraisers who took on some amazing challenges.

Thirteen teams of two competed in the Great Acorn Reuse Bargain Hunt. Having bought items at Acorn, they had four weeks to make as much money as possible however they liked, by upcycling, auctioning or just reselling.

In October we welcomed Adi Higham from the TV programme The Bidding Room and his partner Tara Franklin to judge the Great Harbour Gallery Jersey Upcycling Challenge. Participants bought items from Acorn to upcycle over the summer, and these were then exhibited before being sold by silent auction.

We would like to thank these individual fundraisers:

\*JET Employment Co-ordinator Nick Ozouf who completed a marathon distance on a recumbent handbike.

\*Ashley O'Connell completed the London Marathon, almost doubling her fundraising target.

\*Three people ran the Virtual London Marathon. They were Heather Hill, an RBSi tax compliance manager, and two ATD clients, Alicia and Christian, who ran half each of the distance.

\*Acorn Reuse Team Leader Matt 'The Cobra' Carr took part in white collar boxing, raising £1,400.

Artist Ian Rolls chose to work with Acorn to create his Home art installation for the Skipton Big Ideas exhibition at the Town Church. He enlisted the help of clients in making a house entirely from items from Acorn Reuse.

The community also responded to our Amazon Wishlist at Christmas when we asked people to pick a number on our Advent Calendar. We successfully bought nearly £800 worth of resources for ATD projects.

Thanks to a £10,000 grant from the Association of Jersey Charities to celebrate their 50th anniversary, we will be improving accessibility at Acorn, something that will benefit clients, staff, volunteers and customers alike.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all our supporters and volunteers in 2021, including:

Roy Overland Charitable Trust; Lloyds Bank Foundation for the Channel Islands; Sir James Knott Trust; Jersey Community Foundation (with funds from dormant bank accounts); Greville Bathe Fund; Association of Jersey Charities (supported by the Channel Islands Lottery); Howard Davis Farm Trust; PWC; Geomarine; Magellan Consultancy; Rotary Club of Jersey; Co-op Community Fund; Condor Community Fund.

Photo of Adi Higham courtesy of the JERSEY EVENING POST

