

HOMELESS LINK -
GRANTS AND
INVESTMENTS

**ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRESS
REPORT**

20

21

INTRODUCTION

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England. We work to make services better and campaign for policy change that will help end homelessness.

The Enterprise Development Programme is a five year programme, funded by Access – The Foundation for Social Investment and managed by a coalition of partners, of which Homeless Link are one. The programme aims to provide a broad range of support for charities and social enterprises in England, helping them become more financially resilient by developing new enterprise models, or by growing existing ones.

Over the past three years, Homeless Link has been working with organisations who are seeking to end homelessness to support them to identify, test, implement or scale trading models to help them become more sustainable. Alongside financial sustainability, we have also supported these organisations to increase employment and training opportunities available to their service users in turn which has increased their social impact.

MESSAGE FROM OUR ENTERPRISE AND INVESTMENT MANAGER

What a year..

When I started this role in mid 2019 I never envisaged running this programme virtually. Having spent my first six months in post constantly on trains traveling around the country to meet with social entrepreneurs and charity leaders I never thought I'd be longing for Kings Cross station at 6am... but then lockdown started.

From learning to unmute ourselves to finding ways to connect in different times, I think it's fair to say we've come a long way. We have seen some hugely exciting progress from developing boards of trustees, recruiting staff members, developing corporate partnerships and plans to franchise.

I have had the privilege to witness a group of inspiring, committed and down right resilient individuals whose careers are focused on supporting the mission to end homelessness. During a time where clarity and funding is scarce we've asked 20 not-for-profit organisation to embark on a journey towards enterprise. We asked for engagement, honesty and a commitment to sharing knowledge and it has been delightful to see the relationships that have developed and the sharing of resources and skills amongst the cohort.

I have so enjoyed being part of their journeys and celebrating the milestones with some truly wonderful individuals. We look forward to seeing how they progress and continuing to support them where possible.

Murphy Hopkins-Hubbard



PROGRAMME DESIGN

Following our pilot year we designed the Homeless Link Enterprise Development Programme 20/21 to be reactive towards participants' needs as opposed to a pre-designed programme.

The programme is led by a coalition of partners who each bring expertise to the offer and is funded by Access, The Foundation of Social Investment

Homeless Link's role is to bring sector knowledge and understanding of the issues that organisations working in the homeless sector may face as well as being able to use our reach as a membership charity to share the learning across the wider sector. The role of the Enterprise Development Manager(EDM) was also to project manage the programme and build and maintain relationships with the existing cohorts as well as the wider ecosystem.

Social Investment Business were given the role of grant managers to support sector partners in assessing applications, monitoring milestones and dispersing the funds. Each sector was given a Relationship Manager (RM) to support.

The School of Social Entrepreneurs were involved in some of the learning delivery and facilitation.

Curiosity Society work alongside Access as a Learning partner to analyse the impact and reach of their work and challenge assumptions and needs to remain diverse and inclusive.

Access are the funders for the programme and offer their advice and insight into grant decisions and learning dissemination.



THE PROCESS

Ahead of the below processes we identified various regional and sector recruitment partners to help us spread the word of our programme as well as using Homeless Link's membership reach. We received nearly 80 Expressions of Interest and had a 62% success rate in applications.

Application



If Successful



The diagnostics and self assessment process is based on the assumption that the below roadmap to trading provides a rough outline of the expected journeys of entrepreneurs. Organisations submitted an Expression of Interest and then had a call with the EDM at Homeless Link to understand suitability and need for the programme. If they were deemed to meet criteria then they were asked to submit an application which was assessed by the RM's from SIB over a phone call and by Access and Homeless Link before going to panel.

The roadmap to successful trading is built of the learning principles of the School of Social Entrepreneurs. It has influenced the timelines of our learning programme and guided the monthly monitoring calls. Having a reflection point on where in your journey you are and perhaps any stage you might have skipped provided food for thought and allowed thoughtful planning of trading development.

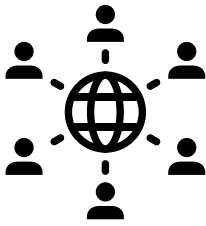
The roadmap to successful trading



WHAT WE OFFERED

Participants selected to be part of the programme worked with the Enterprise Development Manager to help identify what support was needed and how best to phase it. The following areas of support were available;

All Participants



Peer network and shared information and learning through action learning sets and communities of practise.

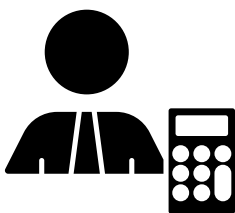
Dependent on Organisations' needs



Learning programmes built around organisation's needs based on skills gap and barriers. These workshops were open to other members of the organisations to encourage wider up-skilling, this included their trustees.



Grants of upto £30,000 to support development of trading. Some of these included feasibility research grants, staff salaries, marketing and branding or consultancy.



Peripetetic Financial Support from a list of agreed providers.

PRIORITY GOALS

Our 'behind the scenes' thinking for the programme was based on an understanding that the expected decrease in grants will leave the sector needing to make up this difference and that traded income could be a part of this. We hoped to use the programme to support our cohort as well as use the learning throughout the programme to share with the wider sector and funding ecosystem.



Sustainability for Organisations

As an enterprising organisation Homeless Link values the need to diversify income streams to become more financially resilient. Traded income can be a huge support by decreasing the amount of income needed from grants which are labour intensive and somewhat irregular. If an organisation can produce 20% of their income through trading they will then only need 80% of their initial grants income.



Sustainability for Individuals

Whilst funders' motivations focused on financial resilience, the motivations of the social sector organisations were largely to create pathways to employment or meaningful activity for service users. By developing social enterprise models organisations can offer their service users



Shared Learning

We wanted this programme to be a platform for shared learning. As a membership organisation we have an opportunity to help connect people, share ideas, challenges and learn from mistakes. We will create an ecosystem of networks geographically, by trading model and by individual need.

THE COHORT

The cohort consisted of 20 organisations whose mission was to support people at risk or experiencing homelessness. We categorised them into 11 different trading model groups as seen below. Here's what each organisation hoped for from the programme;



Accommodation Concern have been involved in feasibility research, development funding and are now scaling their activity. They are getting supported housing properties through housing first model earning income through LHA and RSI



Arc Inspiring Lives received feasibility funding and development support to research, develop and launch a cleaning company employing people who have come out of their services. They will initially earn income through taking over current contracts within their premises and then with the links in the local community businesses.



Barons Court project worked alongside Year Here to undertake feasibility research which has now been funded to employ a full time staff member to run the enterprise selling handmade greetings cards using the service users artwork and giving them an earned income.



Clean socks sought support from the programme to further develop their plans to open a workspace for beneficiaries to learn practical skills and wood working for meaningful activities and skills training. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 these plans have been delayed but we remain in touch and available to support.



Daylight Centre Fellowship joined the programme to upskill their leadership team in business modelling, marketing and co-production to develop their urban farming offer to grow traded income and increase employability options for beneficiaries.



DENs have used EDP as an opportunity to develop and grow an upcycling offer of second hand bicycles as well as investigate opportunities for coffee carts and catering trading around the area,



Ella's have been working with us to facilitate a consultancy project with east side prime timers to identify an options appraisal for property acquisition through social finance in order to use LHA rates as traded income as well as grow their accommodation offer.



The Friary begun their journey within EDP looking at growing their Ebay sales for employability and have now taken on new premises to begin a catering offer in their community.

THE COHORT



The Foyer Federation took part in our pilot learning programme with SSE and used the latest programme to refine their learning and implement a new membership structure to grow their income.



Handcrafted received feasibility and development funding as well as our social investment. They used the programme to identify new trading opportunities as well as scale current activities in new locations. They support their beneficiaries to gain autonomy and self confidence through producing hand crafted products as well as renovating houses to grow their accommodation offer.



Invisible Cities joined the programme to franchise their beneficiary led walking tours to Manchester, Leeds and York. Due to Covid-19 they have also been able to grow their local magazine trading and offer other engaging activities to their staff with lived experience of homelessness.



Paper Cup Project has been a volunteer led outreach service in Liverpool. Through joining the programme they were able to appoint a paid director role to open a new coffee shop to boost income and offer employment to their service users.



Settle work with young care leavers and young people in homelessness hostels to support them in accessing and sustaining tenancies through 1-1 support and life skills coaching. They work together with local authorities to provide this support through paid contracts



Shiloh, based in Rotherham offer support to those at risk or experiencing homelessness through a day centre with advice and support services. They joined the programme to look at a feasibility study to understand the potential of supported housing offers as well as boost their ebay sales activity, In order to do this they increased the hours of their finance manager so their CEO could develop a strategy,



Standing Tall are a new organisation set up shortly before joining the programme and used it as an incubator to hire their paid staff member and grow their organisation strategy, partners and impact measurement.



Unseen Tours sought support from the programme to grow their income streams with a focus on corporates and to increase capacity for the team.

WHAT HAPPENED

The programme was due to start in March 2020 following a window for expressions of interest followed by applications. Due to Covid-19 and the severe impact it had on the sector in particular we delayed the start by 6 months and invested in deeper diagnostics work and resilience building within that time.

The programme has four key components, grants, learning programme, peer networks and peripatetic financial support. The support was given over a 6-month period with quarterly feedback and further diagnostics feeding into the following quarters' plans.



"It's hard to know what the most valuable part of the programme is. Exchange between participants on ideas, best practice and lessons learned; up to date input and new perspectives from trainers on latest initiatives and developments;"

- Dan, Handcrafted

"The programme has been invaluable to our charity – the funding enabled us to employ a full time staff member to develop the idea that we had and to see this come to life is incredible and a boost for our board and volunteers. We have also been grateful to be part of such a wonderful cohort of talent, who we continually learn from. The workshops have been great and Murphy, our mentor is always on hand to assist. There have been times when it has been difficult but Murphy has an incredible knack of knowing how to inspire and motivate. For us, this grant and the course attached has been life changing and we hope that the work we do as a result, will pay that forward.

- Michelle, Paper Cup Project

"For anyone considering applying to be part of the EDP programme, I would recommend you do it. Murphy and the team are there to respond to your specific needs and they know what they are doing."

- Christy, Standing Tall

THE PODCAST

What is it?

A podcast series looking at the role of social enterprise in the homelessness sector, creating an accessible platform for shared learning, hosted by Homeless Link with guest experienced social entrepreneurs and social leaders sharing their experiences, successes, failures and their most valuable lessons learnt. The podcasts are presented by Murphy Hopkins-Hubbard – Enterprise Development and Investment Manager and Simon Pickering – Associate Consultant at Homeless Link and Founding Director of Dot to Dot Consultancy

Our Aims

To create an accessible learning resource to benefit homelessness sector organisations and leaders to reconsider the value and need for social enterprise in the sector to generate social outcomes and how to build an effective social enterprise that creates opportunities for individuals with experience of homelessness.

Why?

Over the last decade, traditional voluntary organisations, charities, and associations across the UK are embracing models of social enterprise; trading for social purpose and reinvesting any profit. The current economical and political climate has left little room for all but the smallest volunteer led organisations to pursue service delivery contracts through local authority or other forms of earned income.



With the acknowledged lack of capacity existing within the beyond profit sector to properly investigate, research or network with peers to better understand the transition to trading models it was suggested that we share our extensive network and learnt experience within this space through a podcast.

TOP
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CHARITY
PODCASTS

TRADING MODELS

In the past 12 months we have seen this variation of trading models across the cohort and have been able to explore stages of trading model development and the associated revenue models.

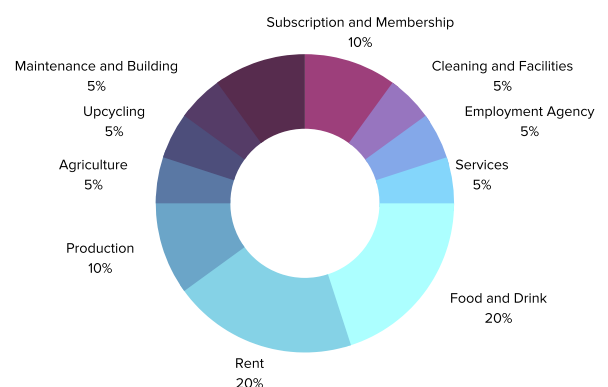
Trading models type;

Some trading models have been developed with the purpose of providing training and employment to people with lived experience of homelessness (up-cycling, cleaning and facilities and agriculture) were mostly seeking support from the programme to conduct feasibility research who were at the ideation or testing stages of development.

The challenges

for these trading models were often;

- in getting buy-in from the board of trustees,
- needing to understand the financial model,
- staff capacity
- and the theory of change.



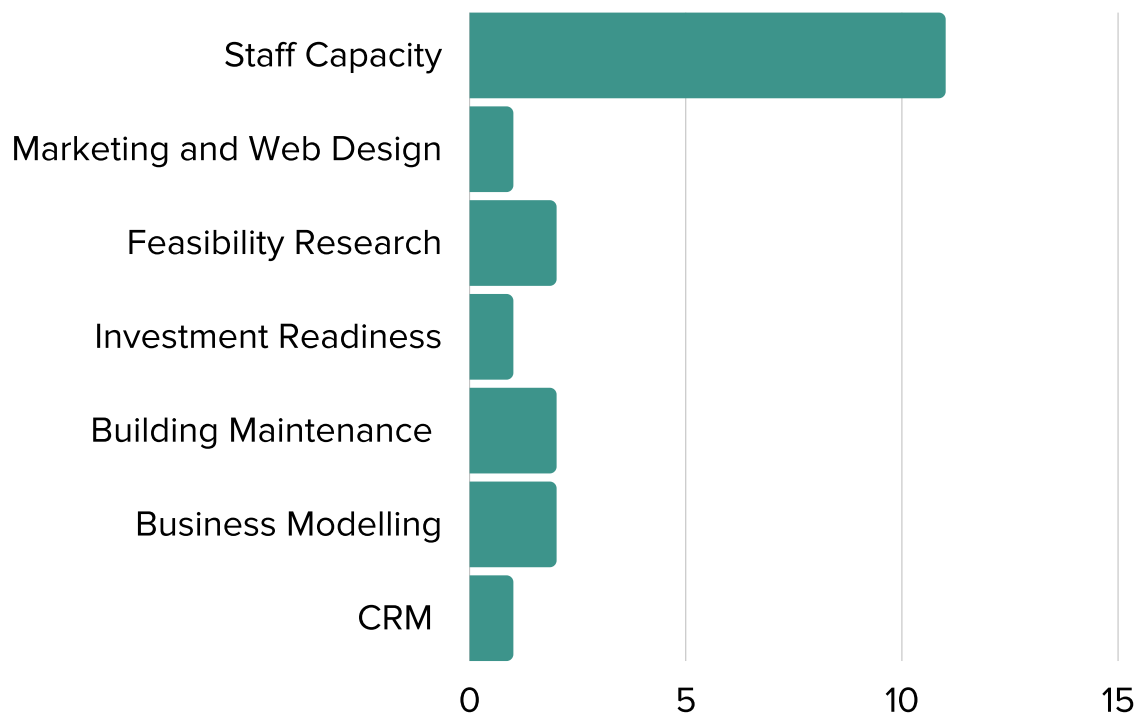
A programme like EDP works well to support these models through allowing a testing phase for governance purposes to protect both financial and social impact risks of the organisation. We have developed workshops to support cohesive boards and engaged trustees at every stage of the programme, we have brought in peripatetic financial support as well as training on financial management and business modelling. We have provided grants and mentoring for those needing to hire new staff members with people management training attached and we have supported organisations to plan deliver and measure their impact alongside their theory of change.

The other models within the cohort were more bespoke to Homelessness. Employment agencies, production and subscription models all exist based on their work within the homelessness sector. These applications were largely seeking an opportunity to expand their network, understanding corporate partnerships and the role of corporates within social impact as well as learn more about governance and HR. These cohort members have all used grants towards staff capacity too.

Recommendations

The trading models which were developed to raise income whilst also expanding their service provision from the skills and resources of an organisation (services or rent) were largely looking for support to scale or implement their trading models. They sought support in developing business models to seek investment or develop more robust income generating tools. As these models are less sector specific the support provided could be cross sector and would benefit from a joint partnership approach with other organisations focusing more on the revenue model as opposed to the impact sector.

GRANTS



Over the past 12 months we have awarded £689,888 worth of Grants up to £30,000 to support the development of enterprise within the cohort. The above graph demonstrates the spend difference across the grants. It was clear the most needed support was to bring in new staff capacity to support to development and management of the trading offer.

We are also pleased to share that 44% of those recruited have lived experience of homelessness which contributes to our determination to support diversity of experience within our workforces.

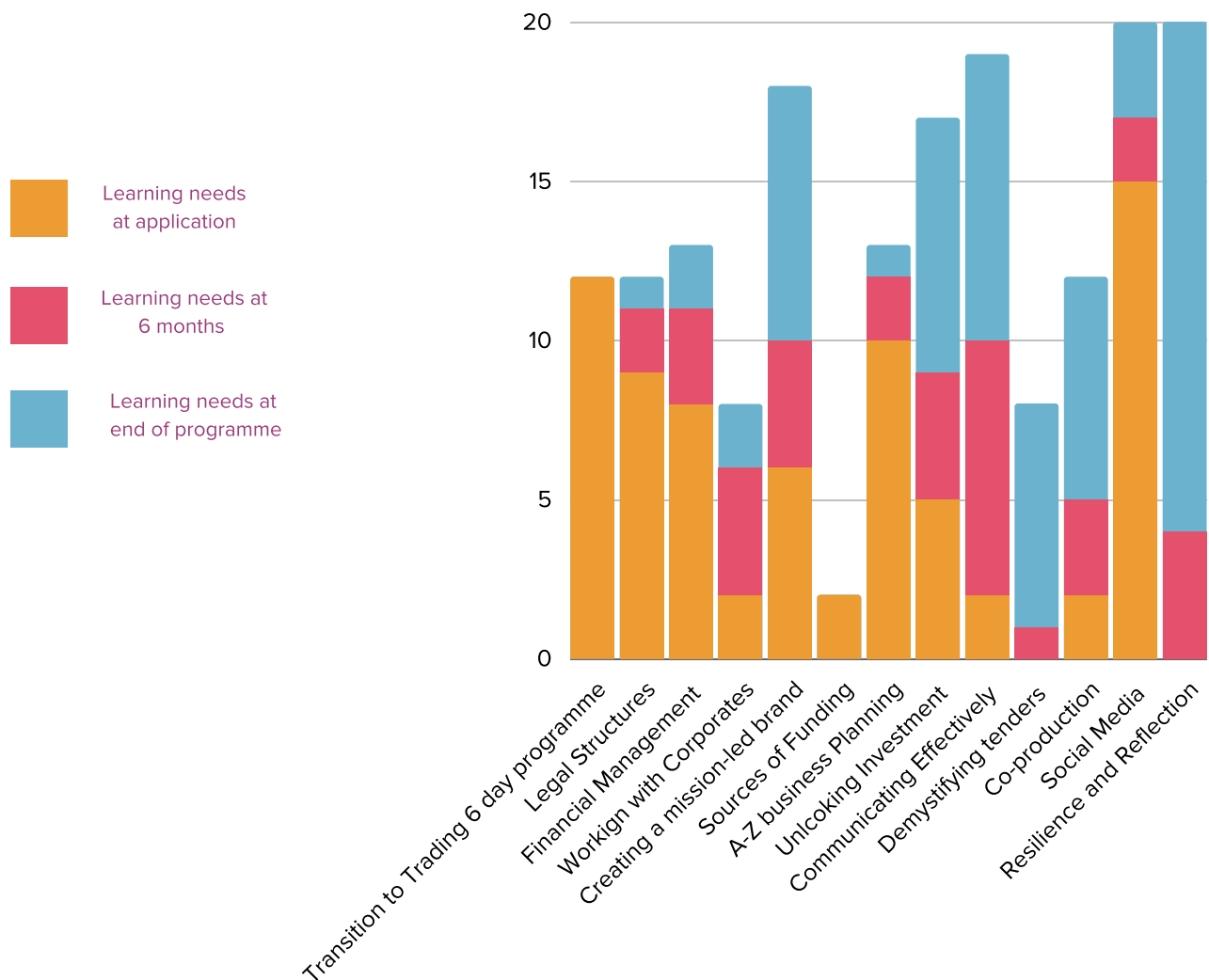
We want to use our knowledge that staff capacity is often the main barrier to developing thoughtful trading models to offer training and employment to homelessness service users and diversifying income. If funders are developing similar programmes support to recruiting, on-boarding and supporting staff should be included.

LEARNING

The learning programme was built and informed by our learning from the pilot year work as well as through our partners, members and peers within the sector. We asked participants to share their needs at application stage, at 6 months through the programme and towards the end of the programme to ensure they were able to best understand their knowledge gaps to best support their trading journeys.

Each workshop offered participants flexibility in the length, focus and layout to enable the greatest impact. We found that shorter sessions broken up over a few days worked better given the capacity issues that exist within the sector. We also asked our cohort to agree a 'takeaway' and an 'action' following each session of which they would report back to the rest of the group as part of our peer accountability initiative.

As seen below, the learning needs initially focussed on operational business needs such as legal structures, financial management, social media and marketing and business planning as opposed to the later end of the programme which focused more around co-production, story telling, unlocking investment and resilience building.



LEARNING PARTNERS

Throughout the programme we worked in partnership with a number of external facilitators, coaches, experts and trainers to provide a thoughtful, bespoke and meaningful learning experience for our cohort. We are grateful to all of our partners who have supported the cohorts throughout the programme often offering hours in kind for follow up support and 1-1 mentoring.

"I have been thoroughly impressed with Homeless Link's Enterprise Development Programme. I have delivered elements of the learning programme and one to one coaching with a number of the sector leaders involved.

It's been quite a journey for a number of the organisations on the programme, I have been very impressed with the Enterprise Development Programme's Manager with the way they have supported all of the organisations with flexibility, understanding and extensive skills to support the social enterprises to develop and grow. The programme has been a real reminder of the value and potential social impact of social enterprise in reducing homelessness and its detrimental impact on individuals lives."

- Simon Pickering, Director,
Dot to Dot Training & Consultancy

"I think the partnership between
The

School of Social Entrepreneurs and Homeless Link facilitated that rich exchange by providing a range of opportunities for participants to learn, collaborate and work together. It's clear the network and the bonds that have been created are strong, I can see them remaining in touch and being a source of support for each other for years to come."

- Rose Gardner, SSE Facilitator

Throughout the programme we have worked with over 20 different trainers including a formal partnership with the School of Social Entrepreneurs, Dot to Dot Consultancy, Picaroons, Expert Link and Curiosity Society each offering a unique perspective and expertise. We interviewed facilitators based on their understanding of the challenges faced by our cohort, their motivations for shared knowledge and enterprise as a tool to end homelessness and finally a flexibility to allow the cohort to prioritise their frontline work and the needs and safeguarding of their service users.

MEASURING PROGRESS

We have been collecting data through monthly 1-1's with organisations, through workshop feedback, through grant monitoring, financial updates and blogs.

At the beginning of the year we asked applicants to self rate themselves at one of the four stages of enterprise development; ideation, testing, implementation and scaling. We have been recording how each organisation progresses in this journey and if they have not we have been trying to understand why not and sharing this knowledge.

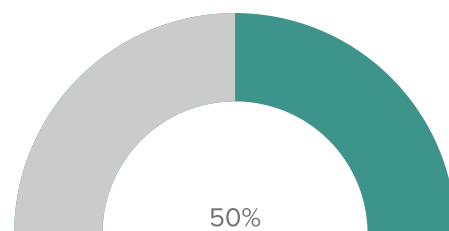
We are interested in the impact of of the learning programme on individual and organisational confidence for trading, ability to engage in new conversations, understanding of risk at board level and overall organisational planning.

KEY INDICATOR	ACTIVITY / PROJECT	DATA / OUTCOME
Organisations are more financially sustainable	Learning programmes, action learning sets, Network meetings, development grants and mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% of workshops were rated good-excellent• 95% of organisations said they grew in confidence.• 45% said they now have better financial management
The opportunities for service users to access training and employment are more sustainable	Learning programmes, communities of practice, funding for feasibility and pilot programmes and story telling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisations have developed a theory of change for employment pathways• Orgs have developed better referral partnership with employers
Homeless Link members have better resources and understanding about potential trading models	Learning dissemination through a podcast, blogs, reports, CoP's and network events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members see Homeless Link as a resource.• Podcast has been in the top 5 charity podcasts• We've developed trading model networks

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

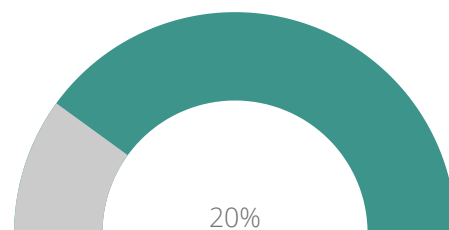
Gender in Leadership

Within our cohort we have 50% male and 50% female leadership for our organisations. This statistic is based on the CEO/ Director position and now the wider leadership team.



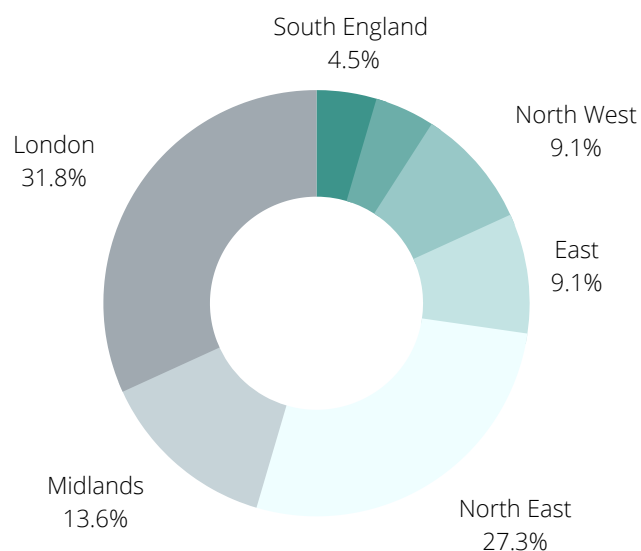
Black and Ethnic Minority in Leadership

Within our cohort we have 20% of the leaders on the programme who have self-identified as being from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.



Geographical spread

Within our cohort we have this regional spread with the majority of organisations being London based or in the North East. The South West and South regions were the least represented. This was likely partially due to the programme initially being held in London and travel expenses are high from the South West.



OUTCOME EXAMPLES

Standing Tall



Standing Tall started on this programme having conducted an 'in house' feasibility research for an employment agency working to help get those at risk or experiencing homelessness into full time employment.

Achievements:

- A full time employee/ Director
- Built a new board of trustees with relevant skill set
- Have three new employer partners
- Developed a new brand strategy
- A new accommodation offer through community hosting

Second Shot Coffee



Second Shot

Second Shot Coffee joined the programme with a need to look at their governance structure, safeguarding policies and partnerships with support services.

Achievements

- They have developed a 3 year strategy.
- They have a further site,
- A full time operations manager,
- Developed a healthy board of trustees
- Brand new subscription model.
- They have also just launched their impact report

Accommodation Concern



Accommodation Concern applied to be part of the programme to action their learning's from their feasibility report in year 1 to work with landlords to manage properties for individuals in need of housing.

Achievements

- Recruited a business development manager whose role looks to be self-sustainable by March 2022.
 - Improved relations with local authorities
 - 4 new RSI properties
 - 2 new social landlords
 - Improved communication with board of trustees
-

NEXT STEPS

We have learned a lot throughout the programme and are now looking at our next steps and how we plan to continue to support the sector understand enterprise, trading and social investment opportunities. We are also focusing on how we support enterprise models which employ beneficiaries to access the support they need.



01 — The Alumni Network

We will work with the existing cohorts within the enterprise development programme to support them in their transition through the stages of trading development.



02 — Research and Best Practise

We will endeavor to research, learn and share our knowledge and the knowledge which exists within the sector to better understand best practise around employment and enterprise within the homelessness sector



03 — Funding and Investment

We will use our position and knowledge to better inform funders, our partners and other investors on the needs and challenges that exist within the sector to encourage funding to be directed towards an enterprising movement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We have been fortunate to work with a number of influencing and supportive partners. We would like to thank Access - the foundation for social investment for their invitation to join the partnership, Social Investment Business for their role in the grant management process, The school of social entrepreneurs for their involvement with our learning programme, Simon Pickering for his workshops and commitment to support our cohort, the Curiosity Society for their questions and thoughtful analysis and of course our wonderful cohort of charities and social enterprises.

We would also like to thank our wider membership for their support and to all the experts within our ecosystem who have made time for 1-1's, who have shared their knowledge and experience.

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to the Enterprise Movement of the Homelessness Sector

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