



POSITIVE ENTERPRISE

TRANSFORMING WEST CUMBRIA

Fund Report 2022-23



CUMBRIA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



**CENTRE for
LEADERSHIP
PERFORMANCE**



Launched in 2022, Positive Enterprise is a competition open to young people living in West Cumbria aged between 14 and 25 who have an enterprising idea and want to make it into a reality.

Developed by Cumbria Community Foundation in partnership with the Centre for Leadership Performance, Positive Enterprise is funded by property developer Brian Scowcroft, with match funding from Sellafield Ltd under its Transforming West Cumbria programme, Nuclear Waste Services, Well Whitehaven, Morgan Sindall and Kaefer.

As well as winning £1,000, which can be used to pay for things like equipment, materials, stock and services to help get their business up and running, each young person receives six months of support, including a series of workshops, expert advice, mentoring and opportunities to shadow local entrepreneurs to help bring their idea to life.

The aim is to empower young people to think differently and break down barriers for aspiring young entrepreneurs. The programme promotes self-belief and leadership skills to help young people find their voice and make a success of their business ideas.



Seven young people, aged 15 to 24 took part in the first year, which kicked off at a welcome event at Solomon's Europe near Cockermouth. This provided an opportunity to help them understand what to expect from the programme and to get to know everyone involved.

Four in-person workshops were delivered to the participants between March and June. Topics covered included time-management,

managing wellbeing, team-building, personal branding, business plan writing, marketing, insurance and legal business considerations. The first workshop covered team-building and the importance of forming relationships. A key element to this programme was to establish a learning network within the cohort itself which encourages independent and peer-to-peer learning. The team-building session lay the groundwork for the action learning sessions which continued to develop the support network and relationships between participants.



Online action learning sessions were delivered monthly between March and June, in between the workshops. This gave participants



time to use information provided in the workshops to progress their businesses and allowed time to identify any challenges that may have arisen.

The participants met with their mentors at varying frequencies due to the personal commitments of both participants and mentors.

The young entrepreneurs achievements were recognised at a celebratory event at Lakes College to mark the end of the first year of the programme.

JOSH COOMBE, 15

Josh, from Whitehaven used his grant to buy printing equipment for JC Stitch & Style, which offers fully customisable clothing and mugs and other accessories. 10% of all his profits go to the Whitehaven Community Trust.



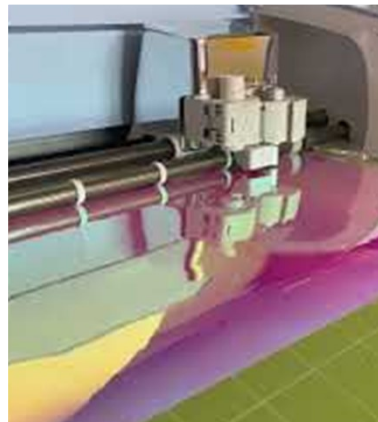
With the £1,000 investment, Josh bought an electronic cutting machine known as a Cricut machine, a variation of coloured vinyl, some tools and a heat pad, as well as t-shirts and mugs.

Josh said: *"My mentor helped me so much with pricing, what t-shirts to use, setting it up, and promotion. I watched YouTube videos to teach myself how to*

print and carry out other activities. Everyone who received the products were very happy with the quality of them and sent messages of thanks and appreciation.

"Positive Enterprise is amazing for young people to set up a business and to put on their CV!"

By the end of the project, Josh had a Facebook account to advertise his products, getting over 70 views a week. He received 15 orders for the Kings Coronation t-shirts, making £7.50 profit, which goes towards buying new stock.



Josh has been asked to make t-shirts and mugs for special events, including Father's Day, and mugs for teachers as it reached the end of the school year.

LUKE EILBECK, 18

Luke from Wigton set up Mad4Kit selling vintage second-hand football memorabilia while studying for his A-levels.

Luke's business stemmed from his hobby of collecting football shirts. For several years he had been buying and selling shirts for his own collection and saw a gap in the market, with a potential for growth in the market.



"The skills sessions put on by the CforLP have been great for helping me with practical skills such as budgeting, marketing and overall business planning, but besides the support offered by the programme, it has mainly been a case of trial and error to discover what works best for Mad4Kit. I took business studies at A-Level which also gave me a decent understanding of how to get started, but I don't think there's any hard and fast method to learning that's better than getting hands-on experience and facing each challenge as it comes," said Luke.

During Positive Enterprise, Mad4Kit fulfilled over 100 orders and generated roughly £4,000 in revenue with 95% of this from online sales, showing the huge potential for growth with future investment. Joining the programme has had a significant impact on Luke and his business, the investment coupled with the technical support has given him the confidence to go out and develop his skills of selling in-person.

JACK FLEMING, 19

Jack from Whitehaven, runs JF Entertainment, a mobile DJ service, which has expanded thanks to Positive Enterprise.

Jack always had a passion for music and he applied to the programme because he wanted to take any advice he could to help him develop his business idea of becoming a DJ. Also, as an apprentice, his funds could only stretch so far, and the grant award helped him with initial start-up costs.



Learning new skills at the workshops really helped Jack to develop his business idea. The marketing workshop opened his eyes to how he could promote his business, and he is now confident to place his own adverts for his services.

The Positive Enterprise programme also gave him the insight needed to be able to successfully manage his business covering aspects such as financial management and customer service. The guidance and reassurances from his mentor has been invaluable.

Jack commented that the networking with other people undertaking the business start-up process and learning from each other was probably the most important part for him.

Luke's first booking came in for a charity night for Gary McKee, organised by the Sellafeld Apprentice Council and his business has grown from there.

LENNON GLASS, 15

Inspired by one of the latest TikTok trends, Lennon, from Cockermouth trades as Artify making customised and bespoke wool rugs.

Lennon spent a lot of time perfecting his rugs, having made the first one which didn't reach the quality he wanted.

Lennon found setting up his own business difficult with many obstacles including sourcing affordable materials, however, with lots of research, all his rugs are now made using wool fully sourced from a UK company whose profits go to the Woman's Institute who help women across the country.



He sold a few rugs with limited marketing efforts, but more importantly he has taken away knowledge and skills and the motivation to



succeed. Lennon is also considering branching out with new products made using the rugs, for example covering stools with rug covers.

The young entrepreneur gained a lot from the support he received from his business mentor giving him inspiration and encouragement every step of the journey as well as an insight into what to expect in the future.

BETHANY GOODALL, 24

Bethany from Workington has a degree in Musical Theatre and a masters degree in arts and cultural business management. She has always been involved in theatre, having had singing lessons from the age of 6 and is still an avid member of local theatre group Workington Amateur Operatic Society.



She established The Lake District Academy of Theatre Arts to provide affordable musical theatre workshops

The passion behind the business came from a desire to bring theatre to west Cumbria. Bethany said: "People believe that you need to be in London to receive the best training but I want to change this ideal and create a culture in the

North of showing our home grown talent.

"Having one-to-one sessions with a mentor gave me a real insight into how to sell my idea. I wouldn't have had the confidence to do that."

When she first began the Positive Enterprise, she thought that the marketing side of business would be easy but getting people to engage was the hard part. With the help of the programme and the confidence instilled by her business mentor, Bethany started running classes at St Joseph's School in Workington inclusive to people of all abilities.

Going forward, Bethany would like to find her own premises and hold enough classes to warrant expanding her team. She also wants to be able to offer qualification pathways with the creation of a Level 2 and 3 courses in Performing Arts in West Cumbria, as well as a BA and MA programme, with the MA being the first in Cumbria.

RACHEL MCCARTNEY, 24

Rachel is a Waste Co-ordinator at Sellafield and completing a degree apprenticeship.



The young entrepreneur from Holmrook has combined her experience working as a Waste Co-ordinator with her passion for sustainability and her farming background, to create a business which aims to repurpose domestic food waste in Cumbria into compost, fertiliser and biofuel.

Alongside her full-time job and with the help of Positive Enterprise, she set up McCartney Sustainable Solutions, and is in the process of raising £1.2 million.

"Through this process I have found so many different routes and options that I never knew were out there. The connections and



networking have been most helpful. I always used to cringe at the thought of networking but I have found it so helpful and cannot believe how many people genuinely want to help.

"The mentoring and guidance was the biggest thing for me – that people supported you and believed in your idea. I'd recommend anyone to start their own business, to genuinely just go for it, because in West Cumbria you've got the support there."

Watch this [short video](#) to hear Rachel's story.

AIDEN THOMPSON, 15

Inspired by his walks with his dog and finding items on the beach, Aiden, from Workington, saw the opportunity to take pebbles, driftwood and sea glass and transform them into artwork.

Cumbria Coastal Crafts produces framed pebble art and customised laser engraved products. With the help of funding from Positive Enterprise, Aiden was able to invest in his business, purchasing a laser



cutter, frames, plywood and public liability insurance. He takes sheets of plywood and makes them into wooden plaques and magnets with the use of his laser engraver.

Aiden said: *"I saw a gap in the market, and it has been very successful. Positive Enterprise helped me take it from an idea to a business. The grant paid for equipment and the mentoring helped me find the best ways to sell the products and explore potential opportunities."*

With the support from his business mentor, Aiden has developed his understanding of business and has been

successfully selling his products at a Young Entrepreneurs Markets in Whitehaven and Carlisle, Silloth Market and through Facebook, Instagram and Etsy.

Aiden collected an extra £1,000 after judges were impressed by his presentation at the celebration event in July.

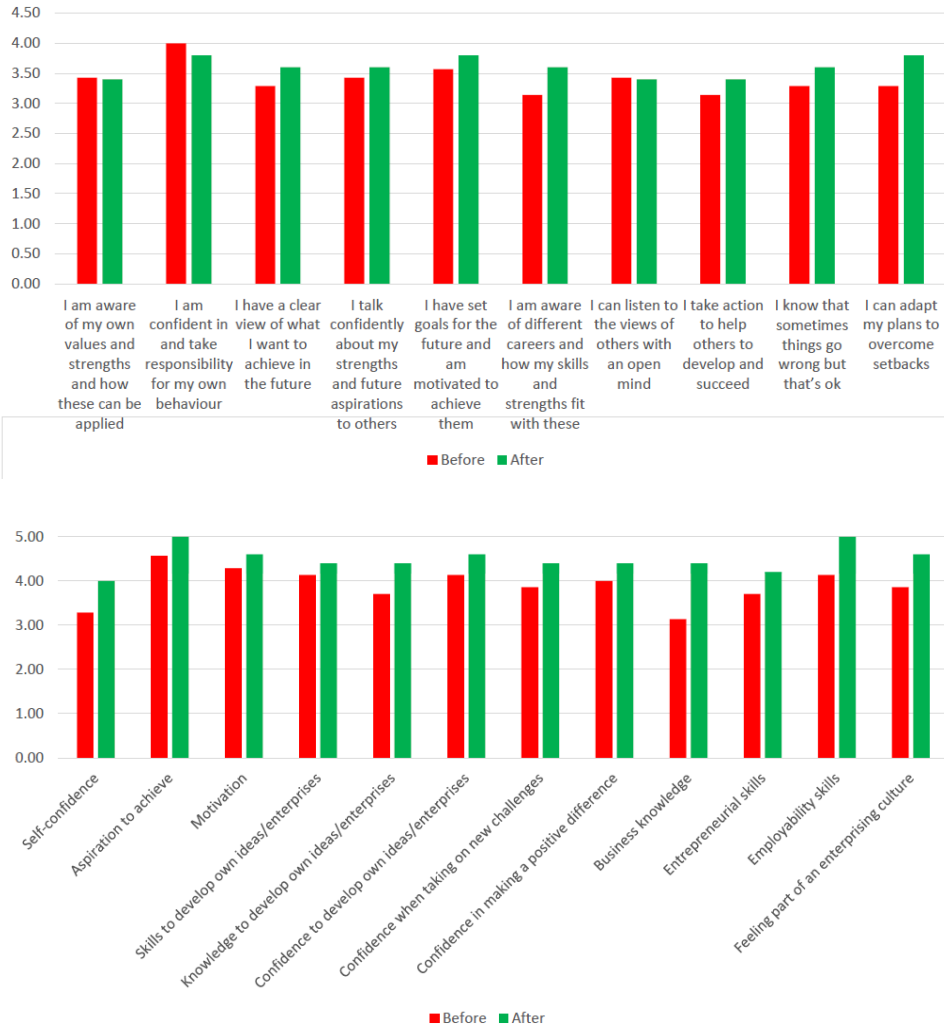
Aiden's mum, Deborah, said: *"Positive Enterprise has been a fantastic opportunity and has provided a platform to allow Aiden to develop his entrepreneurial skills."*

"Aiden is naturally quiet, but he's gained so much confidence since starting his business. Initially we were unsure how he would handle the customer interactions on the entrepreneurs markets but he has surprised us with how well he has done. He is now constantly looking for opportunities on where he can sell his products, and has been contacting gift shops in the local towns and had made some promising connections."

Watch this [short video](#) to hear Aiden's journey.



The participants were asked to complete a survey prior to starting the programme to establish baseline data. They were then asked the same questions as part of the evaluation in July 2023. The graphs below show the distance travelled using weighted averages from the survey results.



Survey analysis shows a demonstrable improvement in a range of key areas, including levels of self-confidence, motivation, and aspiration to achieve, as well as business knowledge, employability skills and feeling part of an enterprising culture.

Numbers and figures only tell so much; the presentations at the Celebration Event in July provided first-hand evidence of the journey the participants have been on over the last six months. Luke Eilbeck said: *“Investing more time in my business as a result of the programme has allowed me to encounter and overcome a number of challenges. Having first-hand experience of developing solutions to these problems has given me valuable talking points for job interviews that not many other applicants have, allowing me to speak about my skills and interests with much more confidence.”*

Arguably, the biggest change is the impact it has had personally on the participants. One parent said: *“As a result of taking part in Positive Enterprise, Lennon is now trying harder at school with increased determination to do well and with a newfound confidence. He has even re-joined his cricket club as he was really struggling with his confidence prior to the programme starting. He also reads more now as a result of his programme mentor encouraging him to do so, something he has never liked doing because of his confidence. Lennon ordered a recommended book on leadership and reads it every day on the bus. Even his teachers have seen the differences in his confidence and new work ethic. The biggest change is what he sees in himself, and Lennon now recognises he needs to work hard to succeed and is motivated to achieve this. He is really considering his own business and being a leader and now thanks to the programme has his own business.”*

All participants also expressed interest in supporting promotion of the programme as ambassadors in future.

Mentoring support from local employers, community groups and other stakeholders relevant to their chosen project, were recruited by Cumbria Community Foundation.

The young entrepreneurs are matched with a mentor to help put their plan into action. The Centre for Leadership Performance conducted introductory meetings between mentor and mentee after matching, and mentors to ensure the mentoring relationship got off to great start. Mentoring support proved invaluable.

Laurie Crayston, 32, is an entrepreneur from West Cumbria running three businesses including outdoor clothing brand Ascendancy Apparel. He said *“Positive Enterprise is a fantastic programme. It’s something I could have done with when I was growing up. I knew I wanted to build something myself, but the advice at school was directed at a career in*



the standard sense.”

“This programme is here to say we can take your ideas and help you build them. The ideas the young people have are fantastic. These are people from where I grew up and it’s exciting to see the talent. West Cumbria in many ways is a disadvantaged area, but there’s so much talent and potential here.”

Mark Cant is the Co-founder of E³ Investment Partnerships, Cumbrian Tea & Cumbrian Coffee Ltd, and works on the Programme and Project Partners (PPP) framework at Sellafield.



“I have been mentoring Rachel McCartney in her innovative project to develop a sustainable and environmentally friendly waste management solution. Rachel is Waste Management Coordinator at Sellafield and although she is already very knowledgeable in her field, I have been supporting her to develop her vision and guiding her with strategic understanding. I have also been able to pass on my designer to create a logo for her company and introduce her to specialist contacts.”

Others mentors included Nicola Myers who owns The Fruit and Veg Box Company in Silloth, James Batchelor, CEO and Founder of Alertacall, David Beeby, Chair of Cumbria Community Foundation, Linda Slinger, Intermediary Relationship Manager at The Cumberland, and Alec Smith, who set up young Cumbrian start-up company, Kultuur.



Cumbria Community Foundation and the Centre for Leadership Performance run the Positive Enterprise scheme. However, it could not run without generous supporters, including property developer Brian Scowcroft, with match funding from Sellafield Ltd under its Transforming West Cumbria programme, Nuclear Waste Services, Well Whitehaven, Morgan Sindall and Kaefer.

Tracey West, Senior Social Impact Manager at Sellafield Ltd, said: *“We want to encourage and support young entrepreneurs by making it easier for them to access the right advice at the right time, build a peer-led environment where they thrive alongside some financial assistance to get their business idea off the ground. I’m delighted Positive Enterprise is continuing to strengthen the growing network of young entrepreneurs in West Cumbria, by fuelling their ambition, confidence and commitment and helping them to succeed.”*

Samantha McKenzie, of Nuclear Waste Services, said: *“One of the priorities for Nuclear Waste Services as a funder is to help young people to develop their skills and knowledge and to be the best they can be. Every single one of them has done that.”*



“Positive Enterprise was developed because West Cumbria is under-represented, compared with other parts of the country, in terms of numbers of young entrepreneurs,” said David Beeby, Chair of Cumbria Community Foundation.

Due to the success of the first year, a further Positive Enterprise programme will run again in 2023/24 and 24/2025.

If you would like to find out more and how you can become involved, whether through mentoring, volunteering or sponsorship, please get in touch with:

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CUMBRIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

We are one of 47 community foundations across the UK, and over 1,700 similar foundations around the world. We work with fundholders to provide a permanent, flexible and growing source of local charitable funding that will directly address the needs of Cumbria's most vulnerable.

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