

Covid Bounce Back Programme

Cultural, Creative and Visitor Sectors
&
Community Voluntary Sectors

Learning Journal – Issue 2



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Thank You



Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of the Learning Journal, a publication dedicated to capturing learnings from the Covid Bounce Back Programme. This journal is intended for the organisations enrolled in Programme, which are from the Community and Voluntary Sector and/or from the Cultural, Creative and Visitor sectors in Barnsley.

The Covid Bounce Back Programme will continue running until 31st March 2022, which means organisations can still receive deep dive support and one-to-one coaching support until the end of the month.

Thank you to all those that have contributed to this issue of the Journal, we hope you all enjoy reading about the fantastic progress made in the last few months.

Learning Event

This issue of the Learning Journal coincides with the 'end of programme' learning and networking event held at Barnsley Civic on 8th March 2022. The end of programme learning event allowed us to share successes, reflect on lessons learnt, and network with fellow organisations, as well as the Coaches who have delivered the support. Thank you for all those that presented and attended the event – it was a fantastic day. Find out more on page XXXX

Contributors



Enterprising
Barnsley



Progress Made



The Covid Bounce Back Programme is part of Barnsley Council's Economic Renewal Action Plan (ERAP) and supports organisations and individuals working in the Community and Voluntary Sector and the Cultural, Creative and Visitor sectors.

Delivered through workshops and one-to-one coaching from Mutual Ventures, the aim is to help organisations and individuals recover from the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, by developing robust business plans to strengthen their resilience, explore new ideas, embrace e-commerce and secure funding opportunities.

The Programme is jointly funded through Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. The Programme runs until 31st March 2022.

What has been delivered by the Programme so far?

In parallel to the on-going one-to-one coaching and deep-dive support, 5 of the 6 scheduled workshops have been delivered to each of the 3 cohorts so far, with another one to be delivered in early March 2022. All of the material developed for the workshop, including a recording of the workshop itself, can be found in the Programme's Slack channel.

1. Building Local Partnerships – *Please see Issue 1 of the Learning Journal*
2. Developing your Strategy & a sound Business Plan – *Please see Issue 1 of the Learning Journal*
3. Navigating the funding environment and bidding for grants
4. Your Marketing and Digital Strategy
5. Growing your company and service offering
6. Building financial Resilience (to be delivered)

Deep Dives delivered so far... with many more planned

Identifying sponsorship opportunities

Collaboration with other organisations in Barnsley

Plans in accessing new income

Property searches

Business Planning

Searching for grants

Event organising

Recruitment

Growing and attracting new audiences

Applying for grants

Redesigning and updating website

Using digital marketing

Review of service model

Review of governance structures

Contract reviews

Developing online services and products

Communication and marketing strategy

Developing posters and leaflets to be used for marketing

Meet the Organisations



Enrolled in the programme are amazing organisations working in the **Cultural, Creative and Visitor Sectors and the Community & Voluntary Sector** within Barnsley. We hope you all have an opportunity to meet at the Learning Event.

Organisation	Service or Product
Age UK Barnsley	Charity supporting older people and their carers
Amazelab	Provides STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, maths) workshops, learning resources and webinars
Anchor (We Got You) Ltd (Gemma Gains)	Upholsterer and designer running sessions for mothers
Andy Platt	Musician
Banimated Ltd (Laura Blackburn)	2D animation and design studio
Barnsley Blind and Partially Sighted Association	Provides advice, support and guidance to blind and partially sighted people, and their family, friends and carers
Barnsley Civic	Creative hub hosting events, theatre productions, music, comedy, galleries and more
Barnsley CVS	Supports volunteers, local charities, and voluntary and community and social enterprise organisations
Barnsley Museum and Heritage Trust	Charity to help preserve Barnsley's heritage
Barnsley Sexual Abuse & rape Crisis Services	Specialist charity providing counselling, support and advocacy to survivors of sexual violence
Barnsley Theatre Trust (1998) Limited	Theatre hosting plays, musicals, one-man shows, panto and family entertainment
Beacon South Yorkshire	Supports carers through physical and emotional support
Belighful Music (Catherine Rannus)	Musician focused on health and wellbeing
Bence farm luxury accommodation	Luxury accommodation
Big Sky Creative Ltd (Joshua Ingamells)	Videographer and video production
Black Bee Creative (Steph Cronin)	Brand specialist offering graphic design and marketing support
Chilypep - H.O.M.E Wellbeing Hub	Young people's empowerment project currently advocating for young people's wellbeing
Craft Allotments CIC (Pamela Llyod)	Community Interest Company for creative crafts, and provides a creative space for over 50s.
Creative Recovery CIO	Supports social change in Barnsley and across Yorkshire
Crossroads Barnsley Ltd	Charity providing support to carers
De Morgan Foundation	Charity with museum and gallery in Barnsley
Delilah Bon	Musician
E=MC2 by Raychel McGuin	Supports with events planning, marketing and communication
Education Learning Support Hub (ELSH)	Charity teaching the various aspects of the English Language (speaking, reading, listening and writing).
Fat Cat Photography (Charlotte Kaye)	Product photography
Frankie and Sidney Felting (Mandy McLoughlin)	Creates and sells needle felting kits and equipment
Friends of Barnsley St Mary (Civic Church)	Focused on making Barnsley an even better place in which to live, work or do business
Gary Clarke	Contemporary choreographer
Gavin Joynt	Commercial photographer providing images for magazines, books and websites

Meet the Organisations



Organisation	Service or Product
Helping Others Positively Engaged in Community	Helping people get more involved with their local community
Inspire Progress (Guillian Bower)	Health And Wellness Coach
Jane Wildsmith	Handmade ceramics, porcelain luminaries and jewellery
Jemma Conway	Consulting support for museums, libraries, cultural and heritage and education
Jolly Good Communities	Supporting groups and individuals to create a community, tackle social isolation and tackle anti-social behaviour
Katie Portman Freelancing	Journalist and blogger
Life is Better in Colour (Laura Smith)	Designer of colourful badges, brooches, bunting craft and stationery supplies
LimBo Foundation	Charity supporting limb difference children and their families
Liz Simmons	Folk singer and songwriter
Mad Dots Press (Helen Madden)	Publishing company supporting the development and well-being of teachers, students and musicians
Marble Salon	Hair, beauty and nail salon
MarkMark (Mark Tillotson)	Performance Art Theatre
Migrant Action	Delivers advocacy work and promotes equity of rights and justice for migrants
Monotones (Martyn Hughes)	Premier function band
Mubarak Elamin	Videographer and show director
Old School House	Pub with auditorium for live music
Olivia Tate	Independent illustrator
Our Place (Barnsley)	Provides activities and support for adults with learning difficulties
Patrick Murphy	Artist, designer and curator
Reds in the Community	Barnsley Football Club charity providing sports programmes
Retro Fitness CIC	Training for kickboxing and boxing
Richard Kitson Fine Art	Artist delivering fine art workshops
Rob's All Day	Fresh, healthy re-heatable meals
Rotherham & Barnsley Mind	Independent local provider of high quality mental health services
Sequence Music (James Maplebeck)	Musician and music producer
Targeted Agency (Shaun Bellis)	Technical agency committed to driving your digital engagement objectives
The Dearne Playhouse	Theatre Playhouse
Trans Pennine Trail	Organises trails from coast to coast for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
Underneath the Stars Festival	Family Friendly Yorkshire Music Festival
YMCA Barnsley	Community group offering recreational programs & services
Yorkshire Academy of Modern Music	Lessons for guitar, bass and ukulele

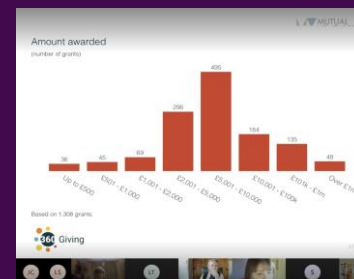
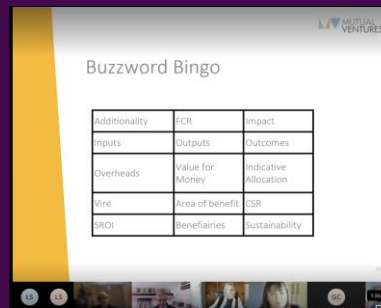


Navigating Funding

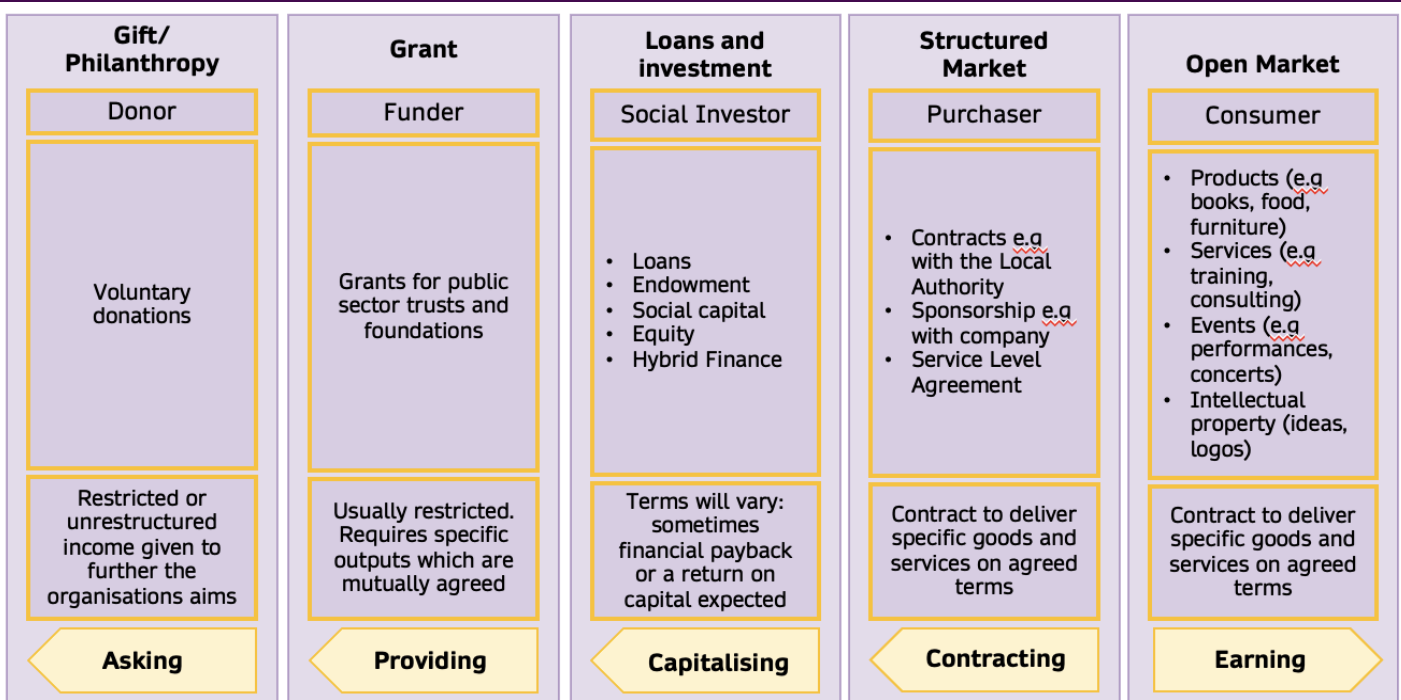
Aims of the Workshop

This workshop of the Covid Bounce Back Programme focused on navigating the funding environment and bidding for grants. The workshop was delivered by Caroline James in January 2022. The aims of the workshop were to support organisations to:

- 1) Walk through different sources of funding for organisations, including grants and other opportunities
- 2) Look at different financing options available at different stages, including seed finance, grants and loans
- 3) Provide tips on bidding for money and look at the funding sources within Yorkshire and nationally.



Different Sources of Funding



What to do before applying

1. Check that you and your proposal meet the published eligibility rules.
2. Make sure the information you have is current - if not sure then contact the funder to check and see if they intend to change anything soon.
3. Read the guidance.
4. Contact your support organisation for advice.

What is a 'good' application

1. Use of plain English with no jargon.
2. Make sure the budget adds up and the costs are fair and reasonable.
3. Clearly argue the need for the project or service.
4. Make sure the project meets the aims and outcomes of the funding programme.
5. The delivery plan is realistic within the timescales and budget.



Your Marketing and Digital Strategy

Aims of the Workshop

Our second workshop of the Covid Bounce Back Programme focused on marketing and digital strategies. The workshop was delivered by Helen Lang and Dan Gibson in January 2022. The aims of the workshop were to support your organisation to:

1. Link your marketing with your overall goals
2. Understanding who your audiences are and who you want to speak to
3. Positioning why what you do matters to them
4. Planning how you are going to speak to them
5. Simplifying what you want to say
6. Identifying where you are going to communicate with them
7. Putting your plan into action

Key Takeaways

Who you are trying to communicate with?

- Who are the individuals who would most benefit from your service or product?

Prioritise your audience

- Who needs this service or product the most?

Ask why!

- Why does the problem exist? Why has someone else not solved the problem? Why is your service or produce important?

Visualise your audience

- Develop personas to be able to be specific about who you are trying to serve.
- Identify the unmet needs of your audience.

Understand your unique selling point

- What are you delivering that others aren't? How can you help individuals?

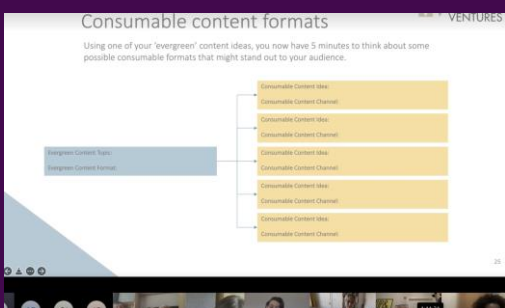
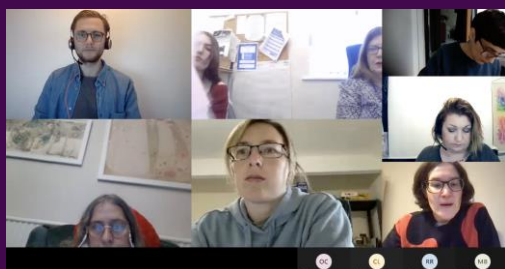
Develop content that adds value

- Develop good pillar content that gives you something to share with your audience that demonstrates how you can help them.

Develop content that will stand the test of time!

- With limited time, budget and resource, develop marketing content that can be used time and time again for different purposes.
- Evergreen content that is long-form and packed with value but can also be chopped up into smaller pieces of consumable content.
- Be consistent: develop a marketing strategy plan to enable a drumbeat of marketing that suits your resource capacity.

Prioritising your audiences



Growing Your Organisation and Service Offer



Aims of the Workshop

Two workshops on 'Growing your Organisation and Service Offer' were delivered in February 2022 by Jo Boardman. The workshops helped organisations to:

- 1) Understand the core foundations that need to be in place to enable them to grow or diversify their service offer, products, audiences, customers and/or clients.
- 2) Recognise the strengths, key assets and Unique Selling Points of their organisations.
- 3) Feel more confident about what they could achieve and maximise on potential opportunities.

What are your intellectual assets?

What have you got that makes you unique.....your USP?

- Knowledge / experience / skills / expertise that you or the team within your organisation has
- Customer database
- Your premises / location / equipment
- Customer care
- Ethical value

INTELLECTUAL ASSETS

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Key Messages

1. Make sure you have developed or are developing your business plan and operational action plan.
2. Consider and develop your marketing strategy, or, at least, identify your target market/s.
3. Identify where your funding is coming from. Does it come from grants, loans, trading, contracts or from a combination of the above?
4. Know what assets you have got – whether it is skills, people, services or activities, events/performances, or products – what are you good at?
5. Know your audience/s - and why they buy from you or support you?
6. Look at how you can 'tweak' or 'flex' what you currently do to attract a different audience / customer
7. Have you properly 'valued' it – can you 'incentivise' your customers?
8. Learn from others – don't re-invent the wheel!

Financial Resilience



Aims of the workshop

Three financial resilience workshops took place in March 2022, run by Agata Miskowiec and Will Carruthers. The workshops aimed to help organisations:

- 1) understand the importance of good financial management.
- 2) become familiar with key financial instruments and how to use them.
- 3) understand more about financial forecasting and how this could benefit their organisations
- 4) learn helpful tips and tricks to improve their organisation's financial resilience.



Important Lessons

1. Cash flow and reserves are key

- **Cash flow is king.**
- **Reserves are vital.** Different organisations will need to take different approaches to reserves, but you should generally aim to hold **three-to-six months of operating costs in reserves.**

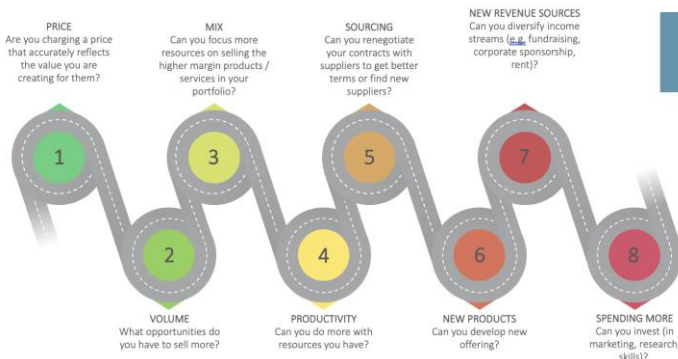
2. Diversify your revenue streams

- Consider **diversifying your revenue streams** so you are not relying on a small number of funding channels.
- You need to **closely manage relationships with a range of funders** and plan for sustainable income.

3. Review your governance arrangements

- Ensure your governance arrangements allow you to **stay on top of your finances.**
- If you have a **board of trustees / supervisory board**, review their **skills and experience** to ensure they are strong in financial governance.

How to drive operating profit?



It doesn't need to be about cost cutting!

If I had to run a company on three measures, those measures would be customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and cash flow.

General Electric

Beyond the Programme



The Covid Bounce Back Programme will continue until the end of March 2022, which means organisations can still receive deep dive support and one-to-one coaching support until the end of the month.

We encourage organisations to continue collaborating beyond the programme and we hope this programme has supported the development of new partnerships. To encourage further networking and collaboration, the Slack channel will remain open to allow all those enrolled to the programme to keep in touch after the programme ends, and access resources developed as part of the programme. Further network events will also be arranged later in 2022.

Update from Barnsley Council - Ongoing and planned activities and resources in your sectors:

Cultural, Creative and Visitor Sectors

- [Barnsley is now a Priority Area for Arts Council England](#)
- The Visitor Economy Strategy is being refreshed, and a further round of consultation will be announced soon.
- The Public Art Strategy is currently being refreshed. More information about getting involved will be via our social media accounts. The current strategy can be viewed [here](#).
- Arts Council England are helping to fund a new Culture Strategy for Barnsley. There will be lots of opportunities to be involved in this strategy and to support the growth of the sector.
- There will be an announcement of a futures grants to further support the culture sector in Barnsley. Watch out on all the BMBC social media accounts.
- [The Community Boost programme](#) will boost the growth of good employment opportunities and ensure local people have access.
- Barnsley Museums regularly commission artists as part of its National Portfolio Organisation Programme, as well as support and partner on applications to ACE. [Learn more here](#).
- Cooper Gallery sells work by Yorkshire artists. [Get in touch](#). Barnsley Museums also has space for artists and creative practitioners across their venues.

Community and Voluntary Sector

The VCSE Strategy Group was established in November 2020 and has been developed to bring together the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Barnsley. The group has developed and agreed a terms of reference, agreed a direction of travel and is in the process of establishing a robust action plan which will articulate the aspirations of the sector and the support these to be achieved.

The VCSE Strategy Group brings together representatives from the sector, each with a mandate to represent a section of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector along with senior staff from the Council, Health, and other key partners. It enables a coming together of the voluntary sector with the statutory sector to determine a coordinated strategic direction which is mutually beneficial. This will ensure cross-cutting actions are implemented effectively, the right person attends the right Strategic Board, and it will assist in raising the profile of the Voluntary and Community Sector within the partnership.

The Strategy Group will provide the sector with a supportive space to discuss current issues and challenges and utilise solution-based approaches to solving some of these challenges together. It will also provide an opportunity for the sector to bring key partners into the meeting when something has been highlighted as an issue, to provide an environment where these sometimes difficult conversations can take place.

As well as the Strategy Group, there will be a group of networks established to provide a strong element of 'voice and influence' from the sector in a coordinated way, along with being a place to share good practice, learn, and find solutions to often complex issues. It will also provide the right environment for co-production and opportunities to attract external funding into the sector.

ELSH - Education Learning Support Hub



A Barnsley learning centre which teaches English as a second language (ESOL) is bustling with activity again after a quiet 18 months. ELSH - Barnsley's Educational Learning Support Hub - provides free teaching in English speaking, reading and writing skills, maths, IT and citizenship. Students include people who have come to integrate in communities across the borough from all around the world, including refugees, asylum seekers and EU migrants.

Prior to the pandemic, the hub was busy with people attending daily classes and receiving one-to-one support, but when the doors closed in 2020, many students were left isolated at home where their language skills, confidence and mental health slipped.

Founder of ELSH Florentine Booth-King says: "It was a terrible time for our students, staff and volunteers and we are all very glad that the worst of it behind us. However, through all the disruption, we did learn a lot about ourselves as an organisation too and it really highlighted lots of things we needed to do at ELSH."

Florentine joined the Covid Bounce Back Programme to ask for help to overhaul ELSH's inadequate digital technology systems and address organisational issues which had never come to the top of her 'to do list' before. She has had one-to-one support from a business coach and she, and colleagues, have attended specialist workshops to develop digital, marketing and business skills.



ELSH - Education Learning Support Hub



With the Bounce Back programme's support, ELSH has put its finances on a much firmer footing with an improved approach to funding applications, including a new bid to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities fund. It has invested in new, secure technology so that it can offer effective learning both face-to-face and via Zoom and use apps like WhatsApp creatively, to share voice recordings of readings for example.

On the management side, ELSH has set up a new board of trustees (which it is currently appointing to) and is recruiting two new teachers and a member of admin staff. Florentine has been offered part-time employment too, after working mostly on a voluntary basis for eight years.

"With the help we've received, we have transformed our organisation and become much stronger. We feel we are now better set up to provide more and improved education and support services to the community," says Florentine.

ELSH is now also working more closely with other Barnsley-based charities and community groups and has ambitions to collaborate with Migrant Action, Feels Like Home, Polska Biblioteka and Barnsley Council to set up a new partnership which will ensure support services are much more joined up across the borough.



Feedback:

Florentine says: "One of the best things about the Bounce Back programme has been all the new introductions to other organisations in Barnsley, some of which we never knew were there before! There is so much more we can do when we work together and get support to people who need it in Barnsley."

ELSH moved to a new base on Warren Quarry Lane in October 2020 and has set this up with screens and so on to guard against Covid-19. See more [here](https://elshub.org.uk/) <https://elshub.org.uk/>

Katie Portman



After 12 years running her own business as an award-winning blogger and author, Katie Portman launched a second business during the pandemic.

Katie qualified as a personal stylist through the London College of Style and began providing virtual and in-person consultations to women from across the UK in spring last year.

Adding personal stylist to her portfolio business was a natural progression in many ways, as Katie had dedicated her writing career to helping women feel good about themselves and how they look.

Katie says: “I had always thought about becoming a personal stylist alongside my writing and public speaking work, but to be honest, if Covid hadn’t happened I’m not sure I would have done it.

“The pandemic hit my business hard with no events and launches; and I couldn’t get out to promote my book. Plus, as a mum of two young children, my time was swallowed up with childcare and home schooling.

“I needed to think differently and think about what to do next and Bounce Back really helped me to do that.”



Katie Portman



Katie worked with her Covid Bounce Back programme coach and attended several workshops, to help her review every aspect of her working life and develop a new business plan.

As a result, she has re-vitalised and re-launched the writing side of her business with a new reader's journal due to be published soon to accompany her first book 'A little pick me up' and second book in the planning stage. She has also decided to put working-from-home behind her and has taken on an office at Barnsley's DMC where she can write free of distractions - and receive her styling clients.

And, in marketing herself post-Covid as a writer, public speaker and personal stylist, she has added a whole new income stream to her business model.

Her existing 15,000 followers across social media have provided an excellent springboard for the new enterprise and she is booked up with appointments for weeks in advance.

Katie is now working with her Bounce Back coach on developing an 'online personal style package' to widen her offer of colour analysis, style assessments and wardrobe edits. And she anticipates she may need to recruit an assistant or commission extra support for her business in the near future.

Feedback:

Katie says: "The Bounce Back programme has been invaluable in helping me find my professional self again after the disruption and demands of Covid lockdowns and it is great to start 2022 feeling so energised and positive."



De Morgan Foundation



A unique Barnsley-based Museum was all set for a big relaunch before the pandemic hit and devastated the visitor economy. But The De Morgan Museum, based at Cannon Hall, is now looking forward to welcoming many more art lovers and local history enthusiasts to its display of paintings and ceramics.

The De Morgan Foundation celebrates the international importance of artists William and Evelyn De Morgan – whose ancestors lived at Cannon Hall.

It opened its art collection at the hall in 2016, and following Arts Council England ‘Working Towards’ Accreditation status, began operating as a museum, in its own right, just before the pandemic.

The week before the first lockdown began, the museum had been refreshed with key pieces that had previously been on display at the British Museum and in San Francisco and a big media launch had been organised. Then the country was shut down almost overnight.

“Obviously the impact of that was huge,” says Sarah Hardy, Director of the De Morgan Museum. “We were just trying to establish ourselves in the area and become this ‘new museum’. We were relying on people coming and spreading the word to others. I had no idea that it would be such terrible timing”. The museum was closed until the summer of 2020, and re-opening was then punctuated by further lockdowns and restrictions.

The support from the Covid Bounce Back programme has been key to getting the Foundation back on its feet.

Sarah has been supported to draw up an audience-focused Museum development plan. One-to-one coaching calls and tailored ‘deep dive’ sessions focused on communications and marketing have helped her explore new ways of growing and attracting different audiences. The foundation has also been supported to improve its digital strategy, to make new local connections, and to understand how it can become more robust, sustainable and self-sufficient.



De Morgan Foundation



“The programme is completely structured to the individual needs of our charity, which means that I’ve had a lot of help and support with work that I had been meaning to do anyway”, says Sarah. “Having this specific help from inside the Barnsley area, and being connected with other organisations here, has really helped us establish ourselves in the borough.”

“I’m the only member of staff, meaning I do absolutely everything, so I was worried I wouldn’t have time to commit to the programme. But having a specific mentor, who has a heritage background so understands us completely, meant I didn’t have to go through the same thing with a different person each time.”

The De Morgan Museum is now thinking ahead to understand how its audiences have changed – and the opportunities that can bring.

The De Morgan Museum is now focusing on capitalising on the Footfall to Cannon Hall Park, which includes laying family trails around the grounds to encourage new audiences into the museum. As part of its outreach plans it is also working with local community groups – and there are even plans to take the collection on a tour of America.



Feedback:

“The Bounce Back programme support has definitely given me more confidence to plan and look to the future”, says Sarah. “I feel like I’ve been steered and directed clearly to make the most of things, and without this support we would have been so much further behind.”

“Through bespoke marketing training with the Covid Bounce Back mentors we’ve been able to look at how we may frame the tour;”, adds Sarah. “We’re hoping that it will help our local audiences understand the international importance of the De Morgans’ artworks.”

Crossroads Barnsley



A Barnsley charity dedicated to supporting carers can continue helping people in need thanks to the Covid Bounce Back Programme. Crossroads Caring for Carers provides long-term practical support to carers and the people they care for, either in the home or in the wider community.

With half of its income generated through private clients (and the remainder via council funding), the pandemic hit the organisation hard. The closing down of the country meant many clients were able to care for their loved ones themselves at home, so services were no longer required. And Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for other 'essential care' visits had to be self-funded by the charity before grants were available.

With 24 staff on the books, furlough was a big help - but income had taken a substantial cut. So, when CEO Joseph David received an email about the Covid Bounce Back Programme, he saw a chance to build a brighter future for the charity. "I liked the idea of talking to someone with experience to help me develop myself and prepare for the future", said Joseph, who has worked with Crossroads for 17 years.



Crossroads Barnsley



“I was appointed a coach, and we had monthly meetings which covered a great deal. I was asked a lot of questions, which made me really think about what I was doing, explore new options and ideas for moving forward. There was a lot of positivity in our meetings and the goal-setting really helped keep me motivated.”

Joseph received help with marketing strategies to pick up new clients as the country started to open up again, and crucially, support with bid writing which enabled him to successfully apply for a number of grants.

“My coach had a background in this area, so it made a big difference in terms of accessing funding”, he said. “We also talked about generating new income, recruitment, and upskilling my workforce. And I was helped to develop my plans for a social care training academy, which we hope to open in the first half of 2022.” The help Joseph received from the Covid Bounce Back Programme has been critical in getting the new academy plans off the ground, with support around marketing and e-commerce. It is hoped this new venture will become a vital revenue stream that will sustain the future of the charity.

Feedback:

“Things were very challenging going into the pandemic”, said Joseph, “but because of the help from the programme, we have actually come out of it in a better place. It’s hard to express just how much I have benefitted from the support. The coaching has been brilliant and I’m really glad I took the opportunity to take part. It has been so worthwhile.”



Underneath the Stars Festival



A live music and arts festival is looking forward to welcoming thousands of people back to Barnsley this summer after the pandemic nearly put an end to the annual event for good.

Underneath the Stars was established by the production company behind Barnsley-based folk-singing legend Kate Rusby and her label Pure Records in 2014. It drew record crowds to Cinderhill Farm in Cawthorne in 2019. Then Covid bit.

Director Emma Holling, Kate's sister, says it was a total shock: "2019 had been a bit of a turning point for us as a relatively new festival. Everything fell into place and we got the numbers to put us on a firm financial footing with a trajectory for growth. But then Covid hit and it was very bleak. We really didn't know if we were going to survive."

Emma said the festival sector is notoriously hand-to-mouth with deposits, planning and preparation costs paid all year round and one big hit of income. As a small, independent festival the prospect of ticket refunds was terrifying and the company was not sure it would be able to cover its losses.

Thankfully, emergency funding support came through from Arts Council England and fans also got behind the event buying 2020 merchandise to celebrate 'the festival that wasn't'.

Lots of live streaming kept the audience engaged in 2020 and a reduced capacity event was held in 2021. Emma says Barnsley Council were really supportive throughout and the festival last year was made possible by a successful Covid Recovery Fund bid.



Underneath the Stars Festival



On top of all this, Emma signed up to the Covid Bounce Back Programme to take a fresh look at the family's not-for-profit community interest company and strengthen both its financial resilience and environmental sustainability for the future.



Feedback:

Emma says: "I nearly didn't sign up because I didn't think I'd have the time, but every minute I've invested in the Bounce Back programme has been worth it and has given me a massive return on my investment.

"My Bounce Back coach has been like a 'critical friend' and we've worked right through our business plan reviewing targets, pursuing new collaborations and getting up-to-date on ever-changing funding opportunities

The visitor economy has a massive impact on the wider economy. Underneath the Stars works with several local suppliers and businesses to deliver its annual events and it is also estimated that for every £1 spent at a festival a further £10 is spent at local shops, hotels, petrol stations and so on.

The event attracts people from all around the world and its 400 volunteers help to give it a reputation as one of the friendliest festivals. It has a community feel for all ages and sells as many cups of tea as pints of beer over its three-day programme!

Emma says: "We just love introducing so many new people to Barnsley through the festival and totally changing their perceptions of the place. They often comment on how beautiful the countryside is here and how many interesting places there are to visit and things to do. "Our aim is to do our bit for culture in Barnsley and to hold a festival where people of all ages can have fun. We're hoping for a big crowd this year and all indications are that people are more than ready for that."

Visit: <https://underneaththestarsfest.co.uk/>

Barnsley Blind and Partially Sighted Association



Barnsley charity has renewed hope for the future. A volunteer-run charity which felt like it was 'going backwards' due to the impact of the pandemic is now full of ideas and hope for the future. The Barnsley Blind & Partially Sighted Association (BBPSA), established for over 30 years, is feeling more positive about 2022 and beyond - thanks to support from the Covid Bounce Back Programme.

BBPSA gives time, advice and support to those who are blind or partially sighted, and their family, friends and carers too. They can provide a range of resources to give people access to apparatus and aids which can make their lives easier. They also offer advocacy services from their office and run a weekly social club at The Silkstone Pub on Park Road in Barnsley. Unfortunately, the pandemic forced most of its services to stop.

"It was hard in many ways", remembers Rebecca Green, BBPSA Chairman. "When the first lockdown began in March 2020, I was grieving the loss of my mother, Carol Green MBE, the founder and former chairman of the charity. So on top of everything else we had to rearrange the committee. Funds were depleting but we still had to pay rent on our offices. It was tough."



Barnsley Blind and Partially Sighted Association



Entirely self-sufficient, the charity generates 100 per cent of its income via fundraising, donations, legacies and grants. A monthly retail stall at Barnsley Hospital contributed towards rent on the office and resource centre, but the impact of lockdown restrictions meant the stalls had to stop and they were forced to move offices.

The charity is a volunteer-led group with no paid workers. Because most of the volunteers had to follow shielding restrictions, it was forced to temporarily reduce its team to just one person at a time in the office, offering emergency support only.

Rebecca says this left the charity feeling they were ‘going backwards’ and the email alerting them to the Covid Bounce Back Programme came at just the right time.

“I didn’t know if our application to the programme would be successful”, she said, “but I felt like we needed a fresh start and a reason to look to the future. The support has been really helpful, and I’m hopeful we can now build on the progress we’ve made.”

The charity was able to access multiple training sessions, including around funding, and they were assigned a mentor for regular one-to-one help and support.

Rebecca said the mentoring support has helped them identify their strengths and weaknesses – as well as reinforcing their motivation.

Rebecca is also grateful for the local connections she has been able to make through the Bounce Back programme, and she plans to make the most of them by attending its in-person networking events.

She added: “The Bounce Back programme has given our charity lots of ideas, and now we are hoping we can move forward. The BBPSA has been going a long time, and it’s important that we have a future.”

Feedback:

“Our mentor has been really good; he understood who we were and the situation we were in. He has helped us with accessing funding by supporting our grant applications and it has all helped us feel a bit more hopeful. Just talking to someone impartial has been useful, and he makes us feel we are doing something valuable.”

Visit: <https://www.bbpsa.co.uk/>



Reflections from the Programme

Caroline James, Coach:

"In addition to the tailored business development support, the coaching sessions have given people a much-needed safe space with a critical friend in order to reflect on how the pandemic has effected the way they run their business or charity and how they want to grow."

"As a coach, it has been very rewarding to work with such a wide range of people in Barnsley. I have enjoyed putting people together for mutual benefit and expanding their networks across different sectors."

"The success of the programme has been in providing a range of networking opportunities which people value. A lot of the people and organisations on this programme straddle different sectors and welcome the opportunity to network outside their area. There is an opportunity here to develop a legacy Barnsley network open to all the Bounce Back participants which could be built on with new people joining."

Helen Lang, Coach:

"For the dedicated individuals we have been working with, many of whom have had to 'hold the fort' with limited support, the coaching has been a lifeline. Many of the people I've been working with have had very limited institutional support from boards, or colleagues, and have found the long-overdue opportunity to take a step back and objectively assess their work invaluable. It has enabled those we are working with to have a safe space, to be honest about the pressures they have personally struggled with over the last 2 years. Having the headspace to unpack their organisational challenges has helped them to make better informed, balanced decisions. I think they have also found the mix of the practical (connections locally, tools etc.) and personal support in these sessions really helpful."

"I have been impressed by the sheer tenacity, dedication and perseverance of some of these people to keep going despite the ongoing challenges many are facing. I feel inspired by the passion and energy demonstrated by most of the people on this programme and believe with the right support there is real potential for these individuals to lead the way in shaping a very positive future for Barnsley."

Jo Boardman, Coach:

"Organisations have benefitted from the Covid Bounce Back Support, whether it be through the one-to-one coaching, deep dives or the workshop element of the programme. Organisations have all identified the benefits of sharing 'best practice', knowledge, and expertise with other participants on the programme."

"Being able to 'visit' clients and work with them has been one of the other positive aspects of this programme from my perspective, as I have been able to watch them in their work environment, and identify the support, resources, and training that will provide the most benefit for them not only within this programme, but also once this programme ends."

"To ensure a robust and resilient Community and Voluntary Sector, and Cultural, Creative, and Visitors Sector moving forward, more support such as the Covid Bounce Back Programme is needed."



Reflections from the Programme

John Copps, Coach

"It is obvious from coaching that the last two years have taken their toll on organisations. But I have been impressed by the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of people to bounce-back, which makes me optimistic for the future in Barnsley"

Oliver Cappleman and Lily Mellen, Mutual Ventures Programme Managers

"It has been fantastic to hear about the creative and valuable work being delivered across Barnsley. The commitment that organisations have given to the programmes in developing skills to drive forward their organisations has been inspiring. Support delivered on the programme has been broad, ranging from organisations receiving deep dives on business planning, bid writing and growing services, to advice being given on property, digital innovation and partnership working. We hope that the organisations have enjoyed being part of the programme as much as we have."

Ben Hawley, Justine Orford and Hannah Towers Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Programme Managers

"The Covid Bounce Back programmes have been really well received and it's clear they have had a substantial impact on the participants of both programmes. It's been great from a programme management perspective seeing the journey the organisations have been on, and Mutual Ventures have done a fantastic job of delivering real value to the participants. These programmes have formed part of the Economic Recovery Action plan from South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, which has helped fund the programmes in conjunction with Barnsley MBC"



Learning Event



Many of you were able to attend the **Covid Bounce Back Programme Learning Event**, held at Barnsley Civic in the afternoon of the **8th March**. It was great to see so many of you networking with fellow organisations on the programme and talking the opportunity to meet the coaches face to face.

The purpose of the event was to share and celebrate your successes, provide an opportunity for you to reflect on lessons learnt, and encourage the continued development of a peer support network for CVS and CCV organisations within Barnsley.

As part of the event, we got to hear first-hand from organisations on how this programme has supported them to develop skills and to feel more resilient. We heard directly from; Chilypep – H.O.M.E Wellbeing Hub, Education Learning Support Hub (ELSH), and Mark Tillotson. We also got to see some inspiring films on the progress made by organisations such as Trans Pennine Trail, Richard Kitson, Barnsley CVS and Helping Others Positively Engaged (H.O.P.E) in Community.

The event also provided an opportunity for reflection in small groups. You reflected that:

- Being able to share advice, support each other, and collaborate with peers has been a key benefit of the programme.
- The coaches and overall programme has held organisations to deadlines, which has allowed them to move at pace and achieve positive outcomes.
- Organisations want to build on the relationships and networks created via the programme by creating a formal network.

The Bouncing Back Creatively from Covid Event was held later that evening. This was another engaging event which allowed for further networking, with many more representatives from BMBC, the wider Culture, Creative and Visitor Sector and the Community and Voluntary Sector.

During this event, we saw more inspiring case study films on progress made by Chilypep - H.O.M.E Wellbeing Hub and Mark Tillotson. We also had a panel discussion to discuss the impact and legacy of the programme. Panel members included Tracey Johnson from Barnsley Digital Media Center, Mandy Loach from Trans Pennine Trail, Richard Kitson (artist), Lynn Dunning from Barnsley Museums and Melvyn Lunn from Barnsley CVS.

Finally, we had some fantastic keynote speakers who inspired the room about what could be achieved by the CCV and CVS sectors in Barnsley: Wayne Hemingway, Co-Founder of Red or Dead, and John Loughton, Founder of Scran Academy.

We hope all that attended the events enjoyed the afternoon and evenings as much as we did!



Thank You



As this will be the last issue of the Learning Journal before the end of the Covid Bounce Back Programme, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the participants for their commitment and engagement with the programme.

It has been fantastic to hear about the great work being delivered in Barnsley within both the Community and Voluntary Sector and the Cultural, Creative and Visitor Sectors. Your enthusiasm and dedication to your work, and to this programme, has been inspiring to witness and we hope that the programme has only enhanced this passion and enthusiasm.

We hope that through the support delivered in this programme, you can all continue to make Barnsley an even better place to work and live.

Finally, remember that you can still receive support and deep dive sessions from your coaches until the end of March 2022.

