

Empowering Enterprise Biannual Impact Report

JANUARY–JUNE 2021





This report was produced by Devon Communities Together, who are the evaluation and impact measurement partner for Empowering Enterprise. Visit www.devoncommunities.org.uk for further information.

Empowering Enterprise: The second stage of delivery	4
Theory of Change	6
Inputs	8
Activities	9
Outputs (Targets & Results)	10
Outcome 1	12
Outcome 2	14
Outcome 3	15
Outcome 4	17
Cross-cutting Themes	18
Looking Forward (2021-2023)	20

Empowering Enterprise is a Building Better Opportunities project, managed by Petroc, and funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund



Empowering Enterprise: The second stage of delivery

Empowering Enterprise is a unique project for 18 to 24-year olds in Devon who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and face the biggest barriers to getting into work, education or training. It is a Building Better Opportunities project, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and The National Lottery Community Fund. It is a partnership project managed by Petroc.

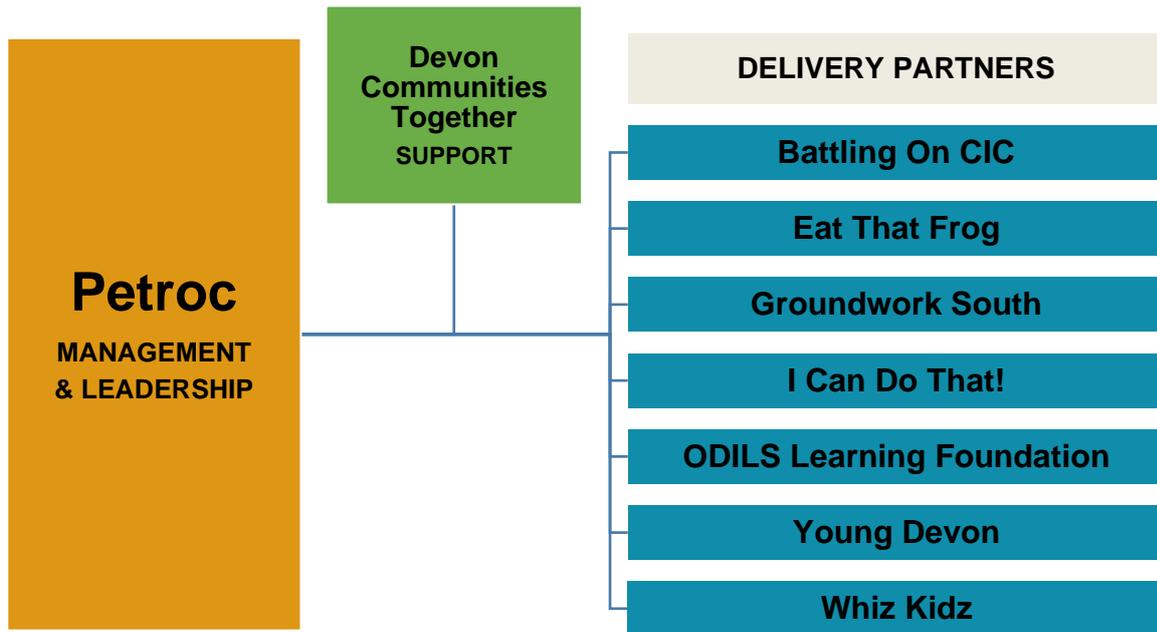
Empowering Enterprise was originally due to be delivered from July 2017 to July 2020, during which time it exceeded its target of 630 participants, and a total of 657 18-24-year olds went live on the project. In late 2020 the partnership was offered a small increase in funding to deliver to end 2021. Then in May 2021 Empowering Enterprise were offered further funding with an extension of time until June 2023.

The achievements and lessons from the first stage of delivery, are outlined in the Impact Report available on the [project website](#).

Whilst learnings from the first stage of delivery are being taken forward and implemented in the second stage, the partnership in most ways is delivering as it did, building on the foundations which were so successful. The partnership's new target for the second stage of delivery is to reach a further 332 eligible young people.

Empowering Enterprise's provision has always been designed to allow for flexibility in participant journeys, and so participants from the first stage of deliver are able to reengage with Empowering Enterprise for support in the next stage of delivery. Anyone who went live previously will not count as an additional start in target numbers, however if they were previously withdrawn and after reenrolment achieve a result, this result will be reported.

As Empowering Enterprise continues Petroc have continued to manage the project's **strategy, budget and administration**, and are responsible for **leading the partnership and ensuring that the intended targets, results and outcomes are achieved**. Delivery of **the project will be continued by 7 of the 9 delivery partners from the first stage of delivery** with Inspiring Arts and Dame Kelly Holmes Trust no longer involved in the project. ODILS, at this stage, remain actively involved in partnership support and cross cutting theme activities, but due to staffing considerations will not be working directly with participants for the first quarters of this project. Devon Communities Together will continue to participate in the partnership as **support partners**, the partnership is as follows:



This report will show how the partnership has re-invigorated itself between January and June 2021. It will outline how partners have had to re-establish teams to prepare for delivery on a project which they had stopped delivering 5 months previously, and it will show how they have already been able to produce outstanding work which contributes to the development of young people in Devon and the wider society.

This report will also show how the lessons of the first stage of delivery are being brought into the project, including an enhanced focus on co-designing delivery with input from participants, and renewed employer engagement work.

Theory of Change & Impact Updates

As the evaluation partner for Empowering Enterprise, Devon Communities Together has supported the partnership since 2017, by measuring the impact that is being achieved. Three annual reports and a report at the end of the original contract have brought to light **the successes of this work in order that they might be amplified** and shared as best practice, as well as highlighting **key areas for further development and growth**. Devon Communities Together will continue on this course moving forward, but will no longer report annually. Rather **six biannual impact updates** will be produced. Below is an explanation of the Theory of Change framework via which Empowering Enterprise will continue to be evaluated and have its impact measured.

When perceiving a current or past project through a Theory of Change, one can trace the resource or **input** that has facilitated a programme of **activities** to take place. The results or **outputs** of these activities can then be identified and, when contextualised and analysed holistically, these outputs can indicate whether desired **outcomes** have become realities. By carefully tracking and analysing each stage of this process, one can understand how, and the extent to which, **impact** (or 'change') has taken place. The theory can also be used as a valuable planning and strategy development tool, to ensure that resource is effectively directed towards the desired change taking place.

Though the numerical targets and desired results of this project (p.10) are an important part of this, Devon Communities Together also sets out to capture and take seriously the very **real qualitative stories and lived experiences of change** that are anticipated to occur in participants' and communities' lives through the work of this project.

Whilst Petroc will continue to report regularly to ESF and the National Lottery Community Fund, to update them on expenditure and progress made towards quantitative targets, **Devon Communities Together will produce biannual reports to capture and present the change that is being achieved by the Empowering Enterprise partnership**. These will be circulated as updates to the partnership, stakeholders and interested parties on the activities that are taking place and impact that is being realised.

The planned programme for reporting is as follows:

Impact Update	Covering from	Until	Report To Be Shared
1	1 st January 2021	30 th June 2021	September 2021
2	1 st July 2021	31 st December 2021	February 2022
3	1 st January 2022	30 th June 2022	August 2022
4	1 st July 2022	31 st December 2022	February 2023
5	1 st January 2021	31 st May 2023	July 2023

A summary of Empowering Enterprise’s Theory of Change for the second stage of delivery can be seen below. The project’s impact updates will largely focus on the activities and progress of the previous six month period and discuss how these in relation to project targets. However, this report in addition will cover the set-up phase as partners have re-engaged with project delivery.



Input

There is a **financial budget of £4.4 million** for Empowering Enterprise. This funding is allocated as part of the Building Better Opportunities programme, it is funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund.

These funds are managed on behalf of the partnership by Petroc, who have sums to each partner organisation, dependent on their role and target number of participants.

The majority of this funding pays for staff time and each delivery organisation employs a team consisting of project management, administrative support and mentors. Some managers also operate as mentors. The 7 delivery partners vary in size and operating structures with number of mentors per organisation ranging from 1 (e.g. Groundwork South) to 8 (e.g. Young Devon). Funding can also be used to pay for expenses justified as necessary in aiding each participants progress, for example transport or suitable interview clothing.

Financial claims are submitted on a quarterly basis with partners providing their costs and associated evidence to Petroc who check and verify these to ensure that they are audit compliant. Petroc then collate these into the overall claim, submitted to the National Lottery Community Fund. As of the end of June, Petroc were talking with partners to set and review budgets and profile to the end of 2023.

Delivery partners operate throughout Devon, as shown below:

Delivery Partner	Area Covered
Battling On	Plymouth and Tavistock
Eat That Frog	Plymouth, Torbay and South Devon
Groundwork South	Plymouth and Southwest Devon
I Can Do That!	Torbay and South Devon
Open Doors International Language School (ODILS)	Plymouth, West Devon, South Hams
Young Devon	Devon wide
Whiz Kidz UK (WKUK)	Plymouth

Activity

In **January 2021**, the partnership re-commenced the delivery of Empowering Enterprise, with the first participant session taking place in early February.

Much of the early part of 2021 was spent to **recruit and induct new partnership staff by delivery organisations**. Although the majority of project managers, and some mentors, remained from the first stage of delivery, most partners needed to recruit staff. Three partner organisations did not start actively delivering with young people until after March. With all newly recruited staff Petroc supported with the **induction of new staff** to help familiarise them with the specificities of ESF funding paperwork requirements for proving eligibility and logging participant sessions and progress. In addition, much of the work of partners in quarter 1 involved reactivating networks, conducting publicity, and building referral routes with support services outside of the partnership. Alongside delivering training and support to the partnership, Petroc also had to prepare for the extension by recruiting new team members and updating systems to incorporate the extension. Petroc also checked hard copies of all evidence from the first stage of delivery to ensure audit compliance.

Delivery work with young people was **limited in the first half of 2021, especially the first three months**, not just due to recruitment of new staff, but because partners were having to work against the **backdrop of a third national lockdown**. This lockdown commenced on the 4th of January, as the Covid-19 threat level was moved to Level 5 by the government. From this date, people were permitted to leave their homes to go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, only if they could not reasonably do so from home; exercise alone or within their bubble once per day in their local area; shop for basic necessities; meet with support bubbles (if legally permitted to form one); and seek medical assistance. Furthermore, it was mandated that all schools and colleges would move to remote learning, and all non-essential retail, hospitality and personal care centres would close. Most of these mandates remained in place for the whole of the first quarter of 2021, with outdoor gatherings of different households not permitted until March 29th and non-essential retail and outdoor restaurants and venues opening on April 12th. Opening of indoor venues, and indoor gathering was not permitted until May 17th, all legal limits on social contact were removed on July 19th. This context affected Empowering Enterprise considerably with much of the project's **activity forced to take place remotely** and **participant's health, wellbeing and motivations severely affected by isolation**. Despite these challenges a significant number of young people were recruited, engaged and supported by mentors (see Outputs).

Devon Communities Together also worked in this time to act on a key learning from the first stage of delivery. Where co-design activities with young people were successful on a delivery partner level, for example, in the creation of personal development plans, or via group work it was recognised that there was a gap of co-design at a strategic level. To gain key strategic insight, and to begin routinely embedding co-design into the project, **engagement with two topics of co-design were facilitated by Devon Communities Together** one on the impact of Covid-19 on young people and the changed role of support services, and a second on the types of support employers could provide. These are discussed in further below (pp 12 – 19).

Outputs (Targets)

The following outputs and results are the project targets agreed with the funding bodies. It is these that Petroc are responsible for overseeing and reporting on a quarterly basis.

Outputs	Project targets	Total to date and % of overall target	Numbers in reporting period and % of overall target
Total participants engaged	989	72%	710
Male	495	82%	406
Female	494	61%	301
Unemployed	544	73%	398
Economically inactive	445	70%	312
Participants with disabilities	435	76%	331
Participants from ethnic minority groups	84	71%	60
Results			
Participants move into education or training on leaving	205	71%	145
Participants move into employment, including self-employment	164	66%	108
Participants move into job search on leaving	209	25%	53

Considering challenges of recruitment and Covid it is a significant achievement that the partnership was able to have **53 young people go 'live' on the project**, meaning that they completed the entry paperwork with their mentor and sought, collated and submitted the necessary paperwork to evidence their eligibility. This number of 53 participants represents 5% of the total project target, and means 72% of the overall target for the project has been reached, with 23 months remaining of delivery. Of these 53, **4 participants were supported to move into employment**, and it is likely that several participants will be moving into education or training in the second half of 2021, as college courses begin.

A point of success to be noted in the above figures is the **near equal split of Male (25) and Female (27) participants in the past 6 months. This is in contrast to the division of the first stage of delivery**, where 58% of participants were Male and 41% Female.

An **additional 58 young people were engaged** by a mentor to begin their participant journeys, and they might later become 'live' participants.

Outcomes

The next section of this report details the partnerships achievements in relation to the established project outcomes. These outcomes, shown below, are the same as those from the first stage of delivery, and a diverse range of quantitative and qualitative outputs are used by Devon Communities Together to support the measurement of progress towards these outcomes being achieved. Though these are not contractual targets, when considered cumulatively, they are valuable indicators of change.

Empowering Enterprise Outcomes

- 1. Young people participating in the project have improved their employability, entrepreneurial and life skills.**
- 2. Existing support services are more visible and accessible to young people and their communities, and are more sustainable.**
- 3. Communities and businesses are more cohesive and resilient.**
- 4. Project partner organisations have increased their capacity and capability to support young people through a more joined-up approach, sharing of best practice and access to training and resources.**

Outcome 1

Young people participating in the project have improved their employability, entrepreneurial and life skills.

53 participants became enrolled on the project in the first half of 2021, 4 of whom moved into employment. Through one-to-one mentoring sessions and group work, these participants were encouraged to identify and explore their talents, aspirations and barriers, and work towards a personal development plan. The format of support undertaken is tailored to the needs and interests of participants, and work towards building confidence, tackling barriers, gaining skills and encouraging pursuit of aspirations. Activities supported this period have varied from coffee or a walk, through to music therapy or guided gym sessions. As Figure 1, below, shows participants so far have been concentrated in Plymouth and Torbay.



Figure 1: Current live participant locations

The need and impact of Empowering Enterprise’s model of support was evidenced throughout the first stage of delivery, but now seems more important than ever. The impact of Covid and its associated restrictions is increasingly understood to be disproportionately affecting the target demographic of this project. Mentors have reported impacts on health and wellbeing, for example, young mums having no respite; very isolated individuals without family; people with learning disabilities or severe anxieties having to face new routines. In addition, Covid has had significant impact on the job market and availability of positions, both paid and voluntary.

“Lockdowns have had a huge impact on young people’s belief in opportunity and we are focusing our initial sessions on building trust, relationships, and confidence in services. Mentors are altering the perception that there is ‘no way forward’ and helping with the softer, more invisible outcomes such as improved anxiety, being able to travel independently or improved family relationships.” Project Manager

The mentors adapted their delivery exceptionally to these circumstances, engaging remotely however they could. Including maintaining WhatsApp peer-support groups; doorstep mentor meetings; and video call sessions. Remote courses and group activities addressed life skills, budgeting, and employability skills. Working remotely has in some cases made it easier to engage with participants, such as those in rural locations or those nervous of leaving the

house or using public transport. Remote working and **the ‘mobile office’ has also allowed mentors greater flexibility to meet with participants.**

Codesign activity, facilitated by DCT, found that **Covid had impacted on young peoples’ aspirations.** Courses held less appeal due to lack of social interaction, and participants were **now more likely to prioritise job security** compared to wages or use of personal interests/skills. **The use of Zoom could cause anxiety in participants, who could find it stressful, preferring to use chat functions** over video to remove pressure and allow them to gather their thoughts. **Barriers to access related more to cost of data and broadband stability** rather than access to suitable devices.

Type of session	Number of sessions	Number of hours
Advocacy	92	76.5
Group	18	128
Contact attempt	434	n/a
One to one	500	623
Total	1,038	827.5
No shows	144	/
<i>Types of support session in this period</i>		

“I was really nervous at the beginning of it because of how the previous course’s Zoom calls had gone (that was the first time I’d done Zoom). But it went really well, and I got on with Bob from the get-go, which was great because I can be nervous meeting new people. But we got our teeth into things and really ploughed through chunks of it.



Bob persuaded me to get a camera, because for the whole of the courses before that I didn’t have a camera, because I didn’t like having my face shown. But since then, I’ve had to do Zoom interviews with Travis Perkins and make two 60 seconds videos for Kickstart – so the practice was so important.” Will, Participant with Young Devon

Strategies to continue providing services remotely were one challenge. As lockdowns ended all mentors have noted the **continued challenge in engagement**, with young people often **having been inside for over a year significantly affecting motivations to become involved with support services or pursue education.** Young people have been reported as seeing no reason to leave their comfort zone, often living in unproductive routines isolated from in-person contact and socialising through virtual worlds. Mentors are finding that low pressure activities such as country walks or creative sessions such as vision boarding are serving to be effective in **rebuilding confidences before encouraging participants into courses or volunteering placements.** Mentors have reported that groups sessions have been especially difficult to establish as confidence from isolation is low, however, their value is recognised, for example when groups have met at an allotment project managed by I Can Do That!

“Communication and conversations have been fluent between all groups who have attended [the allotment]. Project Manager, I Can Do That!

Outcome 2

Existing support services are more visible and accessible to young people and their communities, and are more sustainable.

Empowering Enterprise delivery partners are embedded in their communities and rely upon developing strong relationships with local communities and services. These relationships are often two-way, with partners both receiving referrals and signposting to services.

A major focus of the first three months, alongside recruitment and induction, was re-developing partnerships. This networking continued through the delivery period and led to strong relationships with, for example, Barnardo's, Oxfam, Plymouth Youth Hub, Young Offenders and Care Leaver teams, housing services, financial services, and many more. Many of these relationships led to referrals for partners, the most significant number of referrals, **31 of 53 participants, coming from the local Jobcentre Plus (JCP) advisors.**

"We have formed a partnership with the foodbanks and we are now able through this partnership to distribute food and hygiene packs to individuals in need." Project Manager, Battling On

15 instances of signposting were logged by mentors. Although learning from the first stage of delivery tells us that signposting is likely much more common than this. Indeed, it is the routine nature of signposting that means it is often not logged by mentors. Services signposted to in this period include: British Dyslexia Association for support with assisted technology; The Zone Plymouth to support a participant with trauma-informed counselling; as well as homelessness and housing support; HITS Food bank; Citizens Advice Bureau to help with PIP applications; Job Centre Plus to access Universal Credit. In addition to this, 92 instances of advocacy were carried out by mentors.

The importance of knowing the best ways of working with support services has only increased with Covid. For much of this period, due to furloughing staff and closure or partial closure, **support services have been closed or only offering remote services and waiting lists for many services have increased** (for example, it is likely in excess of 8 months for counselling services and 20 months for a clinical psychologist). For some participants online-only contact has been a benefit as they have been able to access the services they need without the anxiety they feel travelling and meeting face to face. For others engaging remotely has been a challenge.

Codesign activities, found that **participants would be more comfortable engaging remotely if they knew what to expect** from the interactions, and if they knew there would not be pressure to have cameras/microphones on. **Participants also advocated for text-based platforms such as WhatsApp or Discord which removed pressure and anxiety** by allowing people to show up at their pace, and not always by appointment. These platforms allow for multi-media content and for returning to content when the individual is ready to look at it.

Outcome 3

Communities and businesses are more cohesive and resilient.

Empowering Enterprise contribution to their local communities and businesses is apparent in a number of ways. As young people are supported to build better hard and soft skill sets they are intrinsically more able to make positive contributions to their surroundings, and they are equally less likely to engage in negative behaviours. This is likely to lead to social networks, workplaces and places in general being more socially cohesive. The inclusion of young people with extra-barriers is a two-way dynamic, creating valuable **learning experiences for both young people and the employers and groups they are involved with.**

7 young people have entered into employment in this reporting period, in addition, several of the activities on the project worked directly to deliver a positive contribution to communities through social action. These included participants volunteering with community shops, helping with community fridge schemes, beach cleans and hosting sessions in community settings and cafes.

“A group of participants were involved in a community engagement session bringing an area of a park back into use after it had become overgrown. We hired a chipping machine and the ‘waste’ was used to create a path.” Mentor, Whiz Kidz

Community activity is expected to increase over the next months as society becomes more open post-Covid restrictions, as delivery partners engage more young people, and as young people in the project will have been involved for a longer time and developed social confidence with their mentors.

During this period the government’s ‘Kickstart’ scheme has been in operation, starting in late summer 2020 this scheme funded employers to provide 6-month, 25-hour a week, minimum wage jobs available for 16-24 year olds claiming Universal Credit. Additional funds were available for support and training in these roles. Kickstart has been named as a major success by partner organisations, with at least 3 participant’s employment results being through this scheme, and one delivery partner, ICDT!, is a registered ‘gateway organisation’ helping employers in Torquay register for the scheme and greatly improving links between the ICDT! and local employers. Kickstart job roles can start until 31st December 2021.

“I’m coming to the end of the Kickstart programme and I’m trying to prove that I am someone that should be hired and I’m good. Because I enjoy working there and I really do not want to go through more interviews again.” Participant, Young Devon

Employer support codesign and development of employer engagement

As the employer engagement lead, Devon Communities Together will go on to support local employers at a strategic level to better understand this demographic and the **role that employers can play in ensuring that we make the most of young people's potential, talents and aspirations**. In June 2021 DCT developed co-design processes on the topic of Employer Support. These sought to understand the key areas for support young people felt an employer could most help with, and how. This work is ongoing and will inform how delivery partners work to prepare their participants and inform future employer engagement work. Initial findings show that **'First day on the job'; 'Mental health support' and 'Day-to-day supervision/feedback'** as key areas, with **'Getting to and from work'** being a key concern for participants in more rural areas.

"Feeling welcome means like greeting me with a smile and asking me how my day is. I would like that from a few people but maybe not everyone as that might make my anxiety levels rise up." Participant on first days at work.

"[Past employers] weren't very understanding with mental health. If they could just give people some mental health days to take off and do whatever they needed to do to be back able ready to work. That would be better. It's more that they just need to give me the space to let me do what I need to do." Participant on mental health support.

"They did this well because they'd sort of just ask for you at the end of a shift every few weeks and be asked to go to the office and just say we've noticed you've done this well and this is something you could work on. It wasn't a formal appointment" Participant on receiving feedback.

Outcome 4

Project partner organisations have increased their capacity and capability to support young people through a more joined-up approach, sharing of best practice and access to training and resources.

The impact report covering the original contract period highlighted that 100% of project managers believed that working on Empowering Enterprise, and being managed by Petroc, had **enabled them to develop and grow their organisations capacity**. Similarly, 92% of mentors believed that working on the project **developed their personal skills and capacity**. It is expected that this strong record will continue into the next stage of delivery.

Partners have developed themselves, and also significantly benefited from sharing best practice and lessons learnt through delivery. Collaborative work within the partnership has always been central to its success.

“The project has allowed us to recruit a new member of staff with experience of supporting vulnerable young people with wide ranging difficulties. This has brought the capacity to work with high need young people to the team.” Project Manager, Groundwork South.

Petroc have always been considered a supportive and available management team, and as the second stage of delivery began **Petroc continued to provide support to all partners as they hired new staff** and prepared to restart project delivery by hosting 3 support sessions, which reached 10 people. Therefore enabling partners to best set up their organisations for both delivery and management of contracts.

Regular partnership wide meetings continued, and these are invaluable for the sharing of best practice and creating a culture of collaborative working. **21 partnership staff members attended 2 partner meetings**, these are quarterly and serve to provide key project updates from Petroc, as well as where partners can update on their achievement of targets and other key areas of work. Local partner meetings, aimed at supporting mentors and key delivery staff will recommence next quarter. A **newsflash bulletin** shared key updates in May, and a regular newsletter with updates, stories and celebration of achievements will be shared by Petroc throughout the second stage of delivery.

One action which highlights the strength and central position of partnership working on Empowering Enterprise was the circulation, in June, of **a questionnaire for all partners to feed back their thoughts and ideas for delivery until 2023**. These questionnaires sought to understand how partner and partnership-wide delivery may look going forward, reviewing targets, identifying key strengths to build upon, as well as identifying gaps and aspirations.

Cross Cutting Themes

Sustainability & Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

Empowering Enterprise's two cross-cutting themes were successfully embedded in all aspects of the project's work in the first stage of delivery, championing best practice and challenging assumptions and beliefs. The partnership aims to keep up that momentum into the second stage of delivery and ensure the CCTs are incorporated into delivery with participants and in community engagement, and also through influencing organisational policies and practices.

Sustainability

In March, Petroc asked each partner to **identify 3 simple goals to achieve for increasing sustainability** over the year, which Petroc will monitor and support with. Goals could be identified as a partnership effort or for individual organisations. Petroc worked with partners to review these goals in May/June and partners shared a selection of these at June's partner meeting. Throughout the next stage of delivery Petroc will carry out regular reviews of progress partners have made towards their goals.

These sustainability goals include encouraging participants to recycle more, litter picking/clean up opportunities, focusing on sustainable clothing and being aware of fast fashion, participating in local beach cleans, reducing travel impact, cookery sessions.

Delivery partners continue to passionately bring sustainability into their delivery activities in innovative ways, such as sessions on healthy cooking, food waste, food growing and energy suppliers. Additionally, familiarity with video software has reduced miles travelled, including all partner meetings being remotely held. Digital processes have also reduced paper printing.

"We remotely hosted group sessions focusing on food miles and CO₂. Participants were asked to choose an item in their food cupboard and research how far the item had travelled. Reporting this information back to the group, the group discussed ways in which society could reduce its carbon footprint, raising awareness around the topic." Project Manager, I Can Do That!

Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

51% participants so far in the current delivery period are female, however, with only 41% of participants in the first stage of delivery being female, gender equality is an area of partnership focus. Several organisations have been networking with lone parent and domestic abuse organisations for increasing referrals, and have hosted sessions which break down barriers of access to traditionally gendered sectors (e.g. construction or care work).

“Many young mothers found the last year very difficult with no childcare respite, increased living costs and the impact of having to home school children. Many young mothers are being referred to their GPs for mental health disorders” Project Manager

Additionally, several mentors have reported the support they have provided, in partnership with external services, to build confidence around gender identity and sexuality with individuals. Project managers have been **reminded of the Trans Toolkit**, developed by the partnership in 2019, which can help encourage positive conversations, as well as navigate services and relevant paperwork.

Other areas of Equal Opportunities are intrinsic to the partnership’s work. Partners work closely and consistently with participants with physical disabilities, learning difficulties, English as a second language or other challenges. **Promoting a message of inclusivity is a key element of the emerging Employer Engagement strategy.**

Looking Forward to the Impact of the Extension

As this report has shown, the impact of the extension to Empowering Enterprise is already being felt, and **as new mentors and teams further settle into their roles this impact will only increase**. We expect to see more individuals enrolled on the project, and **an increase in community engagement and group activities** as participants become more confident.

In the first stage of delivery cross partner, shared group activities via the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust were a huge success and conversations around future shared activities are ongoing.

Furthermore, it is expected that Innovation Fund Projects will be tailored to meeting the shortfalls, or potential shortfalls experienced by the project, such as increased geographical coverage and a potential lack of female participants. This process of shining a light on key areas has already begun via all partners submitting project extension questionnaires in June, and ambitious Innovation Fund activity which goes 'above and beyond' regular project activities are in development.

These include exploring options of providing accessible childcare, in a way which both meets participant's needs and ESF's funding requirements, and the development of accessible video resources to reach wider audiences.

Devon Communities Together will **continue embedding co-design activities** within the partnership, ensuring that the voices of the young people involved are shaping strategic decisions. This includes learnings from existing co-design which will be taken forward to inform **Employer Engagement activities** as they begin in earnest in the second half of 2021.

Ultimately as the second stage of delivery continues dozens of **individuals will be moving closer to achieving results in Education, Employment or Job Search** and support services, businesses and communities in Devon, as well as the partnership organisations themselves will continue to benefit.