



# Enterprise In **Place**



**THE TOOLKIT**

# PARTNERS

A huge thank you to our participants, funders, delivery partners, Community Connectors and the project team.

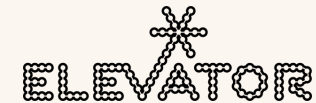
## FUNDED BY



## LOCAL HUBS



## NATIONAL PARTNERS



# A SCOTLAND WHERE ENTERPRISES ARE THRIVING AND NO ONE IS EXCLUDED FROM ENTREPRENEURSHIP

That is the vision behind the Enterprise in Place approach. The community of organisations involved in this project believe that this vision could be realised through **a place-based approach to enterprise support** that weaves together local insight, national ecosystem integration and responsiveness to community needs.

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# INTRODUCTION

**This Toolkit gives a framework for delivering impactful, community responsive enterprise programmes.**

It contains a practical outline for place-based community organisations that want to provide enterprise support programmes. These methods include a particular focus on reaching groups that are underrepresented in entrepreneurship.

This aim of this document is to **reduce the initial input required for a place-based hub to develop an enterprise programme** through facilitating collaboration with the national actors, who can share tested resources and session plans and providing a framework for development infused with decades of experience from other hubs.

**During Enterprise In Place we...**



Brought **3 national delivery partners** and **3 local Connected Hubs** together.



Partnered with **3 Local Community Connectors** who worked in a relational role connecting the national and local support.



Delivered **24 sessions** of tailored enterprise support engaging over **85 women** who face barriers to enterprise.

# WHAT IS ENTERPRISE IN PLACE?

**Enterprise in Place was a pilot of place-based enterprise support programmes for women and underrepresented groups delivered in Dunoon, Glasgow and East Kilbride between November 2025 and March 2026.**

This was a collaboration between community hubs Glasgow Collective, EK Collective and POP Shop Dunoon and national partners; Connected Hubs Scotland, The Melting Pot, Firstport and Elevator. The project was funded by Scottish Government's Pathways fund.

This Toolkit draws from the experience and evidence generated by the Enterprise in Place pilot with the hopes that this can support more impactful, place-based enterprise programmes across Scotland.



*"We aren't trying to take the same approach with every group of women in every community. We're looking at what we know and who we have on the ground in those communities, particularly through the community hub network, and what their needs are."*

*Gael Drummond, CEO Firstport*

# WHAT IT LOOKED AND FELT LIKE

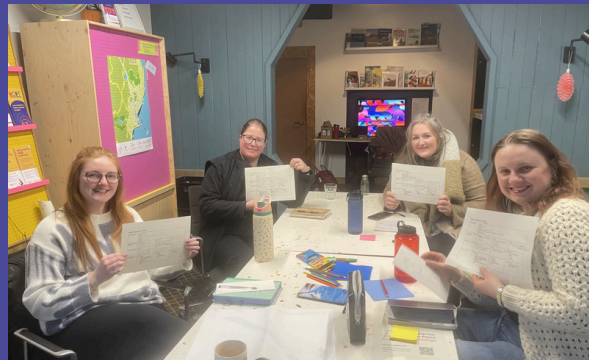


*"Being mentored was a truly enriching experience. The wisdom, professionalism, transparency, and depth of knowledge were both inspiring and humbling. I was given consistent support and guidance, which made a meaningful difference in my development."*

*Programme participant*

*"I have new ideas, new direction, new motivation and inspiration."*

*Programme participant*



*"I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting such a diverse community of strong women with talented skill sets, knowledge and awareness"*

*Programme participant*

# WHAT IT LOOKED AND FELT LIKE



*"When I first saw the programme I thought it was a scam! Free support for women over 50 who are wanting to set up an enterprise? But I believed it when I filled out the form. I'm here to find my tribe. I need people around me who know how to do these things."*

*Programme participant*

# WHY A PLACE-BASED APPROACH?

There are spaces and places across Scotland with thriving communities of entrepreneurial people, connecting these into the ecosystem of enterprise support makes sure these people are supported long-term.

The Enterprise in Place approach has emerged from the wisdom and experience of numerous community-led hubs across Scotland. Many of these hubs have developed enterprise support programmes in response to the challenges faced by the businesses & organisations in their communities.

These programmes are unique and effective as they are based on a depth of knowledge of local enterprises based on the shared grounding in place.

If you're on this journey of supporting your community with enterprise support read on and connect with us! Collaboration will help make these programmes and the enterprises they support more sustainable.



Connected Hubs Scotland is a network of over **30 independent hubs** that support localised communities of enterprises, entrepreneurs and workers from brick and mortar spaces.



# WHY REACH UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS?

The report 'Pathways: A New Approach for Women in Entrepreneurship' powerfully highlighted the systemic barriers underrepresented groups face in entrepreneurship

As independent community hubs the partners that led the Enterprise in Place know first hand that diversity is the biggest strength of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Our communities are made up of innovative organisations that are often responding directly to a social need. Ensuring barriers to participation in entrepreneurship are removed is crucial to supporting the enterprises Scotland needs to thrive.

The economic case for change is compelling. Closing gender gaps in entrepreneurship could add up to £8.8 billion to the UK economy (Rose Review, 2019), with proportionate benefits for Scotland. To achieve this, interventions must be rooted in local realities, flexible in design, inclusive in delivery, and connected into the wider ecosystem so that impact continues.

## The Pathways report shows:



Closing gender gaps in entrepreneurship could add up to **£8.8 billion to the UK economy**



Only **1 in 5** of Scotland's entrepreneurs are women



Only **2% of institutional investment** goes to women-led companies in Scotland



# THE TOOLS

4 pillars and 5 key steps for **building a place-based enterprise programme** that removes barriers to participation in entrepreneurship

# PILLARS

Enterprise in Place took a person-centred and partnership-based approach, utilising the networks and connections of the people on the ground to reach underrepresented groups and remove barriers to participation. You can use the same four pillars of design and delivery to replicate this approach

-  **Local navigation through Community Connectors.** A Community Connector is a trusted, embedded facilitator who understands the local context and can reach those who might never self-select into enterprise support. They provide outreach, one-to-one guidance, and personalised signposting.
-  **Co-creation in context.** Target audiences should be engaged from the outset to enable participants to influence the structure, content, and scheduling of the programme. This ensures alignment with care patterns, health needs, and transport constraints.
-  **Pick-n-mix programme flexibility.** Building partnerships with existing providers of enterprise support at the national and local level allows the highest quality support to be provided without anyone having to reinvent the wheel. It also allows participants to select the support that best suits their needs, stage and enterprise from a range of offerings.
-  **National ecosystem integration.** Connecting local programmes to Scotland's wider entrepreneurial ecosystem through partnership and supported networking with national organisations ensures continuity, progression and growth beyond the end of the programme.

# THE KEY STEPS

## LISTENING

Speak to your target audience or people who work with your intended audience.

Gather qualitative and quantitative data to help understand what they need.

Identify barriers that are present and how you can overcome them when designing the programme.

## DESIGN

**Content:** What topics need to be covered? Who is best placed to deliver it? What format is best (online/in-person)?

**Administration:** Define roles, ways of working, file sharing and systems, and the allocation of stipends.

**Branding & messaging:** Develop a simple visual identity with asset templates in Canva, core strategic messaging, and local messaging.

## RECRUITMENT

Recruitment will be driven through marketing efforts across digital, physical, in-person (networks), and partnerships. Key channels to consider are:

- Website landing page
- Data capture
- Social media
- Physical posters/flyers
- In-person 1:1 or events
- Sharing via Partnerships & networks

## DELIVERY

**Sessions:** Deliver the planned programme sessions in online and in-person formats and share insights afterwards.

**Logistics:** Manage online resources and in-person delivery, including things like catering. Maintain clear communication.

**Stay responsive:** Provide forums for feedback to identify unexpected barriers, requests for signposting and content.

## EVALUATION

Capture light touch, but useful data throughout the programme. Collate this feedback to understand the progression people make during the programme, what was particularly impactful and areas for improvement. This information can be used to develop the programme and support funding applications for future work.

# LISTENING

Listening to the people you're setting out to support starts long before the delivery of your programme and should continue throughout.

Listening is how we build programmes that are grounded in need and support people to overcome systemic barriers to entrepreneurship. If you're trying to reach an underrepresented group that you don't usually work with this is particularly key to designing a fit for purpose programme and being able to reach them in the first place!

- **1:1 interviews** - Take some time to really understand some of the people you're wanting to work with. Listen to their needs, hopes and the barriers they face.
- **Drop in sessions** - An open invitation for an informal conversation (with a biscuit and cup of tea).
- **Online polls** - A good way to get lots of answers to key questions about content and barriers. Be aware that digital barriers mean this won't reach everyone.

## Key places to listen:



**Do some research.** Understand what already exists and well documented needs and barriers.



Speak to partners who **work with the group you're trying to reach.** They'll have key insights and advice on reaching people.



Really listen to **people who you think would benefit!** Don't rely on second hand information. Make sure your actual audience feel engaged.

TIP: Connect your listening activities to data capture - both contact details and evaluation metrics.

# DESIGN

Designing the programme content from what you heard in the listening stage and in collaboration with delivery partners.



**CONTENT** From the listening conversations work with partners to build a programme of sessions and mentoring that prioritises the topics people most commonly mentioned.



**ADMINISTRATION** Decide how you will share attendance information with participants, what you need to capture at events and how you will communicate through the programme.



**FORMAT** Carefully programme sessions to take into account the time of day and week, online and in person access and other considerations you heard were important in listening sessions.



**MENTORING AND SIGNPOSTING** The programme containing some 1:1 time with the Community Connector on a flexible basis will allow for tailored, relevant support.



**REMOVE BARRIERS** This might mean providing childcare, covering travel expenses or flexible timings that meet a range of needs.



**TIME TO CONNECT** Include time for participants to connect with each other. They will have lots of wisdom and support to provide each other!

TIP: Build a programme that has a mix of in-person, online, live participation and resources that can be used any time. This flexibility will help people engage in a way that suits their needs.

# DESIGN

## Consider creating a simple visual identity that makes the programme visually consistent and recognisable.

Some visual design that accompanies the programme will help people engage with it. This will support both recruitment and participation. Think about short term goals like getting people to attend sessions and long term goals like securing funding.

Develop core messaging for the programme across two levels:

- Strategic messaging to create a coherent message that shares the impact of funding the programme, amplified through partners.
- Local messaging, developed in partnership with local connectors to ensure the language connects with people in the local area

TIP: Set up templates in Canva for all of the core assets, where elements are locked, but session details can be edited by local teams.

You have a crucial business meeting over the water but can't find childcare or afford the ferry...

What do you do?

Local partners   

# RECRUITMENT

Recruitment can be driven through a combination of marketing efforts across digital, physical, in-person networks, and partnerships. Develop a suite of assets to enable local teams to utilise relevant channels.



**WEBSITE** Where will you host key information about the programme? Do you have a landing page where you can capture people's information?



**IN-PERSON** Utilise your Community Connectors' network. Where can you go (events or spaces) where you are likely to meet your target audience?



**SOCIAL MEDIA** Which are the most popular social media channels for your area and target audience?



**PARTNERSHIPS** What local networks speak to your target audience? How can you partner with them ?



**PHYSICAL MARKETING** Where could you share posters? In churches, shops, local noticeboards, supermarkets, works paces, libraries?

Core assets to create:

- Printable posters for all events and sessions
- Full programme timetables (digital and print)
- Social media graphics
- Newsletter copy & imagery for partners

# DELIVERY

Programme delivery is where the magic happens. Build relationships, listen carefully, be responsive and lean into partnerships.



**FACILITATION** The way space is held and content is shared during programme sessions is crucial. Work with partners to ensure skilled, experienced facilitators are delivering sessions with tried and tested content.



**CONNECTION** It is important to make time for participants to form deep connections with each other, partners and the Community Connectors during the programme. These relationships will last beyond the end of the programme!



**COMMUNICATION** Different participants will have different communication habits. Reduce your workload by using a range of methods to share programme information, slides and recordings. Try email, WhatsApp and calendar invites.



**ONGOING LISTENING** Capture feedback and continue to be responsive to barriers and ideas for content. You've put all the work into recruitment and the programme, what's one more last minute session!

TIP: Build your sessions around a meal! This will help with connection, attendance and ensures participants are well fuelled and ready to engage.

# EVALUATION

Capture the impact the programme has had on participants to share this with partners, future participants and potential funders.

It's important to have an objective view of how the programme has impacted people and evaluation will help with that. We're sure you'll run an excellent programme! So it also has the added benefit of producing quotes or statistics that can be used to engage funders, partners and future potential participants.

- **Surveys** - A short survey is a good way to evaluate a programme. This can be done at the beginning and end, or just the end. Keep it concise, have a mix of multiple choice and rating questions and free writing fields.
- **1:1 interviews** - Have an in depth conversation with some of your participants to make sure you're not missing anything important.

## Key evaluation metrics:



**Confidence** is a crucial component of people's ability to participate in entrepreneurship.



**Skills development** will be a key intended outcome of sessions and workshops.



**Connection** and a sense of belonging is an important part of the journey, particularly for underrepresented groups.

Example survey question:

- Please rate your confidence to pursue enterprise where 1 is no confidence and 6 is very confident



# NEXT STEPS

How to put this Toolkit into action and  
**start building your place-based  
enterprise programme**

# YOUR ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

## This Toolkit gives a framework for delivering impactful, community responsive enterprise programmes.

We know how tough it is to resource a place-based enterprise programme from scratch. We also know how many incredible community hubs are providing invaluable enterprise support to their communities! Wishing you well with this work, wherever you are in this journey.

We hope that this Toolkit has given you a useful, evidence based framework to consider when developing your own work. The Scottish enterprise ecosystem is stronger through collaboration and connectivity, so please do let us know what you're planning so we can connect and continue building towards ***a Scotland where enterprises are thriving and no one is excluded from entrepreneurship.***

## Some next steps...



**Reach out to us** through The Melting Pot and Connected Hubs Scotland so we can connect you to others on the same journey.



**Start listening!** You don't have to be ready to deliver a programme to start having those all important listening conversations. See what the need is.



**Start building partnerships** with national and local partners. You could collaborate to deliver a one off or prototype session for your community.

# GET IN TOUCH

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“The Melting Pot is a container for a particular type of person. And if that wasn't there, there would be less of an impact because those people just wouldn't be getting together.”

*"I intend to stay in touch with everyone – community means different people and different help we can give each other at different stages. Each path is valuable. From a bakery I can learn how to set up my cafe. From a mental health practitioner I can learn how to work with the team or maintain a healthy community. Everyone's knowledge is valuable!"*

**– Enterprise In Place Participant**

