

# APRIL 2021

## Rotherham Community Options Project Report

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# 1. THE PROJECT

The project, which started in 2017, is a partnership between Community Catalysts and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. There are two main strands of work.

## Community micro-enterprise development programme

The programme supports local people or small local groups to develop small enterprises that offer innovative, community-based daytime support for adults with a learning disability. New, developing and existing enterprise leaders join the Community Catalysts development programme and are supported to meet the 'Doing it Right Standards' to ensure that they provide safe, reliable and quality support.

Community Catalysts have supported enterprise leaders to understand the types of opportunities needed by people in Rotherham. We have also signposted leaders to other key organisations to gain business and marketing advice, training, insurance and DBS checks.

As a result, people with a learning disability now have an extensive range of community-based support options to choose from; helping people to have new experiences, form and maintain friendships and networks, contribute to their community and gain volunteering and work opportunities.

## People Can

The People Can part of the project works with individuals or small groups of disabled people, helping them to lead their own projects, activities or ventures, with aims and outcomes personal to them.

Each element focuses on supporting people's aspirations and passions, providing them with real choice and personalised opportunities.

One person has established their own business as a result of People Can.



## 2. SUCCESSES

### Community micro-enterprise development programme

- At the start we conducted a scoping exercise to find local community options for people with a learning disability. This was followed by a taster programme that gave people with a learning disability who used Council day services a chance to try activities offered by community support options. People took part in **30 taster sessions that equated to 153 individual taster opportunities.**
- At the start of the project and during lockdown we created a directory of options to ensure that people knew about the support available. **18 enterprises are on this directory** and now provide quality, creative support for people with a learning disability who live in Rotherham.
- Currently supporting a further **4 developing enterprises.**
- Enterprises currently **support 470 people** and the majority have capacity to grow if needed.
- The **number of people taking a direct payment** has increased over the life of the project as new opportunities in the community developed.
- Enterprises at present provide **116 jobs for local people.**
- The project and the enterprises it supports have helped the Council to make the systematic, operational and cultural change required to achieve the aims of their [My Front Door](#) vision.

*We are moving away from traditional building based or institutional forms of support and focusing on support which is personalised, flexible and meets people's individual needs.*

- Supported by Community Catalysts, enterprise leaders have formed a **vibrant peer network** which engages with council colleagues and plays a part in local provider forums.
- Recent work has included **an increase in the options available to young people supported by Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) teams.**
- We ran a number of events in the local area to support staff, people and carers to think creatively including: speed networking sessions, interactive activity/taster events and workshops. **Influencing positive local change.**

- We created space for local partners and enterprises to contribute to a range of national events providing opportunities to network, share ideas and **showcase Rotherham on a wider stage.**

### **Achievements of enterprise leaders and their members**

- Enterprises have been successful with grants and funding applications – **bringing funding into the local area.**
- Enterprises and a People Can participant have been on local tv, radio and featured in newspapers – raising awareness of some of the fantastic things that they and their members achieve and **positively influencing culture change.**
- People with a learning disability have gained employment, benefitted from volunteering opportunities, achieved qualifications and have helped to run local events. **Disabled people thrive, lead and contribute locally.**
- Enterprises offer **training to professionals and providers.**
- Enterprise leaders and their members have created and now run many **successful new activities and sports teams.**
- **Enterprises are engaged in many community projects** – developing and running community gardens, allotments, hubs and art and other creative projects including an international arts competition hosted in Rotherham. They have also set up and run cafes and community coffee mornings.
- **People with a learning disability have much more choice** with support now available to help them overnight and go on holiday. New supported living services are currently being developed.

## **3. DEVELOPMENTS AND STORIES**

### **Responding to COVID-19**

Enterprise leaders showed their ingenuity, acted fast and regularly changed their plans in response to national lockdowns and other Covid restrictions. They implemented new and creative ways to support members and their families including offering virtual support and activities, phone calls, activity packs and help with tasks such as shopping.

**Story:** [Rotherham's bright lights respond to the Coronavirus pandemic](#)

## People Can

Currently supports 9 people to focus on their skills or interests including setting up an independent business.

**Story:** [Charlie's Beauty Zone](#)

## The Buzz

In response to lockdown and COVID-19 restrictions Community Catalysts created an online platform called The Buzz. The Buzz helped enterprises to create and share



accessible activity videos so that people could have a great range of things to do whilst at home. Many local Rotherham enterprises were involved in creating videos which were featured on The Buzz.

The Buzz has now shared well over 100 activities, to over 450 members on the Facebook group and we have many more people accessing it via our [Small Good Stuff webpage](#)

**Stories:** [The Buzz video](#) and [The Buzz 6-month story](#)

## 4. WHAT PEOPLE SAY

In Rotherham we have been working with Community Catalysts for a number of years, it has been a great experience and we have delivered together a number of exciting initiatives, providing exciting opportunities for people. Harry from Community Catalysts is seen as part of the wider team in our transformation agenda and we could not have got as far as we have without that challenge, innovation and support. **Anne-Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health**

Community Catalysts has helped us to think outside the box and deliver on our strategy of My Front Door to build local infrastructure and provide better, greater choices for people with a learning disability. They have worked creatively and in partnership at all levels to support the necessary system and culture change required for our transformational vision. **Garry Parvin – Joint Head of Learning Disability, Autism and Transitions Commissioning**

Community Catalysts have been a great support in helping us get established in Rotherham. They have supported us to network with other great organisations and involve us in a variety of projects which has helped our service grow from strength-to-strength. **Liz Carrington – ArtWorks**

The enterprise leaders in Rotherham and staff here within adult social care are very lucky to have someone like you at the helm. I have and continue to appreciate what you have achieved. I've seen you take new services and help them to develop to a point where my trust in them has grown. This was as a direct result of your intervention and guidance. Your efforts have helped to change the culture and concept of care in Rotherham and it's made our role as reviewer so much easier as a result. **Phillip Layfield – Reviewing Officer**

## 5. FURTHER INFORMATION

[Community Catalysts Rotherham page](#) including some of the great success stories under the 'related stories' section towards the bottom. Contact Harry at:

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