

just enterprise

Impact Report

2023 – 2025



NATIONAL SUPPORT
DELIVERED LOCALLY



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01 Executive Summary

Introduction

Social enterprises are an essential and growing part of the Scottish economy.

As businesses that trade to further a social or environmental benefit, they play a vital role in tackling inequality, community wealth building, and driving inclusive economic growth.

Scotland is home to more than 6,000 social enterprises.

These organisations contribute significantly to their local economies, particularly in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas. They provide employment, volunteering opportunities and essential services that might otherwise be unavailable or unaffordable.

However, the sector is facing increasingly complex challenges.



The cost-of-living crisis, rising demand for services, limited core funding, and the long-term impact of COVID-19 have created sustained pressure. At the same time, there is growing demand for demonstrable social value, effective governance and financial resilience.

In this context, **specialist support is more important than ever.**

Just Enterprise exists to meet that need. It provides fully funded business support and learning opportunities, tailored to the unique needs of social enterprises and enterprising third sector organisations across Scotland.

“It wasn’t generic advice – it was specific, practical and relevant to how social enterprises actually work...”

Having someone who knew the sector inside out made such a difference.”

Mike Ellis, Tap into IT



About Just Enterprise

Just Enterprise is a national Scottish Government-funded programme designed specifically to meet the unique and complex needs of the enterprising third sector, namely social enterprises, enterprising charities and community organisations.



It offers a unique mix of one-to-one advice, leadership development, learning opportunities and specialist expertise that is rooted in deep understanding of social impact, community-led innovation and enterprising purpose.



Delivery of the programme is via a consortium of partners, which enhances Just Enterprise's ability to tap into both the geographical and subject matter knowledge required to support impact-driven organisations across all regions and sectors.





Report Overview

This report shares the findings of a comprehensive impact measurement process which sought to understand not only the reach of the programme and its outcomes, but also the stories behind the statistics which you can explore in multiple ways throughout this document.

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from client surveys with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews and analysis of a wider client database.

It covers the current contract period from June 2023 to March 2025 across the programme's 3 core support areas: Start-Up, Business Support, and Leadership Development.

“They understood that we’re not a traditional business.

Our impact matters just as much as our income.”

Andrew Cowan, Capoeira4Scotland

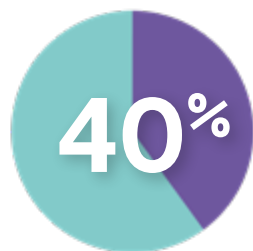
Just Enterprise in Numbers



full-time equivalent
(FTE) jobs created



full-time equivalent
(FTE) jobs retained



of all clients have a Climate
Action Plan in place



projected combined
turnover across start-ups
doubled from
£1 million to £2 million



Clients Supported



client
satisfaction



76

leadership
programmes
delivered



of Business Support clients
moved up an income bracket



323

leaders and
aspiring leaders
supported

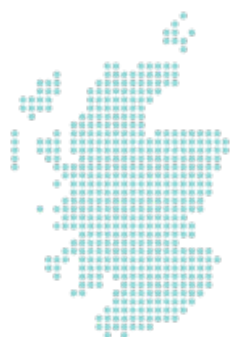
Key Findings

Evaluating the Just Enterprise programme posed a challenge: its 3 strands (Start-Up, Business Support and Leadership) serve organisations at very different points on their journey. By applying a flexible yet coherent framework, the evaluation revealed 5 headline findings:

“We are incredibly grateful for the support provided by Just Enterprise. Their assistance has empowered us with evidence-based insights, ensuring that we continue to meet the evolving needs of our remote and rural community.”

Daniel MacLeod

Dunbeath & District Centre



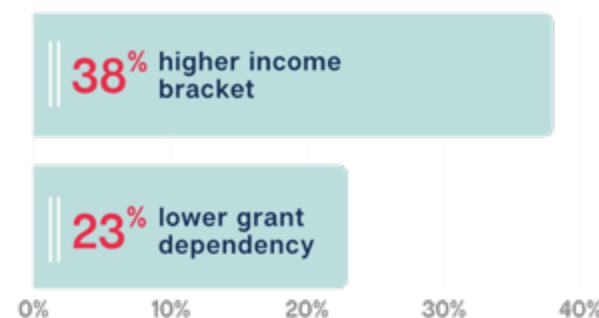
01 National and Inclusive Reach

- Start-Up and Business Support engaged enterprises in all **32 Scottish local authorities**; Leadership reached 28.
- Clients in remote and rural areas accessed support at a disproportionately higher rate than would be expected based on population size.
- Disabled, minority-ethnic and LGBTQ+ founders are strongly represented at the Start-Up stage.



02 Strong Economic Outcomes

- New incorporations, revenue growth and job creation were recorded across all strands.
- 38% of Business Support clients moved into a higher income bracket.
- 23% cut grant dependency.





03 Meaningful Social Impact

- Supported enterprises improved health, education and community services in disadvantaged areas, often tackling clear market failures.

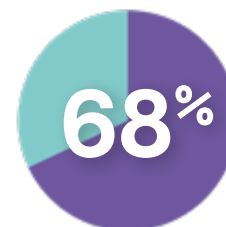
“Lots of young people were able to go back to school wearing uniforms like their peers, with free haircuts too, so they were treated fairly and equally.”

Paul Smith
Stranraer Reuse Shop

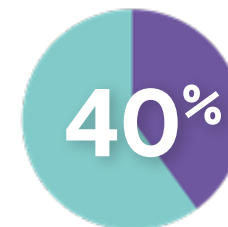


04 Net Zero Progress

- There appears to be strong interest in environmental action, particularly among Start-Up organisations.
- Overall, however, ambition is currently ahead of practice as integrated environmental strategies are not yet the norm.



of Start-Ups have/intend to have an environmental policy



of all clients have a Climate Action Plan in place



05 High Satisfaction and Confidence

- Feedback scores are consistently high.
- Clients highlight personalised, hands-on support and increased strategic clarity.





02 Starting Well: Nurturing New Ideas

Every thriving enterprise starts with a spark of an idea. But for many early-stage social entrepreneurs, turning ambition into action requires encouragement, structure and the right kind of support.

Our Start-Up services meet clients at this formative stage, offering tailored one-to-one guidance that helps build strong, sustainable foundations.

Over the period 2023–2025, Just Enterprise’s specialist Start-Up support enabled hundreds of new social ventures to begin their journey with confidence.



Key Highlights

360

individuals received
one-to-one support



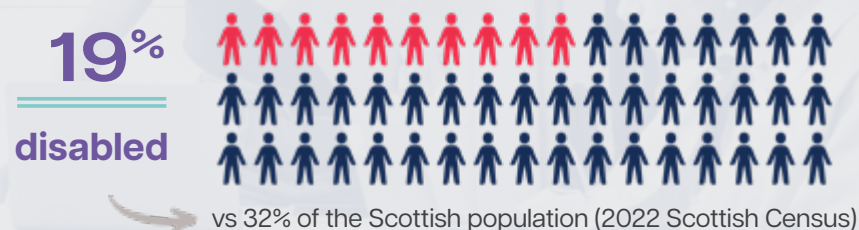
projected combined
turnover doubled from
£1 million to £2 million

90%

had incorporated/planned
to incorporate within
6 months

Fairer Communities

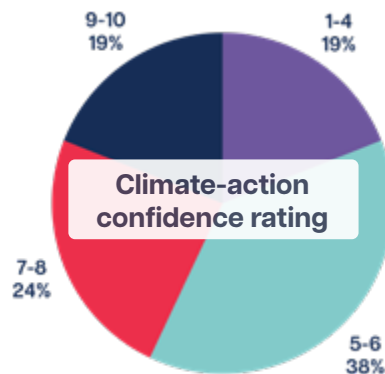
Just Enterprise supported people and organisations who are often excluded from traditional Start-Up routes:



74%
aimed to tackle market
failure or support vulnerable
communities

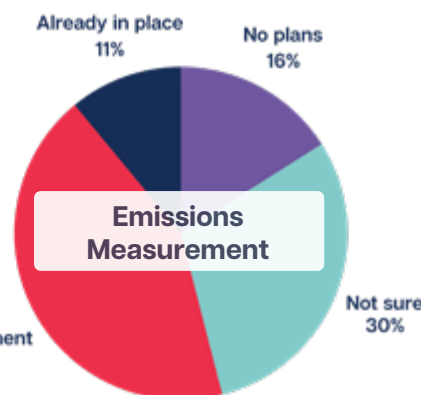
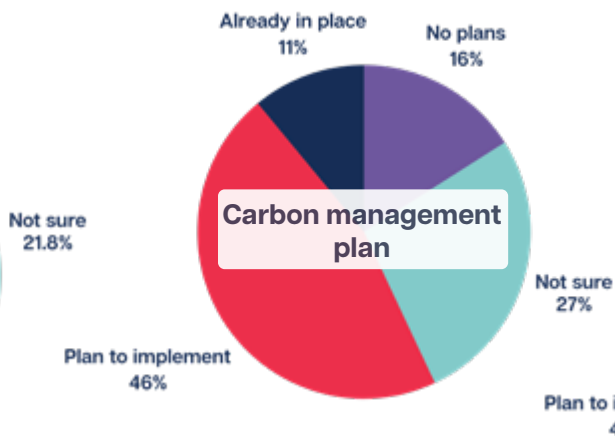
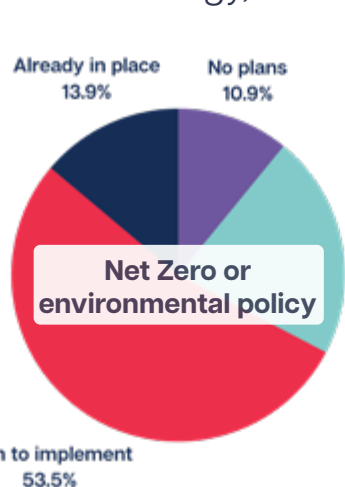
Greener Futures

Over half of surveyed start-ups feel only moderately prepared for climate action, with **57%** rating their confidence in the lower half of the scale (scores 1–6), and just **19%** feeling highly confident (9–10).



However, this lack of confidence does not seem to be translating into lack of intent or action:

- 68% already have, or are drafting, a net-zero or environmental policy;
- 57% are developing carbon-management plans;
- 54% are putting systems in place to measure emissions from energy, travel and water.



“We divert goods from landfill, and fitting solar panels, an air-source heat pump and battery storage has put us firmly on the journey to carbon neutral.”

Paul Smith
Furniture Project Stranraer

Stronger Foundations

Founders reported increased confidence, clearer planning, and faster incorporation.

The most appreciated aspects of Just Enterprise Start-Up support included:

- Structured one-to-one advice
- Early-stage finance and legal guidance
- Peer learning and confidence building

“The start-up support I received has been invaluable and I don’t think I would be doing as well as I am now without the knowledge, expertise and support of my advisors. Thank you.”



Krysta Stoneley
Her Story Scotland CIC



Client Story: Capoeira4Scotland



Capoeira4Scotland received support to set up as a social enterprise following the pandemic.

With guidance from a Just Enterprise adviser, they secured funding, established clear impact goals and grew their outreach programmes.

Today, they deliver inclusive, creative physical activity sessions for children, young people and families, particularly those from refugee and low-income backgrounds.

“Just Enterprise helped us set up, access funding, and grow from a one-person idea to a full-time social enterprise reaching marginalised communities across Glasgow.”

— Andrew Cowan, Capoeira4Scotland

03 Growing Strong: Building Resilience and Scale

As social enterprises begin to expand, they face new and complex challenges – from diversifying income and managing risk, to embedding impact and strengthening governance.

Our Business Support offer is designed to match organisations' individual requirements, offering bespoke advice from experienced professionals. Whether navigating financial uncertainty or preparing to grow, clients value Just Enterprise for its relevance, rigour and understanding of the third sector.

“I’d done business support programmes before, but nothing as tailored and empowering as this.

The support felt like it was designed for people like us – small, ambitious, mission-driven.”

June Grindley, Creatovators



Key Highlights



clients received one-to-one support



full-time equivalent
(FTE) jobs created



full-time equivalent
(FTE) jobs retained



of organisations moved
up an income bracket



reported improved health
and wellbeing outcomes



promoted sustainability



tackled child poverty



BUSINESS SUPPORT

Stronger Enterprises

Just Enterprise's unique social enterprise-tailored Business Support helps organisations turn solid ideas into scalable models.

Over the period, our advisers worked on a diverse range of assignments, including strategic planning, governance, investment readiness and more, which has led to measurable growth and increased capacity across the sector.

35% of Business Support clients created new jobs and **41%** safeguarded existing posts, totalling 199 roles.

Nearly 4 in 10 improved their income band while only **3%** saw a decline.

“Specialist advice turned our small charity shop into a community anchor business.”

Morag Munro
Harris Charity Shop

Fairer Communities

Our Business Support is particularly valuable to organisations working in low-income and isolated areas.

More than half of clients now link their growth to stronger health and wellbeing outcomes, and over a third report direct action on child poverty.

Examples range from digital-inclusion services for older people to reuse centres diverting goods from landfill while offering training and affordable essentials.

Business Support Assignments



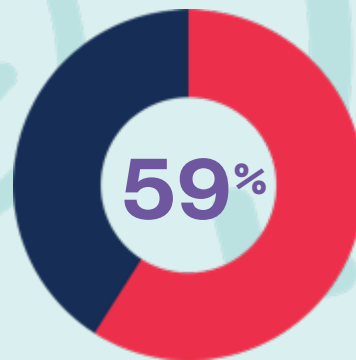
Greener Futures

Scotland's social enterprises are increasingly viewing environmental stewardship as integral to their mission, not an optional add-on.

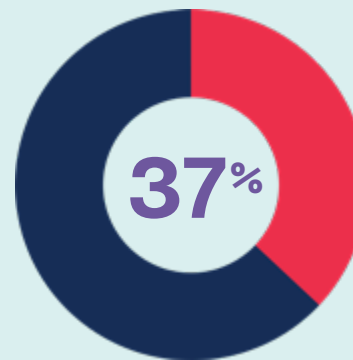
Business Support advisers have helped clients translate broad climate ambitions into practical steps: refreshing procurement policies, retrofitting premises and piloting low-carbon services. These early moves are starting to build organisational knowledge and investor confidence, laying the groundwork for deeper, whole-organisation transition.

Environmental action is gathering pace: **59%** of supported enterprises champion sustainability, **37%** have started cutting their carbon footprint and **32%** have introduced energy-saving measures.

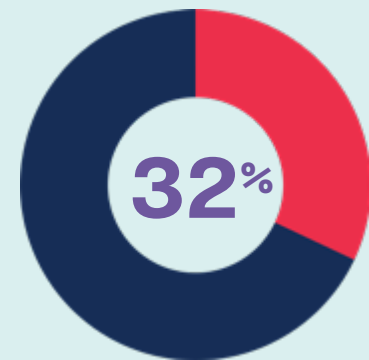
The figures show intent turning into practice, yet the relatively low share of whole-organisation initiatives (**25%**) signals room for deeper integration.



champion
sustainability



reducing carbon
footprint



energy-saving
measures

Client Satisfaction

The programme's hallmark is its hands-on, relationship-based model. Advisers act as sounding boards, critical friends and skilled facilitators, ensuring that support fits the pace and culture of each organisation.

Clients consistently praise the practicality of the guidance and the specialist knowledge of advisers, emphasising that the service feels “like an extra team member” rather than an external consultant. This approach keeps organisations engaged through implementation, not just planning.

Service quality remains a standout strength:

- **93%** of Business Support clients describe themselves as satisfied;
- **91%** say their objectives were met; and
- **96%** would return or recommend the programme.

Clients value the blend of sector-specific expertise and practical facilitation that “pulls the threads together” for busy teams.



“The seed for the changes we made came from the support from Just Enterprise. Their visit changed my way of thinking—it gave us the initial spark to see things differently.”

Richard Thorne
Portsoy Community Enterprise

“It wasn’t just advice - it was a partnership that shifted our thinking and built our confidence.

Other advisers told us what we should do. Just Enterprise helped us actually do it.”

The Rockfield Centre Trustees



Client Story: Portsoy Community Enterprise



Portsoy Community Enterprise runs 2 historic-harbour venues on the Aberdeenshire coast: The Boat Shed and The Sail Loft bunkhouse. After Covid-19, both projects were struggling to stay afloat.

Business Support advisers helped the board revisit its business model, tighten cost controls and reshape the visitor offer. One intense planning session produced the breakthrough that **“changed my way of thinking”** and set a new growth path.

Results:

- Turnover moved into a higher income band and profitability rose.
- Year-round bed-nights at The Sail Loft increased, securing local jobs.
- The enterprise now operates on a more commercial footing, with less grant dependence.

“That one conversation led to real change. Both the Boat Shed and the Sail Loft are now doing really, really well, it has been the salvation of one, if not two, of our projects.”

— Richard Thorne, Portsoy Community Enterprise



04 Leading Change: Developing Leadership and Planning Ahead

Effective leadership is critical to the success and resilience of social enterprises. Our leadership programmes support individuals to develop the skills, confidence and connections they need to thrive. From new leaders to seasoned CEOs, our participants gain the tools to navigate complexity, inspire teams and shape the future.

Key Highlights



76

leadership
programmes
delivered



323

leaders and
aspiring leaders
supported



169

organisations
benefitted as a
consequence



Empowering Leaders

Our leadership programmes give social enterprise changemakers the confidence and practical tools to steer their organisations through complexity.

From strategic visioning to personal resilience, every course blends accredited learning with peer reflection so leaders leave ready to act.



99%

of participants
reported increased
knowledge and skills

78%

said they had
experienced personal
growth as a result



Media Feature

Video Interview with Programme
Participant, Jacqueline Willis

Click to watch
on YouTube!



Building Strategic Resilience and Strong Networks

Just Enterprise's Leadership support is designed to ripple beyond the individual, helping boards tighten oversight, plan succession and manage risk.

This work is already translating into organisational shifts, contributing to a more resilient and sustainable enterprising third sector:

- **40%** of organisations have seen tangible changes – new strategies, refreshed governance or improved finances.
- A further **47%** expect change soon based on the learning they have begun to implement.

It is also becoming clear that a national cohort is taking shape: leadership programme alumni increasingly collaborate on funding bids, mentor newer leaders and sit on policy forums, extending the programme's reach far beyond the classroom.

Supported leaders impact not only their own organisation, but often their wider community and beyond:

- **54%** of participating enterprises now serve areas wider than a single locality, signalling a growing ability to influence regional or national outcomes and agendas.

“This programme has given me a greater understanding of third sector leadership, furnished me with tools to use in my leadership and with the team. Forging a network of wonderful CEOs from across the sector who bring a wide range of perspectives and experience has been invaluable.”

Alice Fogg

Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey (VABS)

Participant Satisfaction

Participants consistently highlight the human, relationship-centred style of the Leadership offering, calling the facilitators “supportive”, “engaging” and “transformational”.

The numbers reinforce this sentiment:



92%

said the programme had met or exceeded their expectations



100%

said they would recommend to their colleagues and contacts

Such unanimous endorsement suggests the service is building a confident, well-connected cohort of leaders, ready to embed new skills and extend good practice across the sector.

“The programme has helped to strengthen the organisation by giving me the tools and resources to manage change, create more leaders and develop a more sustainable organisation”



Client Story: Greener Kirkcaldy

Greener Kirkcaldy is a long-established community-led charity tackling climate change and social inequality across Fife.

Chief Executive Lauren Burke first accessed Just Enterprise support through the Aspiring Leaders programme. “At the time, I didn’t see myself as a leader,” she recalls. “But the programme helped me understand how to lead authentically and with confidence.” She later progressed to the Senior Leaders programme.

Since then, over 15 staff members have taken part, embedding a culture of collaboration, innovation and wellbeing. “It’s created a ripple effect,” says Lauren. “Staff feel more empowered and the organisation is stronger and more agile.”

The team also accessed tailored one-to-one support to develop their social enterprise bike shop. “The business planning guidance we received has been instrumental in making it sustainable,” Lauren adds.

“It’s the best training I’ve ever done. I tell everyone I know in the sector to take part.”

— Lauren Burke, Chief Executive, Greener Kirkcaldy



05 Conclusion: Specialist Support Enables Impact

The data gathered across the contract period tells a consistent story: **specialist support tailored to the needs of social enterprises and enterprising charities delivers significant economic and social returns.**

Estimates suggest that Just Enterprise is associated with approximately **£417 in gross value added to the Scottish economy for every £1 of investment.**

This return is underpinned by tangible results: **76 full-time-equivalent jobs created**, another **123 jobs safeguarded**, and hundreds of organisations supported to strengthen their financial position.



More than 90% of clients are satisfied

with the support received, highlighting Just Enterprise's understanding of mission-led business models, blended finance, and social impact reporting – areas not typically addressed by generalist support services.



“As the General Manager of a small social enterprise operating in a remote area, I am really grateful for the critical support delivered by Just Enterprise.

Just Enterprise provides essential, accessible support that fills a gap in isolated areas.”

Donald-John McSween
Point & Sandwick Development Trust



The programme reaches all **32 local authorities**, with strong uptake in rural, island and more remote communities.

Just Enterprise clients in these areas participate at up to **3 times their population share**, illustrating the programme's role in reaching organisations that are otherwise underserved.

This breadth of reach is matched by depth of impact, as clients go on to generate public value far beyond their initial mission.

Catalysing Local Impact

Just Enterprise clients frequently operate in spaces where market solutions fall short.

They use trading models to tackle local challenges – from digital exclusion and food insecurity to climate action and employability.

Many are small but deeply rooted organisations that create jobs, reduce pressure on public services, and improve community wellbeing. Others scale innovative approaches to health, environment or youth engagement.

Across the board, they report that access to specialist support increases their confidence, sharpens their strategy and opens up new opportunities to trade, collaborate or grow.

Put simply, the programme's impact lies not only in what it delivers directly, but in what it enables its clients to achieve in their own communities.





A Key Part of Scotland's Support Landscape

Scotland is home to more than **6 000 social enterprises**, contributing around **£2.6 billion in GVA** and sustaining nearly **90,000 FTE jobs**.

1 in 3 operates in rural Scotland, often filling critical gaps in services and opportunities where other forms of support are limited.

Within this ecosystem, Just Enterprise plays a unique role. It is the only national programme designed specifically for the realities of social enterprise – offering practical, one-to-one support that understands the balance of purpose and profit.

Its advisers bring sector-specific knowledge and experience that would be difficult to replicate through more general business support models.

Looking Ahead

The data does not prescribe a single path, but it does highlight a clear relationship between tailored support and long-term social and economic outcomes.

If Scotland is to continue unlocking the full potential of its world-leading social enterprise sector – particularly in communities that are underserved or facing systemic challenges – then maintaining access to this type of specialist advice seems critical.

The strength of the sector, and the value it brings to the wider economy and society, is reinforced by the support structures that sit behind it.

Just Enterprise is a key part of that foundation.



**Find out more about Just
Enterprise's unique support and
learning opportunities at**

<http://justenterprise.org>

just enterprise

NATIONAL SUPPORT

DELIVERED LOCALLY

