

# Community micro-enterprise development in Westmorland and Furness

(South Lakes, Furness and Eden)

FINAL REPORT  
2022-24



COMMUNITIES  
CARE

September 2024

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## Achievements at a glance

The projects created a dynamic network of community micro-enterprises offering a range of care and support to older and disabled people in their homes.

- 32** community micro-enterprises delivering services across the South Lakes, Furness & Eden
- 26** new community micro-enterprises supported
- 6** established community micro-enterprises supported
- 26** new jobs created locally
- 404** weekly hours of care and support
- 125** people supported each week
- 25** people who used direct payments
- 100** self-funded people

## Background

In 2022, Community Catalysts launched its community micro-enterprise project in the South Lakes, initially in partnership with Cumbria County Council, and with Westmorland and Furness Council after the local government reorganisation. In 2023, Community Catalysts was commissioned to deliver an additional project in Eden. Shortly afterwards, the reach of the South Lakes project was extended to include the Furness area, to offer support for community micro-enterprises across the whole of the council's footprint.

The projects were led by Catalysts Jade Gibson covering the South Lakes and Furness, and Hannah Turner responsible for Eden. The work over 2022 – 2024 led to the development of a network of 32 community micro-enterprises. A key to the initiative's success was the deployment of Community Catalysts' Development Programme.

The programme provided enterprise leads with comprehensive, free support that focused on creating responsive, high-quality, and sustainable community micro-enterprises. Our 'Doing it Right Standards' ensured enterprise leaders' understanding of legal compliance, risk management and safeguarding. The programme also laid the foundation for continued partnership and peer support between a wide network of community micro-enterprises across the South Lakes, Furness, and Eden.

## What support do community micro-enterprises offer?

Community Catalysts collaborated with local partners to launch the [Cumbria | Small Good Stuff](#) resource, which provides community micro-enterprises with the opportunity to list their offer on an on-line directory. The range of support offered to older and disabled people includes:

- Personal care
- Shopping
- Socialising, befriending and companionship
- Meal preparation
- Social activities
- Digital support
- DIY
- Fitness, health and wellbeing
- Social Activities
- Mentorship

## Who is supported by the micro-enterprises?

Community micro-enterprises have been supporting 125 people each week across the South Lakes, Furness and Eden, many of whom are older, disabled or have learning disabilities or autism.



## The impact in South Lakes, Furness and Eden

- Local jobs have been created by community micro-enterprises in South Lakes, Furness and Eden. People can work locally, earn an income and make a positive difference.
- Commissioners, local health and social care teams and people seeking care and support, know that good support is available. As a result, people are able to choose from a range of care and support options locally.
- There is more choice locally for people who draw on care and support and people can choose to have a Direct Payment to pay for their support from a community micro-enterprise.



## Community micro-enterprise year one survey

Feedback from community micro-enterprises highlighted the critical support provided by Community Catalysts during the South Lakes project. This included advice about what good care looks like, promotional opportunities, access to resources, and signposting to local experts for training and business support.

The project's contribution to enterprise development was rated at 4.9 out of 5. Enterprise leaders rated the support they received from Community Catalysts at 4.8 out of 5 in terms of the likelihood of micro-enterprise success.

**"I can't thank Jade enough for everything she has done in supporting me through the programme. She really has been fantastic. With Jade's support and guidance, I feel proud of what I have completed. This is a fantastic programme for people like me providing quality services and those out there looking"**

## Promotion of community micro-enterprises locally

Community Catalysts organised a series of events to promote community micro-enterprises locally as well as running a 'Good Life' workshop with key council leads to help integrate the community micro-enterprise market into the Westmorland and Furness Council adult social care offer.

### Good Life Workshop

In February 2024, Community Catalysts organised a 'Good Life' workshop in partnership with Westmorland and Furness Council. During this event, practitioners from across health and social care teams explored how community micro-enterprises can work successfully within the space of self-directed support.

It included a facilitated discussion about the benefits and concerns of working with community micro-enterprises and generated a very interesting debate. The highlight of the workshop was three local community micro-enterprises presenting their services to, and taking questions from, the workshop participants.



### Eden Dementia Partnership, Dementia Awareness Week, May 2024

The event featured a mix of health and wellbeing organisations focused on support around the dementia diagnosis and journey. It was a great opportunity for the Eden Catalyst to network with other organisations and promote the project, which resulted in a number of people joining the community micro-enterprise Development Programme

### Health and Wellbeing Festival, Kendal ICC, July 2023

The Health and Wellbeing Festival featured a mix of health and wellbeing organisations and activities, and was attended by a diverse demographic of people, including older adults and their families. It was an excellent opportunity for the South Lakes Catalyst to network with important local organisations and promote the [Cumbria | Small Good Stuff](#) directory to people that were looking for care and support for their families..





## The future for South Lakes, Furness and Eden

With 118 people receiving 400 hours of support each week, the project has greatly increased the local offer for people who draw from care and support. It has been especially beneficial for those who can draw on the advantages of community micro-enterprises - placing personal relationships at the heart of their work and offering support that is flexible and responsive.

To establish a platform from which community micro-enterprises can benefit in the future, Catalysts have supported enterprise leaders to run their own peer support networks. They have also worked with Westmorland and Furness Council's commissioning and adult social care teams, who are keen to continue connecting community micro-enterprises with people looking for care and support.

Furthermore, Enterprising Cumbria, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, and the Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership have committed to continuing business support to people interested in establishing small enterprises that provide care and support to people.

**Jade Gibson, Community Micro-enterprise Catalyst, South Lakes and Furness**

**Hannah Turner, Community Micro-enterprise Catalyst, Eden**

**September 2024**