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Sunderland City Council – UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Final Evaluation Report
Beneficiary Case Studies

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Beneficiary Case Studies

Case Study 1		
Profile	Micro business (1-10 employees) Media & Culture Sector Supported by 4 projects (3 covered in the case study)	
BIPC + City Life	Awareness	Heard about it via one of the experts in residence delivering support through the project
	Support provided	Professional photography to be used for marketing and promotions, including social media
	Perceptions	<i>'Very high-quality support...it made our business more resilient and should support growth... We established a very good rapport with the provider who fully fulfilled their brief. High quality photos were used in promotional work in the public facing side - including Linked In. This was used as part of a refocusing our business where a core area of our work is struggling at the moment. We are seeking to carry out more work in-house and selling to the market rather than simply as a Service Provider and so prioritise our spend. This has allowed us to present a better "outward facing" look and impression and has led to an increase in lead generation.'</i>
Enterprising Sunderland - North East BIC and partners	Awareness	Referred by another support provider
	Support provided	<i>'Helped with production of documentary for future TV sales...Also delivered post production and created clips for Social Media.'</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'To raise the company profile and visibility with our own Intellectual Property. Give us access to bigger projects in Advertising and Marketing... Seen as vital to fine tuning of the business for a new target market...should enable us to attract new investment or funding and we couldn't have done it without the support.'</i>
SIG Sunderland Innovate and Grow - Innovation Placement	Awareness	Referred by another support provider
	Support provided	<i>'3 months of a recent University graduate who assisted during production, provided liaison with contributors and improved our online visibility, particularly our social media profile.'</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'We're [the Directors] ex University of Sunderland students and wanted to give something back to the University. Use of target posts and engagement on social media to create a ripple effect and help us be seen by potential clients. We've got a good track record; we just needed more visibility.'</i>

	<p><i>'Very high-quality support...allowed us to improve our productivity, improve our skills and brought new customers to us...project gave us a new staff member with an excellent skillset and have a fresh view point and clear ideas for changing and improving our social media...also gave the ability to keep an eye on the market and monitor changes in the industry.'</i></p> <p><i>'will result in greater turnover and profit in time.... the graduate placement was so useful we've retained them on a part time, as and when needed, basis.'</i></p>
<p>Collective Impact of UKSPF</p>	<p><i>'All of the schemes supported the introduction, implementation of innovation into the business...allows for the transformation of the company with new services and products for the future...Very positive impact...Company has gained higher visibility, new products, a new client and more resilience for the future. Now aware of how important marketing and publicity can be in our industry and how this relies on professional standard visuals. Also, that time and resource has to be made available to keep up with changes in the market...Feel privileged to have been able to undertake this intervention by tapping into funding and support made available to a micro entity at an absolutely crucial time in our history. It has enabled a group of people with working class backgrounds to compete against traditional competitors with very deep pockets.'</i></p>

Case Study 2	
Profile	Creative retail social enterprise Micro business (1 to 10 employees) Support by 5 projects (3 covered in the case study)
BIPC + City Life	Awareness Through LinkedIn
	Support provided Support was to assist the business to strategise and visualise its future.
	Perceptions <i>'Very high-quality support...going to help make us more resilient... It greatly improved business planning for the future. It also demonstrated our vision to others which will be valuable in future funding applications... The vision includes plans for the expansion of the business for up to 10 people.'</i>
Wear Together - NE BIC	Awareness Newsletter
	Support provided Grant funding to enable us to deliver a new service
	Perceptions <i>'Clear demand...should be self-funding in the future...we couldn't have done it without the funding...its already improved our income and turnover...introduced growth into the business at a key time.'</i>
SIG Sunderland Innovate and Grow - Unlock	Awareness Project publicity
	Support provided <i>'support to examine new creative markets for potential products and services...funding enabled the production of videos so we can pitch our services in multi-lingual markets.'</i>
	Perceptions <i>'great support that will help us grow future turnover...creates opportunities to engage with other cultures.'</i>
Collective Impact of UKSPF	<p><i>'Viewed together the projects have helped me grow my business in a number of ways. They have improved my vision of the future and the planning process to get there...improved my social impact and introduced me to new markets I was unaware of.'</i></p> <p><i>'The teaching was about doing the marketing myself, but I am starting as an amateur. On the positive side the grants were fantastic and gave a number of opportunities.'</i></p> <p><i>'I need to recruit a bid writer to assist in the growth of turnover and social impact. Support for this was not there. It is hard work without the money to employ extra staff. Funding is not accessible at grass roots level because of the level of written evidence required...making it difficult and excluding those set up to help who have not got a sufficient education level.'</i></p>

Case Study 3		
Profile	Creative and digital sector Small business (10-49 employees) Supported by 4 projects	
EXPO Sunderland ISN	Awareness	Project publicity
	Support provided	'Support through networking events, facilitated introductions and helped with grant applications and pitching.'
	Perceptions	<i>'This was great and led us to a range of other support...met a lot of people who could help us grow the businesses...had a real knock-on effect...brought a number of benefits to the business'</i>
Enterprising Sunderland	Awareness	Referred by ISN/UMi
	Support provided	Grant funding to support business growth
	Perceptions	<i>'Gained an Enterprising Sunderland grant...which allowed us to bring our core product and business growth plans forward...gave us more confidence and enabled us to employ one more member of staff...help drive future growth.'</i>
SIG - Sunderland Innovate and Grow	Awareness	Referral from other project
	Support provided	<i>'Support in creating business plan, particularly around technical and financial areas. Provision of Market Research to support planning.'</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'we didn't have the time or skills to develop a strategic plan to take the business forward...The development support process allowed us to take a new view. It provided the opportunity to develop and implement the Strategic Plan. It has provided real opportunities for the future.'</i>
Supply Chain Sunderland	Awareness	RTC North promotion
	Support provided	<i>'Tender writing course'</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'support upskilled our staff in tender writing and gave them the confidence to make bids. Since made a successful application to Innovate UK...very high quality support which made a real difference to staff'</i>
Collective Impact of UKSPF	<i>'Collectively the schemes have had a massive impact on the company. The networking, financial support and training has massively changed the company for the future...Launching our product this summer...real potential for growth...UKSPF programme has allowed the company to upskill and better prepare for this. We are looking for more of the same in the future. Waiting to see what initiatives will be made available. Genuinely, this whole initiative has been brilliant and worthwhile for us.'</i>	

Case Study 4		
Profile	Creative and digital sector Small business (10-49 employees) Supported by 3 projects	
BIPC + City Life	Awareness	Approached by project
	Support provided	Market research
	Perceptions	<i>'Undertook market research looking for specific opportunities within the Manufacturing and Transport sectors in the North East...helped the company move away from Manufacturing as the strategic direction for growth.'</i> <i>'Help us to diversify and be more resilient...expecting this to lead to business growth throughout the year.'</i>
SIG Sunderland Innovate and Grow - Arrow	Awareness	Networking event
	Support provided	Exploring potential impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the business
	Perceptions	<i>'very high quality support...senior university staff helped as look at opportunities to introduce AI into the business. This included review and analysis of existing business and recently produced a 100+ page report...It is too soon to predict beneficial outcomes. However, without the support we would have lost ground to our competitors...[the support] will allow a strategic, planned approach and structure for the business to proceed into the future...too soon to tell what impact this will have as we are still working through their options report and understanding how to take it forward.'</i>
Supply Chain Sunderland - RTC	Awareness	Networking event
	Support provided	Quality management support
	Perceptions	<i>'received a small grant for a specialist to provide a gap analysis to support us towards implementing ISO9001 management systems into the business. This is intended for future improvements in the businesses management practices, procedures and standards...help improve productivity, support growth.'</i>
Collective Impact of UKSPF	<i>'The UKSPF programme helped us to define a future strategy and rearrange or business and focus. Will start recruiting further staff shortly -4 anticipated...Very positive impact on our business...Supplied research and help with strategic vision...Looked at the services available, the market research gave direction to the company and focus to management so we were not just thrashing about trying to figure out the way forward for the business...Will take a further 6/8 months to fully develop our strategy and future plans.'</i>	

Case Study 5		
Profile	VCSE organisation Medium sized employer (50 to 250 employees) Supported by 3 projects	
Business Renewables Energy Efficiency Sunderland (BREEZ)	Awareness	Contact from the City Council
	Support provided	<i>'Needs analysis and grant funding to replace old lights with LEDs'</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'we got the maximum grant available...changes will pay for themselves in less than 18 months...we could have made the change without the grant funding...support was great...received a clear report to justify the grant and our match funding...vastly improves our efficiency and the working environment for staff and customers.'</i>
Sunderland Innovate and Grow - Innovation Placement	Awareness	Networking event
	Support provided	<i>'Student placement to assist with and improve social media.'</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'The student examined opportunities and produced an overview on how we can improve our social media use...They developed a Social Media Strategy which is now in place...also produced a corporate video showing the work of staff and customers, which we now use for fundraising...The support has helped us improve the skills of our staff, brought us new users and enabled us to attract new investment or funding.'</i> <i>'This was a strategic intervention. It transformed the social media output which has increased attendance and take up of our services. The social media strategy is now part of induction and ongoing training...Previously there was no social media strategy. Improved communication greatly and opportunities for fund raising.'</i>
Wear Together	Awareness	Contact with NE BIC
	Support provided	<i>Grant funding to pilot a new service</i>
	Perceptions	<i>This was a startup pilot grant (£5K) to determine whether a new service could generator profit and add an additional service to address social isolation. This proved so successful that we've taken it forward and they have generated additional revenue through "unrestricted reserves", which totally new for us.'</i>

**Collective
Impact of
UKSPF**

'The changes brought about collectively by this programme were all sustainable...environmentally we've had major improvement in efficiency; financially through the launch of a new self-financing service; organisationally were now better informed, more aware...support has provided improvements to operating environment which were a major benefit to both staff & clients.'

'Overall a very positive impact gave us improvements in marketing of services, better communication using social media, updated training for staff and improved service to users. BREEZ and the Innovation Placement were brilliant schemes which helped a lot.'

Case Study 6		
Profile	VCSE sector organisation operating a community facility Micro business (1 to 9 employees) Accessed Support from 2 projects (3 interventions)	
BREEZ	Awareness	Through the Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance
	Support provided	<i>'grant for a new boiler system'</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'Massive savings made, which were then available for community projects...savings made saved the centre from closure...wouldn't have been able to continue to operate without the savings made through the new boiler...huge impact on us and our service users'</i>
CDHH Phase 1 Capital	Awareness	Sunderland City Council
	Support provided	<i>'Digital infrastructure improvements'</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'Provided Wi-Fi access throughout the building...we could then provide free access to laptops and computers to the community...Sunderland Council carried out estimates and then provided the equipment and installation and support.'</i> <i>We can now support the community with applications for Universal Credit and other benefits, looking for jobs and a range of other things...We couldn't have done this without the support.'</i> <i>'It helped us improve the skills of our staff, brought us users, made our organisation more resilient and providing new services...The equipment was vital in providing services and support to the community...Training received from Tech Mates, increased the IT skills of the staff.'</i>
CDHH 2 Revenue	Awareness	Sunderland City Council
	Support provided	<i>Revenue funding for more community services</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'Additional funding allowed many more activities to be undertaken including lunch clubs, wellbeing club and mental health support provision together with other activities...made a real difference... was part of a series of support from the initiative which allowed 2 more paid staff to be employed...Couldn't have done this without the funding'</i>

**Collective
Impact
of UKSPF**

'This was a massive intervention overall which allowed the running costs of the building to be slashed - reinvested in service provision. IT network provision and computers/laptops were made available to the community and support provided. Additional staff were provided to increase the services available and DBS Checks and Safeguarding Training provided to increase the security of staff and service users'

'Very positive impact...This [UKSPF] was a major intervention which completely changed the operation of the centre; with additional staff and services the centre was able to cover wider areas.'

'The centre is looking at new initiatives such as solar panels to further increase the energy savings. Also, we have established a taxi service so users can come from a wider area - especially used for providing services to older residents.'

'The support provided by these [UKSPF] schemes have led to a fundamental restructuring of the provision available to the community.'

Case Study 7

Profile	Engineering sector Micro business (1 to 9 employees) Supported by 4 projects (3 covered below)	
Expo Sunderland	Awareness	Sunderland City Council
	Support provided	<i>Attended workshops on leadership training for personal development</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'helped improve leadership skills...really high quality...will lead to improvements.'</i>
Sunderland Business Support Fund	Awareness	Web based research
	Support provided	<i>Market intelligence</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'Involved support to gather market intelligence for a management report to assist us to launch a new product...including the size of market, desirable features of products, potential groups that products could be marketed to. The report was extensive and really good.'</i> <i>'These are early days but without the market research exercise and report we would not have developed a new range of products or had the confidence to move forward.'</i> <i>'The NBSL grant was extremely useful. It is too early to predict the outcome of the exercise, however, there are a number of positive indicators...expect it to boost turnover and profit.'</i>
Enterprising Sunderland	Awareness	Through Expo Sunderland
	Support provided	<i>Received a grant to support product development</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'received grant funding to help us develop new products for market...built on market research support [received through SBSF]...brought products to market...will lead to increased turnover'</i> <i>'We've now launched the products and already supported a new client...it's too soon to quantify projected profits, however, it is anticipated that these will have a significant impact over the next 12 months.'</i>

**Collective
Impact of
UKSPF**

'Collectively we received funding for market research and design and then financial assistance for the development of new products...Very positive impact...it was a joined-up process starting with investigating market intelligence, assistance with product development and the production and protecting the Intellectual Property Rights.'

'The market intelligence correctly interpreted the lessons that were in the market. This was very useful for the future development of the new products. As the grants required matched funding from our company funds, we had to give careful thought to ensure that decisions were "wise".'

'My company has had brilliant support from Sunderland City Council over the last 18 months. This has made a huge difference to our operation.'

Case Study 8

Profile	<p>Manufacturing sector Small business (10 to 49 employees) Supported by 7 interventions (from 6 projects). Interventions are considered collectively as the business felt unable to differentiate the difference made by each individual intervention.</p>
Collective Impact of UKSPF	<p>Accessed support from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprising Sunderland • Regional Business Growth Fund • Local Automotive Business Support – Sunderland • Arrow Project - Sunderland Innovate and Grow • Innovation Placement - Sunderland Innovate and Grow • Sunderland Skills & Inclusion Programme • Supply Chain Sunderland - RTC North <p><i>'The UKSPF Project has highlighted some key improvements for us, such as transitioning from manual to digital printing with two new machines, which has helped attract more customers. Additionally, the Innovation Placement worked on the stock ordering system, evaluating the current process, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the business, and offering practical recommendations for improvement.'</i></p> <p><i>'Capital grant allowed us to develop our premises...a mezzanine floor which has been established to increase capacity...currently developing a training and apprenticeship platform to attract, retain, and train an unskilled workforce, including those currently in different sectors, unemployed, or who have recently completed a custodial sentence....'Already employed more staff...support will help us employ more people, secure new customers, improved productivity, improve staff skills...couldn't have done this without the support [through UKSPF projects].'</i></p> <p><i>'The key takeaway here is that innovation plays a crucial role in driving improvement. It fosters a culture of creativity, especially in today's fast-paced environment, and allows us to seize opportunities from various funding sources. However, navigating the timeline, documentation, and approval processes for each project requires a good deal of patience and courage. It's essential to diligently follow each step of the process. We've come to understand the significance of persistence and the drive to achieve our goals. Embracing these lessons will undoubtedly help us thrive in our future endeavours...We are hoping for more future funding to help our development in the community and help in the development of employees.'</i></p>

Case Study 9

Profile	Education business Small business (10 to 49 employees) Supported by 3 projects	
BIPC + City Life	Awareness	Sunderland City Council Business Investment Team
	Support provided	<i>Support to help new product development and commercialisation</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'Market research to inform our approach to marketing a new product... Widened the market we were targeting and intellectual property support...which enabled us to seek new markets and sell our product more widely.'</i> <i>'Based on this we've opened a new line for the product which generates an additional £20,000 a year...already increased our turnover...accelerated move into new markets.'</i>
Enterprising Sunderland	Awareness	Sunderland City Council Business Investment Team
	Support provided	<i>Grant funding to support product development</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'Helped us move our product forward at a difficult time for the business... Turnover for this product increased by 30% (£900K to £1.2M) and allowed an increase in staff of 4 FTE. As company had issues with cash flow at the time this initiative would have been delayed at least 12 months.'</i>
SBSF	Awareness	Approached by NBSL
	Support provided	<i>Sales and marketing consultancy</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'Received a grant which enabled us to hire a consultant for 3 months to assist in sales and marketing and company growth. They [the consultant] were so useful that we've retained them at our own cost...really helped in strategic planning for sales and marketing for the future... the consultant played a big part in strategic direction decisions which was a major part of the improvement in turnover and subsequent company growth.'</i>
Collective Impact of UKSPF	<i>'The UKSPF projects have contributed to new products and an increase in turnover and further development work. Helped us develop a more commercial focus...we're much improved...We have discovered that support is available and there is need to search out and gain new providers. Company has gained a strategic and commercial edge which is scalable for the future...UKSPF has replaced ERDF funding very well. It has been a really good source of funding for our company.'</i>	

Case Study 10

Profile	Manufacturing business Micro-enterprise (1 to 9 employees) Supported by 3 projects	
BIPC + City Life	Awareness	Sunderland BID
	Support provided	<i>Professional photography and retail strategy</i>
	Perceptions	<p><i>'Helped us improve our digital marketing...provided a better set of professional photographs for advertising and marketing online...also produced a retail strategy to help with marketing and visual merchandising...should help bring us more customers... Too early for increases in turnover and profit but has now given us access to the digital High Street...gave us the confidence to ask the right questions of ourselves.'</i></p> <p><i>'made good preparation for the future against severe rising costs...should boost sales.'</i></p>
Enterprising Sunderland	Awareness	Sunderland BID
	Support provided	<i>Online sales and marketing</i>
	Perceptions	<p><i>'Gained expert support and a grant towards an audit of digital sites being used by the business and support for an innovative presence on the digital High Street. Also included were courses in Cyber Security and help with networking with likeminded businesses...Introduced a commercial website capable of undertaking financial transactions.'</i></p> <p><i>'very high quality...Only running for 1 month so not possible to predict final benefits for the business but we're confident about the future... has improved networking and given the company more resilience.'</i></p> <p><i>'haven't recruited yet but anticipate that in 6/12 months we will be able to add a further staff member.'</i></p>
SIG - innovative Placement	Awareness	Project event
	Support provided	<i>Graduate placement to support marketing strategy</i>
	Perceptions	<i>'Got 100-hour placement to undertake research into company and competition as part of developing a new Marketing Strategy...we wouldn't have improved our use of social media without this support...really benefitted from having an</i>

	<p><i>external eye look at the business...now thinking about sales and marketing differently... further possibilities to bring in new customers when the systems have been running for a while.'</i></p>
<p>Collective Impact of UKSPF</p>	<p><i>'Instilled confidence in ourselves, resilience and the benefits of networking. We now have more information on what is available. From our networking we have contacted people like ourselves, people who care - we are not alone.'</i></p> <p><i>'Very positive impact. This has involved us in innovation, bringing us up to date. You don't know what you don't know. We have learnt that we should be always learning and striving to be better...I learned that our whole involvement was priceless to our business, we gained some amazing advice for free!'</i></p>

Case Study 11

Profile	<p>Engineering sector Micro-businesses (1 to 9 employees) Supported by 3 interventions (from 2 projects) – Expo Sunderland, SIG Innovation Placement and SIG Arrow Project</p>
Collective Impact of UKSPF	<p><i>'Overall gained an increase in knowledge for the company using resources not generally available...benefited from real expertise...the Innovation Placement gave us a student to work for 2 months on our existing technical projects helping us improve our use existing innovative products.'</i></p> <p><i>'Arrow gave us access to experts with knowledge of the industry and how to innovate...using specific techniques and software...gave us a different take on decisions for the future of the business and use innovation to develop the business.'</i></p> <p><i>'Very positive impact...Will continue to search out support to provide us with an increase in knowledge for our manufacturing processes and continue learning from others...helped to improve our skills, develop new products and hopefully employ more staff.'</i></p> <p><i>'Initially accessed support through a contact with Expo...led to other projects.'</i></p>

Case Study 12	
Profile	VCSE organisation supporting communities through creative activities Micro enterprise (1 to 9 employees) with volunteers Supported by 2 projects targeted at VCSE organisations
Strengthening Communities and Wear Together	Awareness Word of mouth
	Support provided Advice on management and organisational policy and practices and funding – Strengthening Communities Grant funding – Wear Together
	Perceptions <i>'As a new CIC, we received advice on setting up management practices and procedures, DBS Checks and other areas...about ensuring we are compliant and follow good practice.... Also, found out more about how to apply for funding through partnerships.'</i> <i>'Received first small grant to purchase IT equipment, allowed us to deliver workshops and courses for the community...meant we took on part-time staff to deliver.'</i> <i>'Support was very good...we've employed more people, introduced new services, improved our skills...I'd say were now more resilient...we're a new organisation and it really helped with set up and core costs and allowed us to employ 3 part-time staff...the grant allowed us to start outreach sessions which gave us new customers and allowed us to work with local families.'</i>
Collective Impact of UKSPF	<i>'This process has allowed ourselves be established as an entity in our own right. We have been able to get our name known. Business has grown and we have taken on more staff.. we've established a business which has grown organically with support from experts.'</i> <i>'Had a very positive impact... We will seek out more advice and funding, and continue to expand and learn more about how to approach funders...learned we need to focus on specific services rather than a shotgun approach...To be credible need to learn more about how to better estimate costs and the necessary levels of payment required to continue to grow.'</i> <i>'We will seek to become more established, working in partnership with charities and community centres. Because we are becoming known we are now being approached by others. Would like to be involved in the further development of UKSPF as partners. We are new in business and would like to build up our reputation and networks.'</i>

Case Study 13

Profile	Engineering Micro-business (1 to 9 employees) Supported by 4 projects (3 covered in case study)	
LABS-S	Awareness	Part of NEAA network
	Support provided	Expert advice from NEAA on marketing. Invited to take a stand at NEAA exhibition
	Perceptions	<i>'Great for the business...This was an event that we had not previously attended. It raised the profile of the company. It created touchpoints which introduced us to many more contacts...It is difficult to quantify but it greatly increased our potential customer base. These are customers in prospect.'</i>
Supply Chain Sunderland	Awareness	Referral from another organisation
	Support provided	Supported participation at events, facilitated introductions
	Perceptions	<i>'Went to a sales/marketing event, where we had a stand...This was to introduce the company in entirely new sectors such as pharmaceuticals and enrolled in the defence sector networking...Also introduced to HR Event which provided a consultant to look at and assess the company's HR Practices, identified areas for improvement.'</i> <i>'In the absence of this support the company would have been excluded from new market sectors and we would not have gained the new contacts and improvement in turnover. The HR advice drew a line in the sand on where we were - with advice on improving contracts of employment...identified new pathways that the company could follow which led to a happier workforce and the decision to employ a further Apprentice.'</i>
Training for Growth	Awareness	Part of NEAA network
	Support provided	Paid apprenticeship for 6 months
	Perceptions	'This paid the wages of a new Apprentice for 6 months. Company appointed a female Apprentice who fitted well into the organisation....very high-quality support...we wouldn't have employed the apprentice without it.' 'Allowed us to improve our productivity...'

**Collective
Impact of
UKSPF**

'very positive impact... This was a fundamental change to the company, provided access to new markets; improvement in staff skills; increase in staff numbers; increase in company turnover; improvement to employee terms and conditions; improvement in staff retention.'

'The company will seek support and grants to gain access to further new markets and continue to grow. In time there are plans to take on a further Apprentice...The company has had brilliant support from Sunderland City Council over a number of years and so is looking forward to the next round of support to local industry.'