

Business &  
IP Centre  
Network

BRITISH  
LIBRARY

# GET READY FOR BUSINESS GROWTH: IGNITING CREATIVITY ACROSS THE NATION



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



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**Intellectual  
Property  
Office**



**Please note:** The data presented in this report is based on the combination of three beneficiary surveys conducted by The Insight Works Ltd in September 2024 comprising 95 responses to the Scale-up programme survey, 49 responses to the Mentoring programme, 28 responses to the Start-up Stars exit survey and 13 responses to the Peer-to-peer exit survey. Where applicable, project baseline and impact data was used to inform the conclusions.

\*The total number of jobs created and safeguarded have been calculated using a combination of project impact and survey data.

\*\*Those from ethnically diverse backgrounds, women, disabled people and individuals who identify as working class or LGBTQIA+.

Front cover photography: Amanda Overs, Founder of I Can Make Shoes, London, Abigail and Chloe Baldwin, Founders of Buttercrumble, Wetherby and Toks Aruoture, Founder of The Baby Cot Shop, London.

# 223

**JOBS CREATED\***

# 179

**JOBS SAFEGUARDED\***

# £2,479

**THE COST PER JOB  
CREATED**

# 298

**NEW PRODUCTS,  
PROCESSES OR  
SERVICES INTRODUCED  
IN 98 PARTICIPANT  
BUSINESSES**

# 353

**INDIVIDUALS FROM  
UNDER-REPRESENTED  
GROUPS SUPPORTED\*\***

# £33.7K

**AVERAGE TURNOVER  
INCREASE DIRECTLY  
ATTRIBUTED  
TO SUPPORT**

# **LIBRARIES ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

Helping businesses to innovate and grow is one of the British Library's six core public purposes. Since 2006, the Business & IP Centre (BIPC) has created a unique model in partnership with public libraries and the Intellectual Property Office, providing guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs, and helping established SMEs to scale.

In 2012, a nationwide BIPC network in major city and town libraries was established. 2020 saw its expansion to over 100 locations, designed around a hub-and-spoke model, to provide access to quality business support services in underserved areas.

Key to the successful commercialising and scaling of a new product or service are intellectual property rights. The Business & IP Centres are able to guide entrepreneurs on how to protect their creations and ensure that intellectual property protection is in place from the start to protect from infringement later.

As institutions dedicated to gathering and providing open access to information and expertise to everyone, libraries are a great resource to democratise entrepreneurship. Over the last 18 years, the BIPC has been central to the evolution of libraries as a source not only of traditional information, such as market research reports, but also of broader support for business owners: workshops and webinars, one-to-one guidance, and programmes designed to grow businesses – like Get Ready for Business Growth.





# GET READY FOR BUSINESS GROWTH DELIVERED A BENEFIT COST RATIO OF **£16.84** FOR EVERY **£1** OF PUBLIC MONEY SPENT

## GET READY FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

Get Ready for Business Growth was launched in September 2022, and is funded by Arts Council England and the British Library. The programme inspires businesses in the creative and cultural sector to grow, and is built on over a decade of best practice from the British Library's predecessor initiative Innovating for Growth, which demonstrated a clear need for support of this nature. Unlike its predecessor, Get Ready for Business Growth is a virtual, nationwide offer with impact across the British Library's BIPC National Network.

The economic importance of the UK's creative sector cannot be understated. The Department for Culture, Media & Sport reports that for every £1 of public money invested, the sector returns £5 in value. With the government promising to make creative industries "central to a decade of national renewal and a key driver of economic growth"<sup>1</sup>, programmes dedicated to upskilling the creative and cultural sector have never been more valuable.

In just two years of delivery, Get Ready for Business Growth has assisted over 400 creative individuals in England and Scotland to increase their business knowledge (203 scale-ups, 91 mentees, and 122 aspiring entrepreneurs).

<sup>1</sup> Creating Growth: Labour's Plan for the Arts, Culture and Creative Industries (2024)

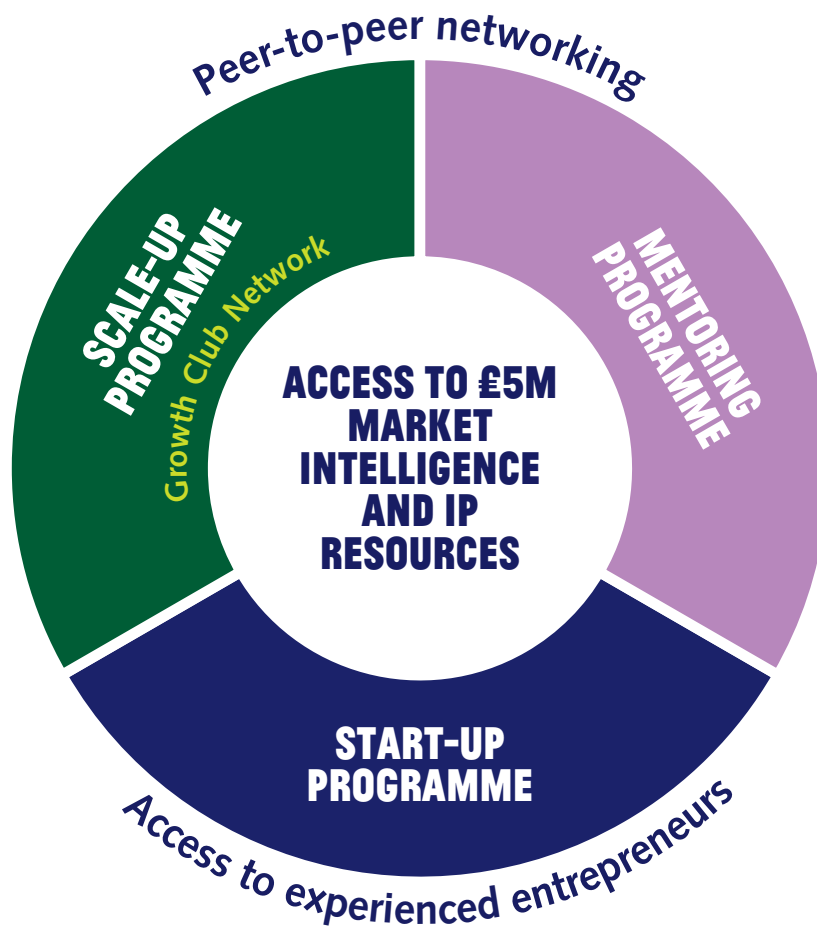
# IMPACT MAP

- 1 Birmingham
- 2 Bristol
- 3 Cambridgeshire
- 4 Cumbria
- 5 Devon
- 6 Glasgow
- 7 Greater Manchester
- 8 Humber Partnership
- 9 Kent
- 10 Leeds City Region
- 11 Liverpool City Region
- 12 Norfolk

- 13 North East
- 14 Northamptonshire
- 15 Nottinghamshire
- 16 Oxfordshire
- 17 Southampton
- 18 South Yorkshire
- 19 Sussex
- 20 Tees Valley
- 21 Worcestershire
- 22 London







**"THE PROGRAMME HAS A GREAT BALANCE BETWEEN WORKSHOPS AND ONE-TO-ONE SESSIONS, OFFERING A PERSONALISED APPROACH TO EVERY BUSINESS, AMAZING POST-PROGRAMME SUPPORT, AND ADDITIONAL LEARNING AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES."**

Codex Anatomicus, Hove

**"IT HAS BEEN VALIDATING TO LEARN THE EXPERIENCES OF THE CONTRIBUTORS – IT'S OFFERED PERSONAL INSIGHT, INSPIRATION AND CLARITY."**

Start-up Stars Participant, London

**"MENTORING HAS GIVEN ME A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON MY BUSINESS JOURNEY AND THE DETERMINATION TO KEEP GOING."**

The QT Apparel, Woking



# SCALE-UPS

**SCALE-UPS IS AIMED AT BUSINESSES IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES LOOKING TO INNOVATE AND GROW. TO QUALIFY BENEFICIARIES MUST HAVE A TURNOVER OF £80K+ (OR £100K IF INSIDE LONDON)**

The Scale-up stream is the flagship element of Get Ready for Business Growth, consisting of 35 hours of workshops and tailored one-to-one support spread across three months. All participants have access to a bespoke research report drawn from the world-leading resources housed at the British Library.

Programme participants are assigned a dedicated Relationship Manager who acts as an ongoing source of support during the programme and beyond, and enjoy the benefits of an extensive support network via ancillary activities such as Growth Club and peer-to-peer events.

The Scale-up stream is also the starting point of a rich knowledge pipeline, with participants being given the opportunity to become mentors for the aligned Mentoring stream and share their successes to inspire earlier stage entrepreneurs.

## Activities and Delivery Partners:

### Getting the Growth Mindset

Delivered by Rasheed Ogunlaru

### Refining Your Business Model

Delivered by Red Ochre

### Market Research

Delivered by the BIPC Reference Team

### Developing a Growth Strategy (Part 1)

Delivered by Red Ochre

### Building Your Brand and Creating a Marketing Strategy

Delivered by Perro

### Good Governance and Building Purpose into Your Organisation

Delivered by Impact Hub

### Financial Planning for Growth

Delivered by The Friendly CFO

### Product and Service Innovation

Delivered by Goldsmiths

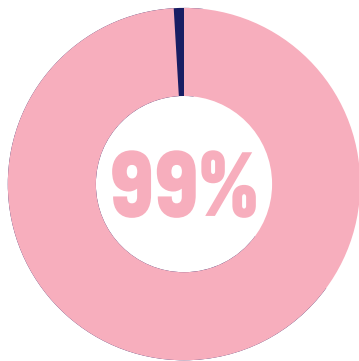
### Maximising Your Intellectual Property

Delivered by the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and Briffa

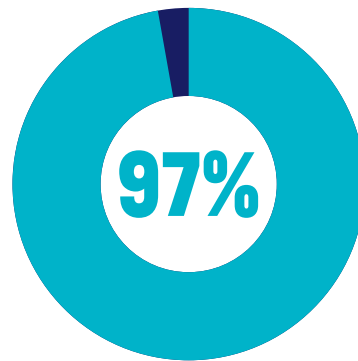
### Developing a Growth Strategy (Part 2)

Delivered by Red Ochre

# KEY IMPACTS



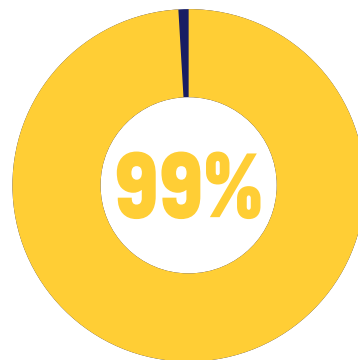
**REPORTED THEIR RELATIONSHIP  
MANAGER WAS VALUABLE  
THROUGHOUT THEIR JOURNEY**



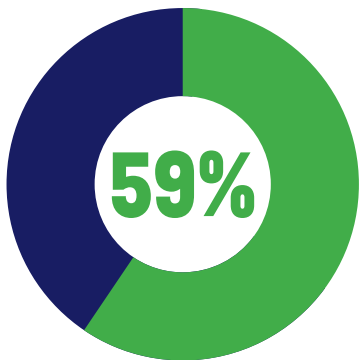
**EXPERIENCED ENDURING IMPACT  
WHICH WOULD HELP THEM TO  
GROW IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS**



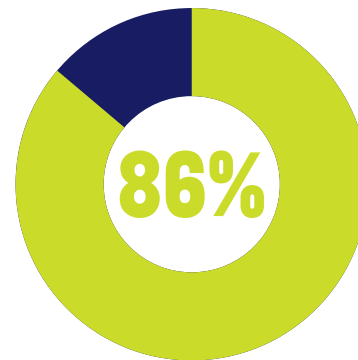
**POSITIVELY CHANGED THEIR  
APPROACH OR BEHAVIOUR**



**OVERCAME THEIR MOST  
URGENT BARRIERS**



**EXPERIENCED AN INCREASE  
IN PRODUCTIVITY**



**EXPANDED THEIR  
KNOWLEDGE**

**€6.3M OF BUSINESS  
WON OR PROTECTED**

**€2.4M IN  
REVENUE GROWTH**

**€3.9M OF  
SAFEGUARDED SALES**

**€483K IN ADDITIONAL  
R&D INVESTMENT**

**€630K IN ADDITIONAL  
FINANCE RAISED**

## MATTHEW WRIGHT

Founder of Playpress Toys  
East Sussex





## ENCOURAGING INNOVATION

The Scale-up programme has actively supported participants to innovate, exceeding its requirement to help participants introduce new products, processes and services by 148%. In total, 98 participants (48% of the cohort) have reported outcomes so far, a significant achievement for a programme offering advisory support with no grant element.

**"THE BIGGEST IMPACT HAS BEEN APPLYING FOR AND RECEIVING A £50K GOVERNMENT GRANT FOR THE PRODUCT IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE PROGRAMME."**

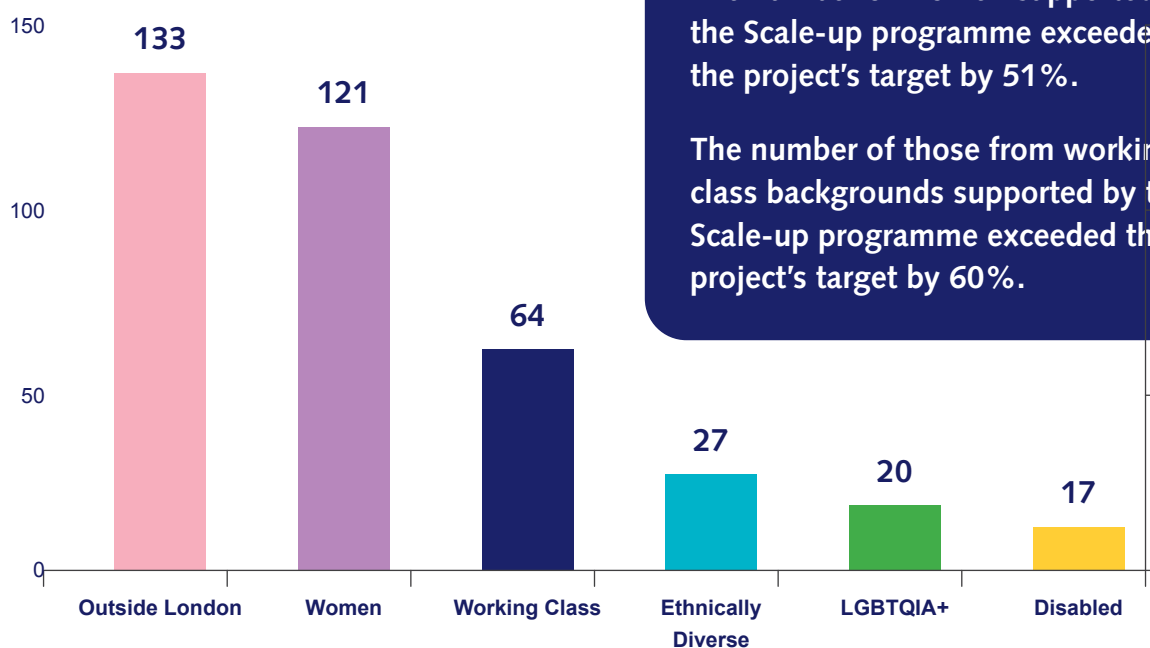
**Translating Nature, Margate**

### Number of innovations recorded to date:

**140**  
NEW PRODUCTS

**139**  
NEW PROCESSES

**19**  
NEW SERVICES



The number of women supported by the Scale-up programme exceeded the project's target by 51%.

The number of those from working class backgrounds supported by the Scale-up programme exceeded the project's target by 60%.

Number of individuals supported by the Scale-up programme in each under-represented group

## SUCCESS IN SUPPORTING UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

The team have invested significant effort in forging better connections with local communities and target groups. Extensive local research and active contact with potential participants is a cornerstone of recruitment efforts, delivering clients from all targeted under-represented groups and developing a national reach.

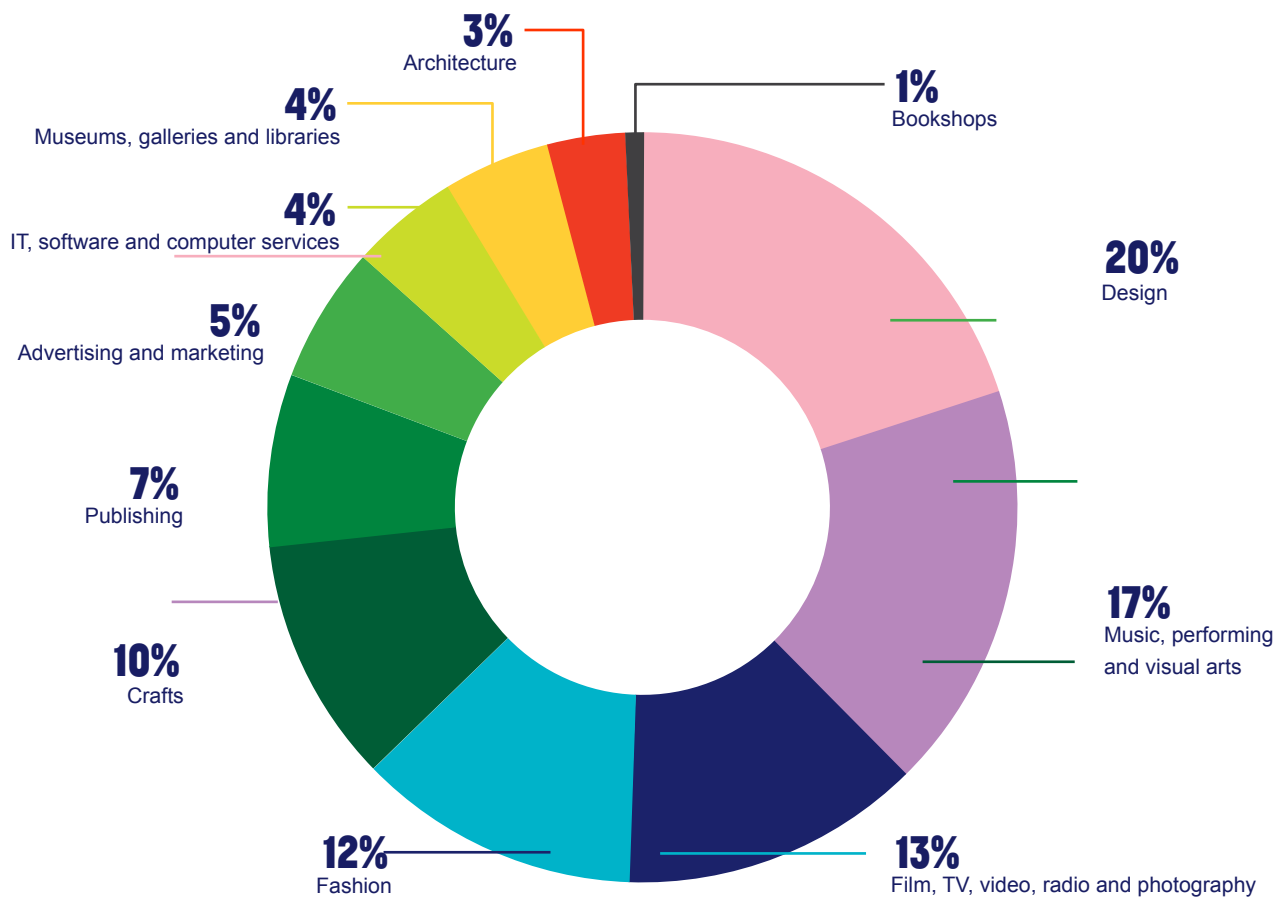
## **SARAH MCCARTNEY**

Founder of 4160 Tuesdays  
London



**"THE PROGRAMME WAS SUPERB,  
INFORMATIVE, MOTIVATIONAL  
AND OF A VERY HIGH STANDARD.  
IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO SO  
MANY CREATIVE BUSINESSES"**

**Habulous, Dartmoor**



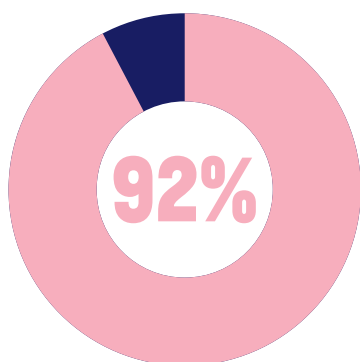
## **SUPPORTING THE CREATIVE SUB-SECTORS**

The Scale-up programme has been successful in attracting a diverse range of businesses from across the Arts Council England creative industry sub-sectors.



## CONNECTING CREATIVE BUSINESSES TO A NETWORK

The programme's 700 person strong alumni network brings together graduates of Get Ready for Business Growth and its predecessor Innovating for Growth, and offers ongoing support. As a member of the Growth Club community Scale-up graduates have access to business support via their Relationship Managers, Library events, and opportunities to attend quarterly Growth Club networking evenings and virtual peer-to-peer problem solving sessions. This has fostered a sense of community and led to the transfer of knowledge and ideas.



## OF PEER-TO-PEER PARTICIPANTS BENEFITTED FROM KNOWING THERE WERE OTHERS IN THE SAME BOAT

## CONCLUSIONS

The Get Ready for Business Growth Scale-up stream deploys traditional business assistance in innovative and fresh ways. With an emphasis on meeting individuals' needs through the crucial role of the Relationship Managers, the programme builds lasting relationships with its graduates, beyond the initial three month support period.



**RORY HUTTON**

Founder of Rory Hutton Ltd  
Edinburgh

This fosters a highly engaged alumni community who, alongside delivery partners and stakeholders, seek to collaborate and give back their time to support the successes of fellow Scale-up participants.

Get Ready for Business Growth has delivered unrivalled impact for its customers, achieving very high levels of client satisfaction.



**"THE CONTINUED SUPPORT WAS AMAZING AND LIKE NOTHING I HAD EXPERIENCED BEFORE."**

Petit Miracle Interiors, London

**"I NO LONGER HAVE IMPOSTER SYNDROME, I HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE THAN EVER!"**

Rove Knitwear, Margate

**"IT WAS HARD TO FIND A SCHEME FOR ARTS AND CREATIVE PRACTICE, AND THIS FITTED PERFECTLY."**

Flow Associates, Lewes

**"REALLY EXCELLENT, ESPECIALLY AT SUPPORTING ME AS A NEURO-DIVERSE BUSINESS OWNER."**

Work Show Grow, Margate

**"SO GRATEFUL FOR THE MIND-OPENING, EXPERIENCE-WIDENING SUPPORT."**

Badapple Theatre Company, York

**"I LIVE WITH ME/CFS. THE SUPPORT HAS ALLOWED ME TO LEARN AND THRIVE DESPITE THE ILLNESS."**

Freshrb C.I.C., Manchester

**"MY FAITH IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY MEANT I COULD RELY ON THE COURSE FROM DAY ONE."**

Alphabetti Theatre, Newcastle upon Tyne

**"IT'S THE MOST VALUABLE THING WE HAVE EVER DONE FOR OUR BUSINESS."**

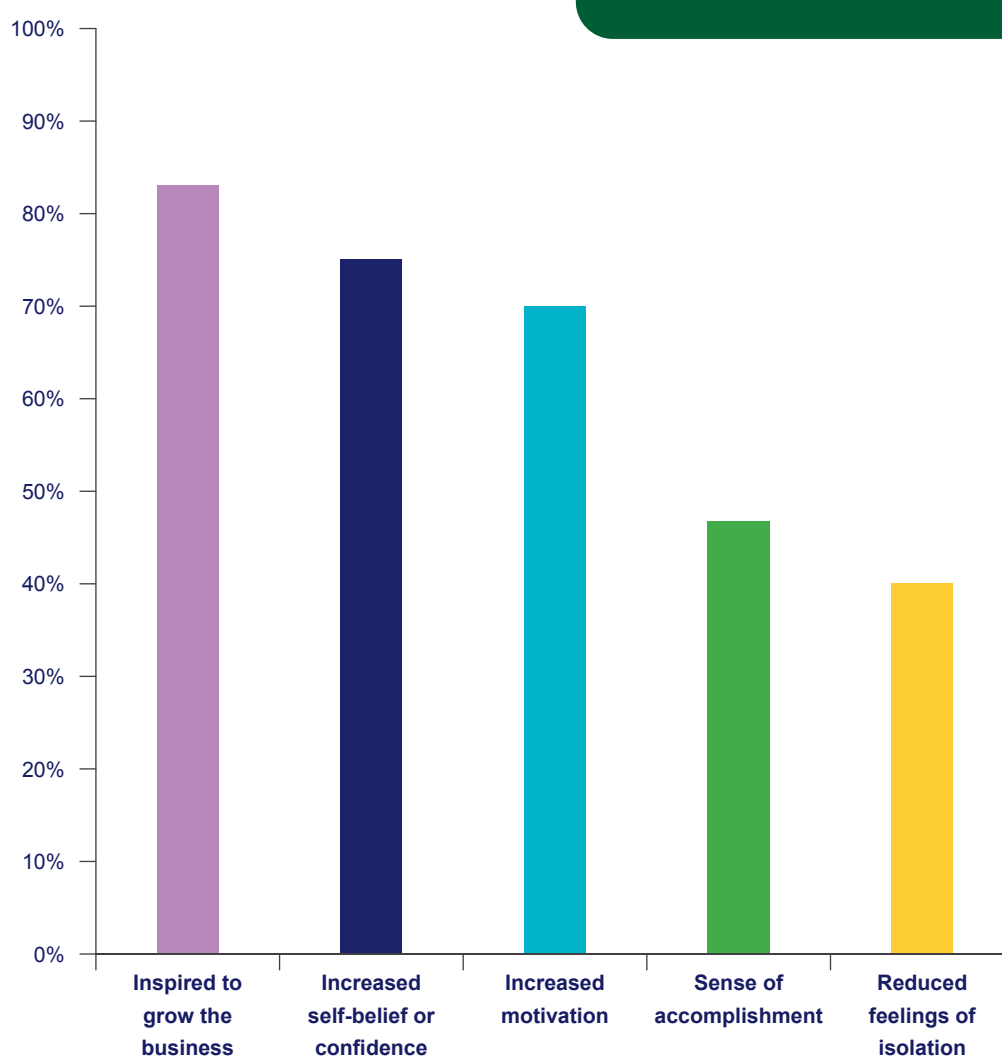
Happydashery, Leighton Buzzard

**"THE PROGRAMME  
EMPOWERED US TO CREATE A  
PERSONALISED, PRACTICAL,  
AND ACTIONABLE ROADMAP  
FOR GROWTH."**

**h10 Agency, London**

**"I'VE GONE FROM  
OVERWHELMED, FRIED AND  
TERRIFIED, TO ARMED, UNDER  
CONTROL AND EXCITED FOR  
THE NEXT CHAPTER!"**

**Cool Crutches, Harrogate**



Percentage of Scale-up participants experiencing a personal impact

## THE PERSONAL IMPACTS OF SUPPORT

In addition to more traditional impacts like improved understanding of business principles, beneficiaries of Get Ready for Business Growth reported a wide range of personal impacts such as improved confidence and reduced feelings of isolation. 92% of Scale-ups reported at least one personal impact (with 66% reporting multiple personal impacts). The most common was increased inspiration to grow the business.

## **VICTORIA EGGS**

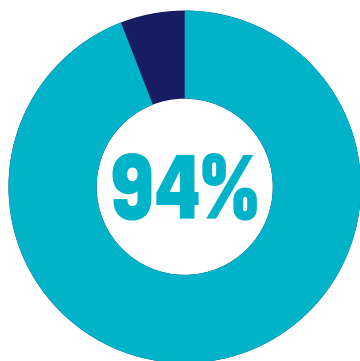
Founder of Victoria Eggs Ltd  
Kingston upon Thames



# MENTORING

Sitting alongside the Scale-up programme, and directly benefitting from the engagement of its graduates, is the Mentoring programme, which has helped over 90 creative and cultural businesses. Alumni from the Scale-up stream are paired with mentees for a six month long relationship, with significant effort and care given by the British Library in matching mentors and mentees.

The programme unlocks the altruism of those who have benefited from Scale-up support. At virtually no additional cost, the initiative delivers real personal and business impact for mentees, and has proven 'a two way street' with mentors also reporting significant personal development benefits. The care taken by Relationship Managers in matching mentees to mentors makes a significant contribution to the impact achieved.



**OF MENTEES ARE NOW MORE  
CONFIDENT IN RUNNING  
THEIR BUSINESS**

**MENTORING IS AIMED AT  
BUSINESSES IN THE  
CREATIVE AND CULTURAL  
INDUSTRIES LOOKING FOR  
GUIDANCE AND  
ENCOURAGEMENT. TO  
QUALIFY BENEFICIARIES  
MUST HAVE A TURNOVER OF  
£10K+**

Both mentors and mentees receive training via the Association of Business Mentors to upskill them in readiness and mindset, and to provide a foundational understanding of how to engage effectively in the relationship. Mentors also receive an accreditation from the Institute of Leadership Management as part of completing this training.

## CONCLUSIONS

Mentoring helps participants increase self-confidence, improve focus and achieve clarity on business direction. It provides mentees with the opportunity to discuss ideas and obtain feedback. The volume of women and working class individuals supported to date is double the project's targets.

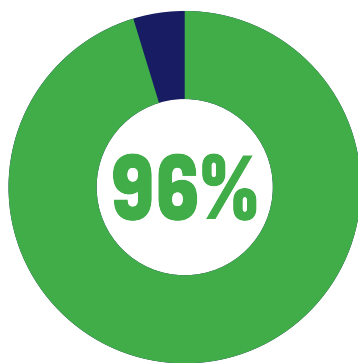
Mentoring works for both mentees and mentors, and the training provided by the Association of Business Mentors has been well received.



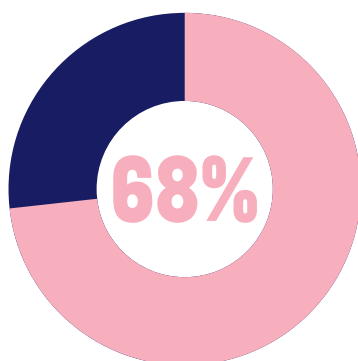
# START-UPS

The Start-up stream consists of a series of inspirational, quarterly events called Start-up Stars where graduates of the Scale-up stream share their business journeys and learnings with an audience of established or aspiring creative entrepreneurs. At the time of the evaluation, a total of nine Start-up Stars events had been held, supporting a total of 120 individuals. Topics included **Taking the Plunge and Starting your Creative Business**, **Staying Creative in a Global Crisis**, and **Tech-Enabled Creativity**.

**START-UPS IS AIMED AT ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS AND START-UPS IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES LOOKING FOR INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION. THERE ARE NO ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, ALL ARE WELCOME.**



**OF ATTENDEES LEARNT SOMETHING DURING THE SESSION**



**FOUND BENEFIT FROM THE OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON THEIR CURRENT POSITION**

## CONCLUSIONS

Start-up Stars events inspire numerous would-be and early stage creative entrepreneurs to take the next step on their business growth journey by telling relatable and informative stories around creative business. Fuelled by the energetic facilitation, the events give participants a chance to reflect on their current position and increase their knowledge of the support available through the British Library and elsewhere. Here again the programme demonstrates a robust ecosystem and engaged community, with Scale-up graduates giving their time free of charge in order to 'give back' to the programme and inspire the next generation of creative business owners.

## ABIGAIL AND CHLOE BALDWIN

Founders of Buttercrumble  
Wetherby







# CASE STUDY:

## JAQUELINE HARVEY

Women in Art Fair, London

Women in Art Fair is a yearly event dedicated to redressing the gender imbalance in the art industry. The founder, Jaqueline Harvey, originally planned the debut event for 2020 but the global pandemic left her facing uncertainty.

Jaqueline used the enforced pause in operations to reflect strategically, and in 2022 she approached the British Library for advice on whether a business structure based around face-to-face events would ever be viable moving forward. It was at this point that she was introduced to Get Ready for Business Growth.

At a time of uncertainty and anxiety Jaqueline, who had previous experience of the British Library's support, was attracted to the idea of business advice with high integrity, from a known and trusted source.

**"IT IS HARD TO GET INDEPENDENT ADVICE EVEN IF YOU PAY FOR IT; THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE BRITISH LIBRARY, IT IS VERY PROFESSIONAL AND EXTREMELY INDEPENDENT."**



Jaqueline found the Get Ready for Business Growth workshops and one-to-one sessions valuable for a variety of reasons. Where workshops were good at providing general information, one-to-ones took that learning, built on it, and tailored it to her situation.

The Finance stream was particularly valuable, introducing Jaqueline to grants, different accounting systems, specialist accountants, and a range of quick fixes and tweaks which could be implemented with minimal effort for maximum impact. Jaqueline also derived significant value from the customer segmentation element of the Product and Service Innovation stream, and



**"IF THE EXPERTS DIDN'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION, THEY WERE EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO POINT YOU IN THE DIRECTION OF SOMEONE WHO WOULD."**

the British Library's own Business Research session was able to provide her with data on potential funding channels and access to the GrantFinder database.

Jacqueline also found the Business Model Canvas provided by the programme particularly beneficial, helping her to organise her thoughts, and enabling better communication about her company.

One of the unexpected benefits of the programme was the community it fostered. Jaqueline enjoyed being surrounded by other creatives who were asking a variety of relevant questions that might not have otherwise occurred to her. This peer-to-peer element also enabled the sharing of inspiring experiences and approaches between people in similar situations, with similar businesses and mindsets.

The effects of Get Ready for Business Growth were personally and professionally profound for Jaqueline. The support gave her certainty and reassurance in her business model, and accelerated the launch of her first event by at least 12 months.

Jaqueline left the programme with the confidence to better articulate her business offer, and the knowledge that Women in Art Fair most certainly had a place in the UK market.



**"THE RESOURCES AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY ARE EXTENSIVE; ONCE I WAS ON THE PROGRAMME, IT OPENED UP THE POTENTIAL FOR A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS FURTHER SUPPORT WHICH HAS BEEN INVALUABLE TO ME."**

# CASE STUDY:

## ALEX THOMPSON (MENTOR)

Troubador Publishing, Leicester

## ELLA SNELL (MENTEE)

Art School Plus, London

Troubador is a publishing business with over 30 years' experience in the industry. When Alex Thompson took over the family business, he joined Get Ready for Business Growth to inject some fresh ideas.

Alex found the programme genuinely impactful and clarifying, leading to improvements in his financial model, strategic thinking, and internal communications. This in turn translated into increased revenue of £200,000 directly attributable to the support provided.

**"We increased profit margins by 10%, with costs only rising by only 3%. This was largely due to a better understanding of who our customers are and how to serve them. The programme also forced me to think bigger, and now it's become a habit. I'm more focused on new services and overall business growth."**

Inspired by his time on the programme, and eager to give back, Alex became a Get Ready for Business Growth mentor. He was matched with mentee Ella Snell of Art School Plus.

**"ALEX WAS A FANTASTIC MENTOR – HIS INSIGHTS AND SUPPORT HAVE HELPED US STAY FOCUSED AND MOVE FORWARD WITH CLARITY."**

Art School Plus is a training organisation designed to equip emerging artists with the skills they need to thrive outside traditional gallery settings. Founder Ella reassessed her career path during the pandemic, and after years of working with artists and cultural institutions, she realised her passion lay in helping new artists to build a professional career.

**"Many artists come out of art school with immense talent, but they aren't prepared for the business side of things – they don't know how to develop funding applications, pitch for projects, or make strategic career choices. We connect these artists with cultural institutions and help them build sustainable careers."**

One of the challenges Ella faced was balancing the tension of being a not-for-profit, mission-focussed organisation, with a business mindset and desire for growth. Like many creative entrepreneurs, she was navigating how to continue moving forward.

**"Years two to four of a business are tough. You're no longer eligible for Start-up support, nor established enough for mainstream Scale-up support. It's about figuring out when to bring on more staff and how to grow smartly."**

The Get Ready for Business Growth Mentoring programme naturally filled this gap in support, and so Ella joined in summer 2023.

**"ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT THE MENTORSHIP WAS THE ACCOUNTABILITY IT GAVE ME. JUST HAVING THAT DATE IN THE DIARY EACH MONTH KEPT ME FOCUSED ON THE BIGGER PIECES OF THINKING AND STRATEGY, WHICH CAN EASILY GET LOST IN THE DAILY BUSYNESS OF RUNNING A BUSINESS."**

From their first meeting Ella knew that Alex was right for Art School Plus. His background in marketing provided a fresh perspective, and with his supportive yet practical guidance, Ella began focusing on an indirect marketing strategy creating engaging content, blogs and knowledge-sharing materials that built credibility and trust within the arts community. Alex also provided invaluable support with financial modelling, a key area of improvement for him during his time on the scale up programme, and a crucial aspect of business development that Ella had found challenging.

With a stronger financial model, a more refined marketing approach, and regular time for reflection, Ella has steered Art School Plus towards sustainable growth, and the benefit has been mutual, with Alex finding the experience as a mentor personally enriching and rewarding.



Ella and Alex's relationship is just one of many mentoring pairings that are a testament to the pipeline of support and lively creative community fostered by the Get Ready for Business Growth Programme.

**"I FOUND THAT MENTORING WAS AS BENEFICIAL FOR ME AS IT WAS FOR MY MENTEE. IT MADE ME REFLECT ON MY OWN BUSINESS AND APPRECIATE HOW MUCH I'VE LEARNED."**



# CASE STUDY:

## LIZ WINTER

Translucent Dance Studio, Worcester

Liz Winter's situation before joining Get Ready for Business Growth was a common one for creative entrepreneurs. Having founded and scaled Translucent Dance Studio organically, she found she was managing almost every aspect of her business. Despite her dedication, she felt stuck and unable to strategise or plan for growth as she would like.

**"I WAS DOING ALL THE ADMIN, MESSAGING, MAKING COSTUMES, DOING FESTIVALS, HANDLING KIT ORDERS – EVERYTHING. I KNEW THAT I COULDN'T GROW THE BUSINESS IF I HAD TO KEEP DOING ALL THAT."**

Liz recognised that this wasn't a sustainable situation and that she needed strategic guidance – so when the British Library reached out to her, it felt like fate. The programme offered exactly what she needed – space to set goals and focus on more deliberate growth.

For Liz, as for many others, it was the tailored one-to-one sessions that made the biggest impact. The Marketing stream provided Liz with the confidence to hire a freelancer to handle marketing activities. By applying the advice from this stream, Liz scaled her marketing in a structured way, which led to a greater presence in the local community and increased student numbers.



**"I didn't want someone to tell me how to run my business. I wanted guidance on how to develop it, but it had to fit me, my staff, and my students — both adults and children."**

The Product and Service Innovation stream helped Liz implement a new summer programme aimed at gifted and talented students, and to market test the offer – running taster sessions to gauge students' interest and ensure the programme met their needs before committing fully to a formal service introduction.



The proactive and fast-paced nature of the programme also led to Liz hiring an Admin Assistant immediately after the support commenced. With new goals in place, Liz was able to start delegating tasks more easily.

It was this mindset shift that was one of the most transformational aspects of the support. The programme encouraged Liz to hire, delegate, set boundaries, and prioritise tasks that aligned with her long-term goals.

**"I LOVE TEACHING, AND I DIDN'T WANT TO JUST RUN THE BUSINESS. BUT THERE WERE PARTS OF IT THAT I DIDN'T NEED TO BE DOING — LIKE ADMIN. IT WASN'T A GOOD USE OF MY TIME OR MONEY."**

One of the most meaningful changes for Liz was reclaiming her work/life balance. The programme meant she could refocus her business, redesign activities, and ultimately take a step back from everyday operations, all while still ensuring Translucent Dance Studio remained true to its vision, and continued with success.

Like many Get Ready for Business Growth graduates, Liz has remained close to her Relationship Manager, and in July 2024 reached out to the British Library to report that students from Translucent Dance Studio had appeared in The Times, following a high profile collaboration with English Heritage, an opportunity she felt would not have occurred had it not been for the programme's help.



**"THE SUPPORT HAS GIVEN ME RENEWED CONFIDENCE TO GROW AND MOVE FORWARD WITH A MUCH GREATER DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND FEARLESSNESS. I AM EXCITED FOR THE FUTURE OF THE STUDIO, AND THE LIVES WE CAN IMPACT."**

# CASE STUDY:

## CAROL WALLACE AND VICKY HUTCHINSON

CreativeHutch, Carlisle

CreativeHutch is a branding, marketing and design agency founded by Carol Wallace and Vicky Hutchinson. What began as a small freelance venture quickly grew organically into a scaling business, and by 2023, the pair sought structured guidance and joined Get Ready for Business Growth. Having worked with consultants previously, they wanted more comprehensive and holistic support.

**"We'd done some business planning before but needed more guidance. The programme offered tools that helped us fill in knowledge gaps and provided validation for our strategies."**

Carol and Vicky were introduced to the programme through a connection at the Cumbria BIPC (part of the British Library's National Network of Business & IP Centres) and were particularly drawn to the peer-to-peer contact and diversity of participants within the programme, seeing value in learning from other businesses at similar stages.

Carol and Vicky found the Finance stream particularly essential, and as a result developed a framework to help them manage cashflow and scale the business more effectively. Equally important was IP, and they acted immediately after the session to trademark and protect their business.

Since participating in Get Ready for Business Growth, CreativeHutch have grown their team from two to 10 employees and tripled their turnover. The financial understanding they gained during the programme was a key driver in this growth, allowing them to take calculated risks.

**"THE FINANCE WORKSHOPS WERE CRUCIAL; WE DIDN'T HAVE A BUSINESS PLAN BEFORE. NOW WE HAVE A STRATEGY IN PLACE. IT'S HELPED US MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN EXPLORING FUNDING OPTIONS."**

On a personal level the programme has been transformative for both Carol and Vicky. Coming from marketing and branding backgrounds they felt less at home with the legal and financial complexities of business ownership. The programme introduced them to crucial concepts and armed them with the tools and knowledge to proceed with confidence.

**"WE WOULDN'T HAVE SCALED SO QUICKLY WITHOUT THE CONFIDENCE AND ADVICE FROM THE PROGRAMME. IT'S GIVEN US THE TOOLS TO GROW EFFECTIVELY, AND WE'VE ALREADY HIT THIS YEAR'S TURNOVER TARGET IN Q3."**

Carol and Vicky also both participated as mentors for the Get Ready for Business Growth Mentoring programme. They felt their experience in starting CreativeHutch late in life, combined with their knowledge of marketing and branding, positioned them well to offer practical guidance to mentees, and they found the process also strengthened their own leadership skills.

**"Mentoring is more than just advice, it's about sharing experiences and helping mentees avoid the mistakes we've made. It's been rewarding, and we've built great relationships through it."**

With a solid business plan and the tools to continue growing, Carol and Vicky are excited about the future of CreativeHutch.



**"THE PROGRAMME HAS BEEN INVALUABLE, NOT ONLY IN HELPING US GROW BUT ALSO IN GIVING US THE CONFIDENCE TO TAKE RISKS AND MAKE BOLD DECISIONS. WE'RE IN A MUCH STRONGER POSITION NOW, AND WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THE SUPPORT WE RECEIVED."**

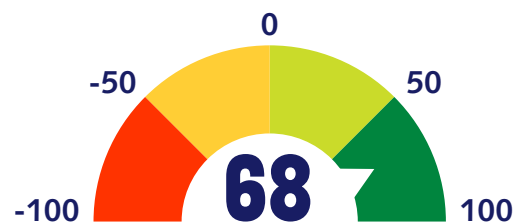
# 100%

## OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRAMME, 55% WERE ABSOLUTELY DELIGHTED BY THEIR EXPERIENCE

### CLIENT SATISFACTION: THE PROPENSITY TO RECOMMEND

Get Ready for Business Growth enjoys extremely high levels of participant satisfaction across all elements of support. During the evaluation, levels of satisfaction were tested using the Net Promoter Score method, a commonly deployed index that measures the willingness of customers or clients to recommend an organisation's services to others. It is used to assess overall satisfaction in a wide variety of industries.

Get Ready for Business Growth has achieved a score of 68 which provides a very high degree of confidence that participants were extremely happy with the support provided and, most importantly, would recommend it to others.



### GET READY FOR BUSINESS GROWTH NET PROMOTER SCORE

Our independent evaluators collect the Net Promoter Score data for all the publicly funded projects they evaluate. As of December 2024, the average score was 58, meaning Get Ready for Business Growth scored 16% higher.



# GET READY FOR BUSINESS GROWTH HAS PROVIDED SIGNIFICANT ADDED VALUE

## THE PROJECT HAS DELIVERED EXCEPTIONAL VALUE FOR MONEY WITH SIGNIFICANT LOW-COST INDIVIDUAL, BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS:

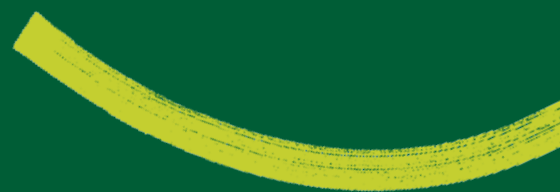
- High quality workshop learning experiences around key business themes (strategy, IP, marketing, finance, growth)
- Assisting those already achieving some business success to become even more successful
- Helping those with less or no experience to build their capabilities
- Helping entrepreneurs wanting to grow to escape from 'working in the business' to 'working on the business'
- Increasing individuals' business skills and the confidence to hire
- Helping managers develop and refine offers around market intelligence
- Boosting productivity by focusing on profitability, cost reduction and increased efficiency
- Offering validation of business models and help to think bigger
- Bespoke research reports utilise and unlock the British Library's world-class business information resources to give even more added value to participants
- With more significant resources this initiative could be developed further and support even more businesses

# CONCLUSIONS

Get Ready for Business Growth offers exceptional personal, professional, business, economic and social value. The programme is a highly effective model of business support for the creative and cultural industries with impressive return on investment and an enviable level of client satisfaction. The extensive expertise and world-leading research collections of the British Library, alongside national reach through a National Network of Business & IP Centres in libraries across the UK, makes the offer uniquely valuable and accessible to all.

A flourishing creative community and mutually supportive ecosystem of graduates now exists as a result of the programme. Creative businesses join the programme as masters of their craft and come away from it skilled in all principles of business too.

After taking part in Get Ready for Business Growth, graduates are resilient, inspired and educated – ready to take their creative practice to the next level.



# THE FUTURE

There are approximately 4,000 public libraries in the United Kingdom. This figure includes the national libraries as well as the vast majority operated by local authorities. These libraries are located within a 30-minute walk of 78% of the population and 87% of people know where their nearest public library is<sup>2</sup>.

With this level of access and awareness, libraries are the ideal organisations to provide business guidance. According to the Department for Business and Trade, there are nearly 5.5 million small businesses (0-49 employees) in the United Kingdom. These businesses provide nearly 50% of jobs and command over 35% of private sector turnover<sup>3</sup>. They constitute millions of entrepreneurs employing millions of people and driving billions in turnover and certainly thousands more aspiring entrepreneurs within walking distance of and familiarity with their local library.

As we saw in the British Library's Democratising Entrepreneurship 2.0 report, libraries delivering business support and guidance have already added significantly to the UK economy<sup>4</sup>. The BIPC leads an established nationwide network of trusted professionals who are well placed to convert investment into tangible results. Already sitting within this landscape Get Ready for Business Growth is testament to the unique power of libraries to support creative and non-creative businesses alike, at any stage of their business journey but particularly when scaling.

With these results achieved in just two years the level of reach and impact with further public and private sector support could be extraordinary. We are keen to work with partners and supporters who can help bring new resources and partnerships to increase the scale, reach and economic impact of our work into new places and sectors.



<sup>2</sup> Libraries Connected, <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/facts-and-figures>

<sup>3</sup> DBT Business Population Estimates 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2024>

<sup>4</sup> Democratising Entrepreneurship 2.0: Libraries as engines of economic recovery and growth (July 2023)

# GET READY FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

**203**

businesses supported

**60%**

of the cohort were women



A return of

**£16.84**

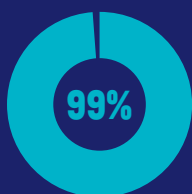
for every £1 of  
public money spent

**298**

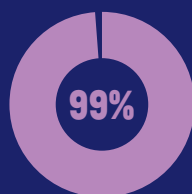
new products, processes  
or services introduced

**223**

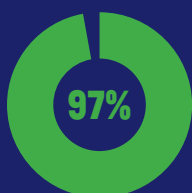
new jobs created



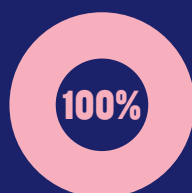
**POSITIVELY  
CHANGED  
BEHAVIOUR**



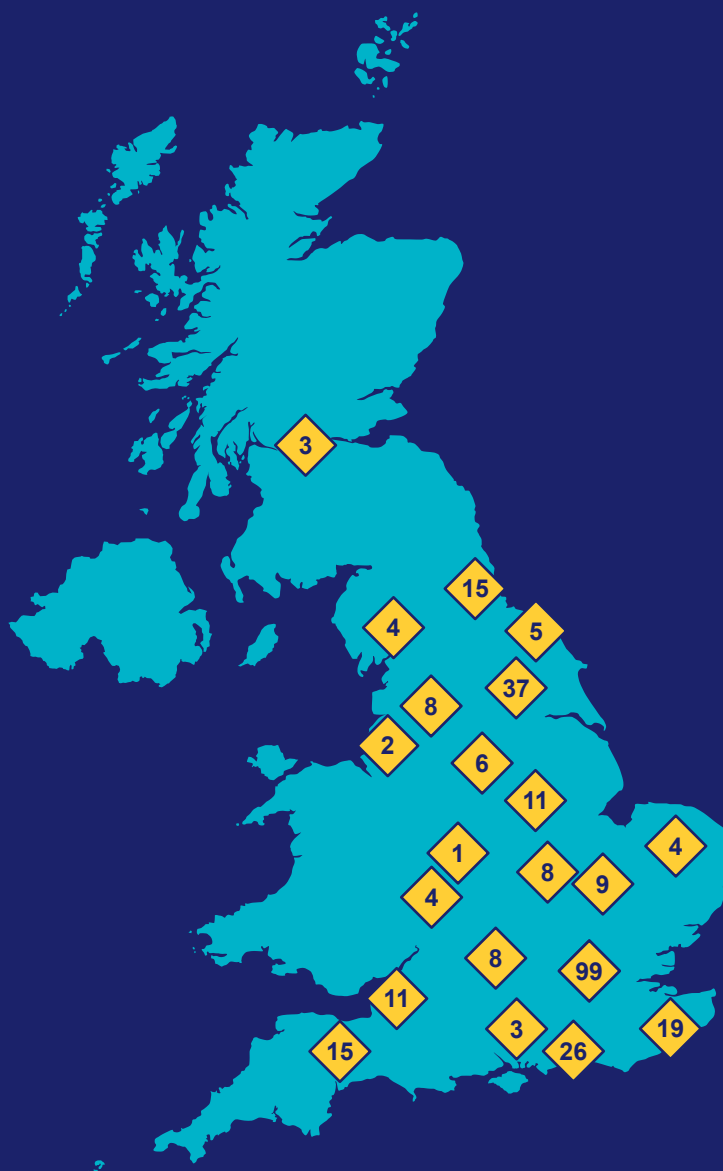
**OVERCAME  
URGENT  
BARRIERS**



**EXPERIENCED  
ENDURING  
IMPACT**



**WERE  
SATISFIED  
WITH THE  
PROGRAMME**



Number of new products, processes or services  
introduced by BIPC region