

Setting the benchmark: £3.36 value for every £1 invested in Outset

Outset, the award-winning start-up support service, delivers a return of £3.36 of social, economic and financial value for every £1 invested, according to a recent independent evaluation by NEF Consulting, leading experts in the field of impact assessment.

The evaluation is the first of its kind for start-up support services like Outset, and thus establishes a high benchmark against which funding bodies – in both the public and private sector – can assess their investment in future support services, in line with local economic development strategies.

Indeed, this outstanding return on investment is welcome news for the Outset service, which was created by YTKO Group as a not-for-profit social enterprise and is currently funded in the South West through a combination of European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and local authority investment. With tendering for the next round of European funding currently underway, this result allows Outset to demonstrate the total impact it makes on the communities it supports – an increasingly important requirement for all publicly funded projects.

The evaluation employed a Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology, an approach that values all impacts made by a programme, including those that are often considered intangible or hard to measure, like client wellbeing and quality of life. Graham Randles, Managing Director of NEF Consulting says: *“We deliberately took a conservative approach to compiling our analysis. The true value of the Outset service is therefore likely to be significantly larger than we are able to credibly measure, predict and value within this evaluation. Evidence of impact and value for money should therefore be interpreted as the minimum contribution Outset provides to clients, the State and the wider economy.”*

Overall, the evaluation reported that Outset’s greatest contribution to the State is delivered by supporting people out of unemployment and into self-employment, realised through decreases in benefits claimed and increases in tax generated. 65% of clients were unemployed prior to engaging with Outset, including 19% who were classified as long-term unemployed. Of this total client group, 49% successfully entered self-employment following engagement with Outset, compared to only 11% for the national baseline. Additionally, 14% of these clients went on to secure employment, reflecting Outset’s focus on helping clients develop valuable transferrable skills and knowledge, even if self-employment isn’t right for them.

Value delivered to clients was measured through changes in clients’ emotional and financial wellbeing from their early stages of engagement with Outset through to 2.5 years after receiving support. The evaluation reported measurable increases in clients’ self-esteem and self-belief, which grew as they recognised new capabilities within themselves and the ability to change their lives for the better. Clients also attributed an increased sense of meaning, purpose and belonging and a greater feeling of autonomy and freedom to the support they received from Outset.

In addition, regardless of whether or not they ended up entering self-employment, all clients reported the development of essential transferrable knowledge and skills. This included becoming more effective communicators, improving their organisation and time management abilities, and increasing their



Editor's Notes:

About Outset:

The Outset service was established by YTKO Group in 2009 to help stimulate economic development, financial and social inclusion through the creation of sustainable jobs and businesses. Offering a flexible and client-focused programme of workshops, mentoring and coaching, Outset empowers people to take charge of their lives and overcome barriers in order to create their own self-employment opportunities. Each local Outset offering is tailored to meet the specific needs and objectives of the local community and always has a significant focus on working in wards with the highest deprivation levels. Thanks to strong working links with sister service, Enterprising Women, the Outset service is embedded with best practice principles for supporting female entrepreneurship, a fact reflected in the well-above average representation of women in Outset services. Over 50% of clients engaged by Outset are women, more than double the national average of 19%. **For more information, go to: www.outset.org**

About YTKO Group

YTKO Group is a successful, private sector business with a team of over 100 staff working in the UK, Europe and Internationally. With headquarters in Cambridge and six regional offices in the UK, it brings more than 30 years' combined private and public sector expertise in supporting new entrepreneurs, established businesses and corporates. The Group's mission is to support the creation and enable the growth of more than 6,000 companies, who together will contribute more than £1 billion per annum to the British economy by 2020. Over half this work is being delivered on a not-for-profit basis. It's Chief Executive, Bev Hurley, was awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion in 2011 and a C.B.E. in 2013. **For more information, go to: www.ytko.com**

About NEF Consulting:

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) is an independent think and do tank that inspires and demonstrates real economic well-being. It promotes innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on social, economic and environmental issues. NEF Consulting is the consultancy arm of the Foundation and puts NEF's ideas into practice by placing people and the planet at the heart of decision-making. **For more information, go to:**
www.nefconsulting.com

Client case studies:

- 1. Paul Carr-Griffin, Mr Cupcake's Amazing Cakes – Cornwall**
Client suffering from depression following major financial losses who turned his life around.
- 2. Ana Paula Teixeira, BraveMumsNeeded Coaching & Training – Bournemouth**
Brazilian client who was made redundant and was on the NEA Job Seekers Allowance prior to engaging with Outset.
- 3. Ali Celiker, Got2Team – Swindon**
Unemployed client with Scoliosis, originally from Turkey launched an ambitious new business.
- 4. Lynette Jordan, Flossy and Jim Illustrations – Torbay**
Unemployed, single parent who was bankrupt and evicted from her home created a new life for herself.
- 5. Rob Middleton, Teckygeek – Plymouth**
'Older' entrepreneur who, faced with redundancy, decided to become his own boss.
- 6. Dawn Watson, The Bickland Café – Cornwall**
Client suffered a severe injury, which prevented her from working and caused severe depression until she found a new direction for her life.
- 7. Kevin Squire, Kev's Decorating Solutions – Bournemouth**
Unemployed, ex-addict who found a new lease on life with Outset's support.

Paul Carr-Griffin, *Mr Cupcake's Amazing Cakes*
Outset Cornwall client

Mental health issues often leave sufferers feeling isolated and excluded from society, presenting real barriers to them gaining employment and moving on with their lives. The Outset service supports these individuals by empowering them to become their own boss and helping them find the confidence to overcome those barriers.

After experiencing a breakdown triggered by major financial losses and relationship difficulties, Paul Carr-Griffin became severely depressed and contemplated suicide, abandoning his home and career in London as a service butler and travelling to Cornwall with the intention of seeing it through.

With treatment and support from the Longreach Centre in Newquay, Paul slowly began to recover, undertaking voluntary work and utilising the patisserie skills he learned at college to bake cakes for the Centre as part of his healing process. Keen to start working again and to get his life back on track, Paul saw an opportunity to turn his love of baking into a career and, after consulting staff at Longreach, approached Outset Cornwall for help becoming self-employed.

"I've always been hard-working, proud and determined so found it extremely difficult being unemployed and living on benefits after the lifestyle I'd enjoyed before my breakdown," says Paul. "Enrolling on the Outset programme gave me a real epiphany; I felt like the luckiest man alive to have been in the right place at the right time to find and start the course."

Learning the basics of market research through the Introduction to Enterprise sessions helped Paul identify a gap in the market for gluten, wheat, dairy and egg free cakes. Combined with specific Business Start Up sessions on marketing, sales and finance, Paul developed a strong business plan and launched *Mr Cupcake's Amazing Cakes* in April 2014.

Paul says: *"I'm a celiac myself so I know what a challenge finding 'safe' food can be. I wanted to make cakes that anyone can eat and through my research, I discovered a real need for it in the market."*

In his first three months of trading Paul has put his Outset training to good use, gaining supply contracts with over 15 local businesses and regularly baking cakes for holiday let guests and individual customers' special occasions. With additional support Paul plans to grow the business to a level where he can rent premises, purchase a vehicle and employ staff to assist with day-to-day operations.

"Since I started the business, I've had some great feedback, which has really given me a boost," says Paul. "For the first time in over two years, I'm actually looking forward to life. None of it would have happened without the amazingly supportive team at Outset Cornwall to whom I'll always be grateful."

Ana Paula Teixeira, *BraveMumsNeeded Coaching & Training*
Outset Bournemouth client

Outset participants come from all walks of life and a large number join the programme to benefit from our support after enjoying a long, successful career working for other organisations.

When Ana Paula Teixeira came to England from Brazil with her husband in 2006, she knew that by not speaking the language she had a challenge ahead. Despite this, she successfully learnt English and found a job in the NHS. She was made redundant in 2012 and after a period of claiming job seekers allowance, Ana Paula heard about the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) scheme through her local Jobcentre Plus, which would offer her a weekly allowance to start a business. She decided to seize the opportunity and build on her existing skills to create her own coaching business.

Ana Paula heard about Outset Bournemouth through her local Jobcentre Plus. She approached Outset to gain the support she needed to develop her business idea and to put a business plan in place. She says, *"Outset definitely offers a proper blueprint in how and where to start up and grow a business. Their guidance, support and information were essential at the first stage of starting my business."*

Although she was highly trained and qualified in coaching herself, Ana Paula felt she would benefit from mentoring and one-to-one coaching from Outset to help define her business proposition. She also attended Outset networking events to begin making connections with other like-minded individuals in her area.

"Outset helped me make it all real," says Ana Paula. *"Writing a business plan gave me a proper structure to focus on one business idea and to find the best way to use my abilities and skills."*

With Outset's support, Ana Paula launched *BraveMumsNeeded Coaching & Training*, a coaching and training business that provides support for mothers looking for personal development, a career change, help to start and grow a business or successfully return to work. Through a range of workshops and coaching sessions, *BraveMumsNeeded Coaching & Training* is helping the community by assisting mums to become economically active and self-sufficient.

Ali Celiker, Got2Team
Outset Swindon client

Working for yourself can be the best solution for people whose health limits their options, as can be attested to by Outset Swindon's 100th business owner. Ali Celiker, who suffers from Scoliosis, was 13 when he left Turkey with his family and moved to the UK in 2004. At the time, he only spoke Turkish and German, but he learnt English very quickly after starting school. Following the completion of his BTech in IT in 2012, Ali started looking for work, but it was difficult to find something appropriate because his Scoliosis restricted him to sedentary work.

He had always been interested in computer technology but it was only after a conversation with his brother about successful online platforms, like Facebook, that he started to think about web design and development. In his spare time, he researched the industry, started building test sites and studied graphic design in order to improve his skills. After two years spent looking for work without success, Ali decided to investigate the possibility of setting up his own business as a website designer. This would have the advantage of allowing him to work in an environment that suits his health while doing something he loves.

He discussed his idea with his local Jobcentre advisor, who then referred him to Outset Swindon for business support. After an initial one-to-one meeting with an Outset Enterprise Advisor, Ali signed up for Outset's 'Business Start Up' workshops.

"Outset Swindon really helped make my business possible by inviting me to a series of workshops where all my questions about how to get started were answered."

The workshops gave Ali all the information he needed for running a business, including sessions on advertising, finance, how to approach customers and tips for making a sale. Ali particularly struggled with calculating a cash-flow forecast, but his advisor went through this with him in a one-to-one session to help him understand.

"All the information provided by Outset has been so helpful. I am much more confident with the idea of being my own boss than I was before."

Ali's market research revealed that a lot of small businesses are not able to afford a website because it is too expensive. Similarly, business owners do not want to pay for a simple website with just a few images and text that will soon become out of date. Ali identified the need for a service providing professionally-built modern websites, that are future-proof, at accessible prices.

"My main customers will be new business start-ups who are trying to get a website, a logo or just a few graphics for their business before opening," says Ali. "There will also be customers who are not happy with their current logo or business collateral designs and are looking for something new and eye-catching."

Having completed his business plan with Outset's support, Ali registered his business, *Got2Team* in July 2014. His goal is simple: to provide professional yet affordable web and graphic design services. But web design and development is just the beginning; next year, Ali plans to add app development to his services. His goal is to start in Swindon and gradually expand the company and take on clients from around the world. In the longer term, he's hoping to secure some contracts with big brand clients.

Lynette Jordan, Flossy and Jim
Outset Torbay client

It was just a few short years ago that Lynette Jordan ("Flossy") found herself a single mother of two young children, unemployed, bankrupt, and evicted from her home in Swindon. After she was mugged in broad daylight, Lynette took the decision to move away and try to establish a new life for herself and children in the seaside town of Brixham, Devon, where she had spent holidays as a child.

"I didn't know anyone in Brixham," said Lynette. "My confidence was at rock bottom but I knew it was the place I wanted to be. I didn't think things could possibly get any worse than they had been so it was a fresh start for us all."

Looking forward to her future, Lynette secured a place on a three year Illustration degree course at South Devon College, putting into practice her passion and skills for creative art and design. *"My Jobcentre Plus advisor was so helpful at that time. I had two young children to support; one of whom is autistic and needs me around-the-clock. The thought of taking on a degree was daunting, but my advisor helped me to work out how my benefits would change by returning to education, and supported me when I said I wanted to become self-employed as an illustrator."*

During her final year of study, Lynette took her Jobcentre's advice and got in touch with business start-up organisation Outset Torbay for free support to help bring her business idea and plan together. *"I knew everything I needed to about illustration, but doing it on a commercial basis and having the confidence to market my work to consumers was another matter. Outset Torbay was brilliant in helping me to prepare myself and develop the critical business skills I needed."*

Lynette completed the Outset programme of start-up workshops that provided her with a familiar and supportive group each week, where she could gain confidence and keep motivated.

"My creative, fun side can sometimes take me off in all directions, but Outset helped to keep me focused and grounded when I need to. They helped me make sense of financial planning, budgeting and tax requirements and worked with me to secure a small Start Up Loan to get me started."

Lynette's life has taken on a whole new direction since moving to Brixham. Her partner, Jim, has completed her relocation, supporting her at home and in her business *Flossy and Jim* – a bright, quirky and unique design and illustration business. *"Flossy and Jim aims to make the world a happier and sunnier place with our illustration and designs. Not just for children but for adults too! We create punchy images for business brands, family portraits, illustration for books and learning aides, wall murals, and a range of merchandise. We've also opened a shop in Dartmouth which has been an exciting step forward for the business!"*

Flossy and Jim has caught the imagination of many and an increasing stream of orders has meant a three-month waiting list for new commissions. Added to this, a contract to illustrate a series of books and cartoons in America, the business is truly flourishing.

"I can't quite believe how things have changed for me. I absolutely love what I do and I couldn't have done it without the support of Outset Torbay. They've been like a second family really. Everyone is so friendly and supportive, and if I'm ever unsure of something, they are readily available to sit down for a chat to work through it. They have given me a much needed confidence boost, and now I can't believe I am doing my dream job for a living! I will always be eternally grateful for that."

Starting my business has been a great adventure, and I can't imagine doing anything else. My vision is to have retailers selling Flossy and Jim merchandise while I continue to develop the illustration portfolio. So many fantastic opportunities have come my way so far; I am looking forward to a sunny future!"

Lynne recently won 'Best New Business' at the 2015 South Devon Business Excellence Awards.

Rob Middleton, Teckygeek
Outset Plymouth

The idea of changing roles in your 50s can be daunting, but Rob Middleton is an excellent example of an 'older' entrepreneur who decided to use his skills and experience to start his own business. Following redundancy, Rob was referred to Outset Plymouth by a friend who had experienced Outset workshops and started her own business.

"After working all my life for someone else it was a big step to make, and to be honest I was very cautious at first as to whether I actually wanted to do this," he says. "But with excellent advisors guiding us through the process of deciding whether our ideas were actually a viable business, to the interaction with other members of the group, listening to their decisions and why they made them, I found the whole experience exhilarating and it gave me the confidence to be able to say YES!! I can do this, I can be my own boss."

Rob worked through the Introduction to Enterprise and Business Start-Up programmes, and found the process extremely informative, bringing up ideas, questions and solutions that had not previously occurred to him.

"The advisors had total commitment and nothing was ever a hardship for them, if you had a question they would answer it and if they did not know the answer they would find someone that did."

His business, TeckyGeek, is based around the concept of returning the personal touch to PC & network solutions. Rob's research and personal experience showed him that in an increasingly technological world, people are disillusioned with helpline staff who merely read from a script, or by having to send technical equipment back to the place of purchase to get a repair. He aims to bring back the concept of calling a technician to your home to repair your equipment or simply set it up and show you how it should work. So whether it's a new PC/Laptop that needs tweaking, a phone that won't work, or a home network that needs to be set up, Rob aims to make the IT experience easy.

Rob found the whole Outset experience hugely positive, both in terms of researching and planning his business, and for boosting his own self-belief.

"My biggest challenge was having that confidence to go it alone, where I was only the person responsible as to whether I sank or swam. But with the help of Outset I soon got over that fear. I have since advised several others to contact Outset!"

Dawn Watson, *The Bickland Café*
Outset Cornwall client

Sourcing capital to finance a new business can often prove tricky, with many institutions offering excessive interest rates or proving unwilling to lend to start-ups. Fortunately, a personal loan from Outset Finance, combined with support from Outset Cornwall, means more entrepreneurs can access the money they need to turn their business dreams into reality.

When Dawn Watson had an accident at work that left her suffering with a painful back injury and severe depression, she knew she would be unable to work for some time and that returning to work for an employer would be extremely difficult. After spending almost six months in recovery, Dawn decided to start her own business focused around her passion for catering and, after consulting her local MP on available support, contacted Outset Cornwall.

"I've always been involved with food and spent nearly 32 years in the catering industry, running my own businesses and in various other roles," says Dawn. "I absolutely love it! It's the first thing I think of in the morning, and now I had an opportunity to get back to doing something I loved."

Developing her business plan and cash flow forecast using the market research, finance and promotion knowledge she gained through attending the Introduction to Enterprise and Business Start Up sessions, Dawn knew she needed capital to fund her new venture. With advice and support from the Outset Cornwall team, Dawn applied for a government-backed Start Up Loan from Outset Finance.

Dawn says: *"Even though I have lots of experience in running my own business, I really got a lot out of the Outset programme. It filled the gaps in my knowledge, taught me lots of new skills and showed me how to write a good business plan, which helped me get the capital I needed to start my business."*

With her application approved, Dawn used the loan from Outset Finance to refurbish her new premises on the Bickland Industrial Estate in Falmouth, launching *The Bickland Café*, with daughter and business partner Laura, in August 2014. Offering freshly prepared, good quality affordable food that can be eaten in, taken away or delivered to customers, Dawn has established good links with other businesses on the estate, employed two members of staff and is already working on plans to open another outlet close to Truro within two years.

"Going into business is not an easy thing to do, and I'm not the type of person who finds it easy to ask for help," says Dawn. "I couldn't have done any of this without Outset Cornwall; knowing someone was only a phone call away was a massive boost and I wouldn't be where I am now without their help, encouragement and support."

Kevin Squire, Kev's Decorating Solutions

Outset Bournemouth client

In February 2014, Kevin Squire, who had been unemployed for over ten years and was an ex-addict in recovery, decided to take control of his life by creating a job and turned to Outset Bournemouth for support.

"After many years unemployed and having gained several qualifications, I wanted to create a business that would combine my skills and give me personal satisfaction, and painting and decorating seemed like the right direction."

He joined the Outset programme in February 2014 and began to discover his own potential for starting a business. Having worked through Outset's 'Introduction to Enterprise' workshops where he looked at whether being self-employed was the right option for him and gained the confidence to put an initial business plan in place.

"The whole experience was really useful and provided hands-on experience for every aspect of my starting up my business. It has given me the encouragement and confidence I needed to succeed."

Kevin started offering a voluntary service and eventually had enough clients and confidence to move forward. He then moved on to Outset's 'Business Start Up' workshops, where he got support developing his marketing and branding strategy: *"The workshops have helped me understand most of the important things I need to know to run a business, such as marketing, professionalism and sales."*

Kevin has now completed the Outset programme and is successfully running his *Kev's Decorating Solutions*, a painting and decorating business. *"Thanks to the advisors at Outset I'm now providing decorating, tiling and minor alterations to small businesses and home owners and renters."*

Kevin is particularly grateful for the practical guidance he has been given by his Outset Bournemouth advisors. *"I received great support and enjoyed the team atmosphere where everyone was very supportive and approachable."*

Now, Kevin is considering employing an apprentice to work alongside him to share his experience and grow his business.

All local services featured in the SROI evaluation are funded by European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and co-financed by a range of other local partners. Outset Cornwall is funded through ERDF's Convergence Programme, and the others through ERDF's Competitiveness Programme.

Outset Bournemouth



J.P.Morgan

Outset Plymouth



Outset Bristol



Outset Swindon



Outset Cornwall



Outset Torbay

