

Black Social Entrepreneurs Futures Programme Application guidance notes



Important information for applicants

We have developed this programme in response to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis and the recent Black Lives Matter campaigns.

Recruitment: Our recruitment process is fully online, including applications, interviews and assessment panels, while the government guidelines make this necessary.

Learning programmes: Our learning programmes will be online until government guidance on social distancing changes and we are able to all meet safely face to face. We have trialled online learning successfully with our existing programmes and can support you in accessing our online services. We have adapted our programmes to support social entrepreneurs through these difficult times and will work with you on recovery, resilience, and rebuilding.

Accessibility

If you would like this document in another format, please contact Amy Barbor amy.barbor@sse.org.uk / 0207 089 9120.

"The SSE programme was awesome. It forced me to think strategically and challenged me to commit the time to work on my business."

**Jeremy Grant,
FORM180**



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Introduction

Black Social Entrepreneurs Futures is a free support programme run by the School for Social Entrepreneurs in the Midlands, in partnership with Gowling WLG.

We're offering learning for Black social entrepreneurs based in the West Midlands.

Eligibility: Can I apply?

We are looking for Black social entrepreneurs who are committed to making a social impact in the West Midlands.

Overall eligibility criteria

To be eligible for this programme, your project must have been active for at least one year. The majority of your beneficiaries must be from Black communities in the West Midlands.

You should be able to answer “YES” to the following questions:

About you

- Do you identify as Black?
- Are you an individual who is leading a project that has a significant social or environmental impact?
- Are you over 16 years old?
- Do you live in the UK?
- Do you have the right to work in the UK?
- Are you committed to meeting and sharing with others who have been through and are going through the same process?
- Are you committed to learning and to attending the whole of the learning programme? (The final instalment of the grant is dependent on at least 80% attendance.)

About your social enterprise

- Is your social enterprise's purpose to create a social or environmental impact in disadvantaged areas or with people in need?
- Has your social enterprise been active at least one year
- Does your project have a formal organisation structure in place and has been incorporated for 12 months?
- Is your social enterprise focused on benefitting Black communities in the West Midlands?

Please do NOT apply if...

- You plan to develop a purely commercial business.
- Your project does not have a formal constitution or legal structure that is at least 12 months old
- Your social enterprise's main beneficiaries live outside the UK.

If you're unsure whether you're eligible, contact Charles Rapson on 07500 081 219 or charles@ssemidlands.org

"The SSE programme has really helped me remove some of the mental barriers that I had in my thinking patterns, which were really hindering the growth and development of my business and ideas."

Daina Anderson - Open Lens Media

**Black
Social Entrepreneurs
Futures Programme**



What will I learn on the programme?

The School for Social Entrepreneurs' learning programmes are very different to traditional teaching. We're not about essays and academia. You will hear from expert practitioners and seasoned social entrepreneurs who help you develop the skills you'll need to take your project forward - to increase your impact and sustainability. You'll be in a group of up to 20 other individuals at a similar stage to you, from all backgrounds.

We'll also introduce you to experts to help you develop new skills and knowledge and you'll have the opportunity to build a network of peers and professionals who can support you.

We believe in learning from other people's experiences so you will also hear from inspiring social entrepreneurs who speak frankly about the good, the bad and the ugly of running an organisation. (This [playlist of videos](#) shares the types of stories you'll hear.)

To help keep you on track, we will provide you with up to 3 hours with a professional business coach and we'll also match you with a mentor from Gowling WLG.

The Black Social Entrepreneurs Futures programme can help you if you have set up a social enterprise and need help to increase your income and impact in the year ahead. Due to the impact of Covid-19 and the current climate, this programme will be responsive to the needs of participants to support social enterprises in their journey to get back to trading through innovative learning approaches. We recognise that your focus in terms of growth and development may be how to bounce back from the crisis, accelerate recovery and build a stronger, sustainable, resilient business model.

This programme could help you:

- **Learn how to strengthen your model** and grow through sales, with 8 learning days spread over a year.
- **Access to a network of social entrepreneurs**, who will support your plans and help you through tough times.
- **Be supported by** a business coach and one-to-one mentor.
- **Increase your impact and reach to build a stronger future.**
- **Access a support network** through peer learning with people in the same boat as you.

You'll be supported to reach the next level of your ambitions develop outstanding leadership skills; build resilience, confidence and capabilities; transition your organisation to sustainability.

Our learning managers are expert facilitators, so they'll flex learning to ensure everyone's needs are met, as well as creating a great group dynamic.

The programme at a glance

WITNESS SESSIONS

Entrepreneurs share their experiences and discuss the secrets of their success.

You will be able to listen, learn and question them to help you examine and find meaning for your own project.

ACTION LEARNING SETS

You will work in a small group with a trained facilitator, to help you find ways of overcoming the stumbling blocks, dilemmas and other problems that your project faces.

PEER SUPPORT

You will bring your skills and experience to the group and learn from the skills and experience of the other members. This network of like-minded people will provide vital support to enable you to develop your enterprise.

EXPERT SESSIONS

Through questioning, observing and listening to experts, you will improve your abilities in financial management, income generation, business planning, sales and marketing, managing people, partnering and other essential skills.

MENTORING

You will be matched with a mentor, who will help you build your confidence and understanding, and develop yourself and your project.

1:1 BUSINESS COACHING

You will have 3 hours 1:1 specialised business coaching



What about the impact on my project/organisation?

By equipping you to be a better leader, you will be more able to develop:

- **Resilience:** respond to challenges facing your project/organisation.
- **Sustainability:** embed change, build sustainability and achieve impact.
- **Impact:** develop a strong sense of purpose, and achieve social/cultural impact.

About the programme: schedule & timeframe

What is the time commitment?

Jan 2021 - Oct 2021:

- 8 x group (cohort of up to 21) learning days either online or in a wheelchair-accessible venue
- 4 x half-day Action Learning Sets (groups of 5 or 6) - online only
- 1:1 business coaching - 3 hours over the course of the programme
- A mentor from our Corporate partner Gowling WLG
- Corporate skills sharing session - time commitment to be confirmed

Programme dates

- **Learning Day 1:** 5 January 2021
- **Learning Day 2:** 12 January 2021
- **Action Learning Set #1:** Thurs 28 Jan, Tues 2 Feb, Thurs 4 Feb 2021
- **Learning Day 3:** 16 February 2021
- **Learning Day 4:** 9 March 2021
- **Action Learning Set #2:** Tues 20, Thurs 22 or Tues 27 April 2021
- **Learning Day 5:** 18 May 2021
- **Learning Day 6:** 8 June 2021
- **Action Learning Set #3:** Tues 6, Thurs 8 or Tues 13 July 2021
- **Learning Day 7:** 14 Sept 2021
- **Action Learning Set #4:** Tues 5, Thurs 7 or Tues 12 Oct 2021
- **Learning Day 8:** 9 Nov 2021
- **Graduation:** 14 Dec 2021

The learning programme is only part of the picture though. You will need to be developing your project during the year and will need to have the time and commitment to do this.

There is also a graduation event at the end of the programme that you will be invited to attend to celebrate your achievements and completing the programme.

Where do in-person learning days take place if these happen?

Birmingham, at a wheelchair-accessible venue.

Will there be a cost to attend?

There is no cost, thanks to support from Gowling WLG.

What if I have access needs?

We want to remove all barriers to anyone being able to attend and fully participate in the programme. Please talk to us about your access needs so we can best support you.

How to apply

Deadline for applications

5pm, Wednesday 2nd December 2020.

Steps to apply

1. Go to: <https://www.the-sse.org/courses/black-social-entrepreneurs-futures/>

(If you are unable to access/submit information online, contact Amy on 0207 089 9120 / amy.barbor@sse.org.uk and we will try to find a way that works for you.)

2. Click 'Apply now' button: this takes you to our online application portal.
3. Complete 'Applicants details' online (Section A of application form)
4. Answer the 'About you and your organization' (Section B of application form, also copied below).

Section B You have the choice to answer the questions either:

- In writing via the online form (max. 800 words)
- A voice recording* (max. 6 minutes)
- A video* (max. 6 minutes long; you can submit this in British Sign Language if you prefer)

*If you answer using voice or video:

- ✓ Email your recording to amy.barbor@sse.org.uk
- ✓ Title your email: 'Black Social Entrepreneurs Futures Application'
- ✓ Include your name and contact details.

All formats (writing/video/voice) will be assessed equally. We just want to make sure you feel comfortable using the format that works best for you. Please ensure you answer all questions.

5. Complete the Diversity Monitoring Form. This is at the end of the online application.

If you have any problems, contact Amy Barbor amy.barbor@sse.org.uk or 0207 089 9120.

Application questions

About you and your organization

(Section B of application form. Remember: you can submit your answers in writing online, as a voice recording, or as a video - including in British Sign Language.)

Tell us about yourself - including your background, skills and experience (max. 200 words)

Tell us about your organisation (max 300 words)

- Please give a brief history of your organisation. How and why was it set up?
- What is the social or environmental purpose of the organisation?
- What are its main activities?

What positive changes or impact has your organisation achieved so far? (max 150 words)

Why do you want to take part in the Trade Up programme? (max 150 words)

- How will the learning programme make a difference to you and your organisation?
- What do you hope to be able to do differently as a result of this programme?
- What do you expect to get out of the programme?

How will my application be assessed?

December 2020

- Based on your application, we will see if the programme is a good fit for you, and check you're eligible.

9, 11 and 14 December 2020: informal interviews

If we think the programme could be right for you...

- We'll invite you to an informal interview. Depending on what suits you best, this will be live via Zoom. If you require adjustments, just let us know.
- We'll be keen to find out more about you and what you would do with the opportunity, and we can work out together if this is right for you.

18 Dec 2020: panel with Gowling WLG

- Following the interviews we will invite successful applicants back to present your idea to a panel made up of SSE and Gowling WLG staff.
- We will ask you to present your idea in a 3 minute pitch with 5 minutes for questions.
- We can help you with the panel presentations. Please contact us if need adjustments/support in any way, please contact us.

22 Dec 2020: offer to join the programme

- If the programme is right for you, we will ask you to formally accept a place on the programme. (e.g. accepting terms and conditions of the offer, providing documentation.)
- We will be in contact with you to discuss any access requirements you have.

Key contact details

If you still need advice on your application, contact us on 0207 089 9120 or by email to charles@ssemidlands.org or amy.barbor@sse.org.uk

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect the programme, please see our [Complaints Procedure](#).



Appendix: FAQs

What does SSE mean by “Black social entrepreneurs”?

This includes anyone who identifies as Black and is running a small business that has a social impact.

What does SSE mean by “social impact”?

We are looking at how your activities *improve* the lives of people or communities in the West Midlands, particularly those from black communities and/or who are disadvantaged.

Does this include Asian or other ethnic minority?

This programme is specifically aimed at Black social entrepreneurs. See [here](#) for more information on other programmes you may be eligible for.

What organisational structure will I need to have for the programme?

When you come on the programme you must have a formal organisation in place, which has been in place for a year. This means your project needs to have a constitution or governing document.

What do you mean by “active for at least a year”?

We are seeking projects with some proven track record.

What do we mean by “social or environmental impact in disadvantaged areas or with people in need”?

We are looking for projects that improve the lives of disadvantaged people or communities either through social or environmental benefits. You should be targeting your services to work with people in need.

What do you mean by “leading a project”?

We mean the people who come on the programme should be the ones that hold the vision for their project and are passionate about the ideas behind it. They will be the drivers of change and have the strategic ability to make the changes that are necessary. Usually this is the founder or the CEO, but it may also be the chair or a key senior manager or director.

The programme is not suitable as a training programme for people who are staff or project leaders who are simply employed to develop a project.

We recognise that, in some cases, social entrepreneurs have set up and are leading projects that are hosted within established organisations. The Trade Up Programme is open to leaders of these projects as long as they are clearly defined as a distinct part of the host organisation and have a degree of independence within it. You will need to demonstrate this. If you are unsure, please contact us via charles@ssemidlands.org.uk or amy.barbor@sse.org.uk

What do you mean by a hosted project?

Normally SSE supports the whole organisation, but sometimes we have applications from projects that are hosted or incubated by a wider organisation, for example, a children's cookery club that is being hosted by a large community centre, with a view to becoming independent later. We will accept applications from hosted projects, if there is an intention that the project will become independent, and the leader of the project has a considerable level of control over the project. The expectation should be that if the leader of the project leaves the organisation, the project would go with them.

What about safeguarding?

If you work with children or vulnerable/at-risk adults, you will be required to show that you are following good practice on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults including having an up to date safeguarding policy and procedure in place, which includes getting enhanced checks for people who require them. Individual applicants working with children or adults in vulnerable situations will be required to have a Basic Disclosure.

What if I have particular needs which may prevent me from fully taking part?

We want to remove all barriers to anyone being able to participate in the programme. Please let us know if you are concerned about this.

Can I apply if I already have been on a School for Social Entrepreneurs programme?

In general, yes! But with one exception: if on the 5 January 2020 you will be on another SSE programme that is longer than six months, you cannot apply for this programme. Ask us if you're unsure.

Can I apply if I am connected to the School for Social Entrepreneurs or to any of the funders of this programme?

We cannot accept applications from staff or trustees of SSE. If you have a close connection with SSE or Gowling WLG, we will make a decision on a case-by-case basis. Please contact us before making an application.

Can I apply for this programme if I have criminal convictions?

Previous SSE fellows have included people who have criminal convictions, some of whom have used their experience in prisons to make a difference to the lives of ex-offenders. You do not need to let us know about previous convictions unless they are relevant to your application.

If you have unspent convictions for fraud or any convictions which may affect your ability to run your project, including working with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable, you should let us know, as we may undertake checks during the course of the application assessment.

What about Data Protection?

SSE is committed to protecting your personal information and acting in line with your rights under data protection laws and will treat all data in accordance with our [Data Protection Policy](#).

SSE will collect and use personal information provided by you in the application form or separately, or which we otherwise lawfully obtain about you. We may use this information for; processing your application and managing the selection process for the programme conducting due diligence on you and your organisation as part of that process. This includes contacting you about the workshop or programme which you are applying for by phone or email.

If your application is successful, we may also use your information for: managing your participation in the programme, , monitoring your progress and the impact of the programme, sharing and promoting your story and the story of your organization and other lawful reasons.

We may share your information with our funders and partners, including external evaluators for monitoring and reporting purposes. They will also only use your information for the reasons outlined above.

Further details, including how we share your information and your rights relating to our use of your information, can be found under our Data Protection Notice, a copy of which is available here: <https://www.the-sse.org/your-data>.

We ask you to provide your Equal Opportunities details. You are not required to give these and you can select the 'Opt Out' box. However, it is helpful for our future development and marketing that you provide this information. It can also help us to identify ways in which we can provide specific support to those who need it, for example applicants who may require additional support to attend interviews or participate fully in the programme.

“Brilliant social entrepreneurs, both in the room and delivering on the course. It enables you to take time out of the day-to-day and focus on the future plans - which is invaluable. And you will be challenged...”

- SSE student