

# The Somerset Social Entrepreneurs Accelerator Programme

- Do you have an enterprise that is working to improve communities in Somerset?
- Have you been trading for over a year?
- Do you want to meet a community of other people starting up projects in Somerset, regularly meet online, gain support and work through challenges together?
- Do you want a grant funded programme of practical learning and network building between March and May 2022?

If so, our Accelerator Programme could be for you.

## Introduction

The Somerset Social Entrepreneurs Programme is led by the School for Social Entrepreneurs in partnership with Somerset County Council, Somerset Community Foundation, Smart Communities Ltd and Spark Somerset. It is funded by the UK Government through the [UK Community Renewal Fund](#).

The Somerset Accelerator programme is focused on existing organisations, who have been trading for around a year or more and want to increase their trading in the next three months. Individuals and organisations will have access to support, learning, funding and coaching, all aimed at giving you the best possible chance of success.

The Accelerator Programme is part of a wider programme under the South West Social Entrepreneurs Partnership:

You may also be interested in:

- The Somerset Start Up Programme - aimed at new social entrepreneurs and social enterprises
- Similar programmes in Bath and North East Somerset (BANES), and Devon

[Get more information on these programmes.](#)

# The programme

A free learning programme made up of

- 8 x learning days - with a focus on leadership and business development
- 3 x Action Learning Sets designed to support individuals' resilience and wellbeing.
- 3 one-to-one coaching sessions to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on their learning
- 1 business review panel where participants will access a panel of experts to explore business challenges and opportunities in more depth.

A [Match Trading](#) grant of up to £15,000 managed by Somerset Community Foundation.

SSE's learning programmes are very different to traditional teaching. We're not about essays and academia, so expect to try new approaches and learn through doing. The programme is a transformational experience that will push, challenge and support you. It will give you the confidence and skills to create the social and/or environmental impact you're aiming for. You will:

- **Learn from experts, leaders and social entrepreneurs** who will speak openly about the good, the bad and the ugly of running an organisation so you can learn from their experiences. (This [playlist of videos](#) shares the types of stories you'll hear.)
- **Build a support network.** You will be in a small cohort of people who will support and learn from each other.
- **Join an [Action Learning Set](#):** Working with a facilitator in a small group to guide each other to developing your own solution to challenges.
- **Access a coach** and a support network through peer learning with people in the same boat as you.

Our entrepreneurship facilitators are experts at facilitation, so they will flex learning to ensure everyone's needs are met and create a great group dynamic.

**Some of the topics we are likely to cover are:**

- Leadership and management
- Balancing purpose and profit
- Marketing
- Business planning
- Scaling up and replication
- Developing networks and connections
- Product/service review and development
- Trading planning
- Environmental auditing and sustainable social value led supply chains.
- Financial review and modelling
- Costing and pricing review
- Accessing social investment

- Accessing public procurement and tendering contracts.

Not sure if the Accelerator programme is right for you? Find out about other programmes available on the webpage [here](#).

## The Match Trading grant

The Match Trading element of the programme will be managed by Somerset Community Foundation (SCF). SCF has provided over £15 Million to Somerset social enterprises and VCSE organisations since 2002, including over £750k of social investment through the Somerset Social Enterprise Fund.

We want to support you to improve your financial sustainability by increasing your income from trading and sales. To help you do this, Somerset Community Foundation will set aside up to £15,000 of funding for your organisation as part of this programme.

As part of the programme you will get:

- A traditional grant of £7,500 to kick-start your trading growth and support you to put into practice new ideas and initiatives, paid in March 2022.
- Plus, up to a £7,500 grant that matches an increase in income from trading through a multiplier effect. For every £1 that you increase your traded income we will pay you £3 in grant up to the maximum of £7,500. This is a Match Trading grant to accelerate recovery and growth. [Learn more about Match Trading here](#).
- The Match Trading element of the grant will be calculated against an increase in trading income over the period February, March, April and May 2022.

### **What if my income from trading does not increase?**

We will work hard with you to support you to increase your trading, and we hope you will. We want to give you the money and believe you have the potential to achieve this growth.

If you don't increase your income from trading at all, you will still keep the £7,500 traditional grant and participate in the learning programme.

### **What do we mean by income from trading?**

Income from trading includes:

- Sales of goods or services to the public, for example - selling food, tickets, training sessions, workshops
- Sales of goods or services to other organisations, for example, training courses, commissions, contracting
- Sponsorship and membership fees, where there is a significant benefit for the sponsor or member

- Rental income

It does not include:

- Donations or voluntary contributions
- Income from investments
- Bank interest
- Loans
- Equity income (e.g. through sale of shares)
- Grants, for example from trusts
- Transfers of funds from other organisations, e.g., in the case of a merger
- Sponsorship or membership fees, where there is no significant benefit to member or sponsor

We can advise you about this if you are not sure. And just to be clear, by income from trading we don't mean surplus or profit - just income.

You will be matched with a grant manager from Somerset Community Foundation to support you with questions about your grant and how you can spend it.

## What can I spend the grant on?

We will be as flexible as possible about how you spend the grant. But your grant must be used to support your learning and to put that learning into practice through developing trading within your organisation.

You can use your grant towards items such as:	We cannot fund any of the following:
Salaries for yourself (as long as this supports the objectives of the grant) or your employees as well as sessional staff fees or paying for professional support and advice to help your business develop	Private benefit that is not “incidental” (see below)
Developing new products or services	Assets over £5,000 in value, including refurbishment of buildings or purchase of Vehicles.
Marketing and publicity: e.g. developing a website to support your trading	Work that has taken place before the grant was awarded
Travel and subsistence costs, including for attending the programme	Costs associated with the application or interview
Supplementary training for yourself or others, directly relevant to your project	Expenditure outside the UK, except as agreed with us

## How will the grant be paid?

This grant can be paid to your organisation or to a host organisation to help you develop your enterprise. It will be paid to a UK bank account which must either be solely controlled by you or have “dual authority” i.e. at least two people have to sign cheques.

You will need to sign terms and conditions and provide us with all necessary documents before we release the first payment. In order to receive the final instalment of the grant, you will need to attend at least 80% of the course and increase your income from trading as described above.

## Eligibility

### Who is this programme for?

We're looking for enterprises and organisations that are incorporated, have traded for at least a year, want to grow their income from trading in the next 4 months and are based in or provide the majority of its services and impact within Somerset.

**To be eligible for this programme, your project or organisation must:**

- Have a clear social or environmental purpose and work in the voluntary and community sector
- Have traded for at least a year.
- Be based in or carry out the majority of your work in Somerset.
- Have a clear plan of how to increase trading activity such as the development or delivery of new products and / or services

**To be eligible for this programme, you must:**

- Be socially driven, action oriented, passionate about change, a reflective and active learner and collaborative.
- Be committed to attending the learning programme, (the grant is dependent on 80% attendance)
- Ideally be working full or part time on the project in either a self-employed or employed capacity
- Live in the UK and have the right to work in the UK
- Not currently be under a bankruptcy order or CCJ

## How do I apply?

**Apply by 1pm, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

[You can apply in writing via this online form](#)

When you are completing your written application form the following information may be helpful:

- You can save your application and return to it at a later date. Just click “Save for later”, and you will be given a unique link to return to your application. Remember to save this link.
- When you’ve completed all the questions, click “Preview” to review your application, then click “apply”. You will be redirected to our equalities monitoring form and you will also receive a copy of your application via email from 123 FormBuilder. Check your junk folder if you can't find it.
- We recommend downloading the application form questions and preparing your application in word so you can copy and paste into the form and keep an eye on the word count.

To help you make your application we plan to run information sessions and provide telephone support during January 2022. Further details on this support can be found [here](#).

## Provisional timeline

The provisional timeline for the programme is as follows, however this may be subject to change.

1. **February:** Application deadline - **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 1pm**

2. **February:** Interview

If you are longlisted, you will be invited to attend an online interview during the week beginning **24<sup>th</sup> February 2022**. We'll make any reasonable adjustments to ensure you feel comfortable. If you can't make an interview that week, please let us know and we will try to accommodate you.

We'll let you know if you have made it onto the programme around the beginning of March 2022.

3. **March:** The provisional programme start dates are the weeks of **17<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**.

The learning programme runs until **June 2022**.

## Key contact details and complaints

If you need advice on your application, contact us on **01803 435084** or by email to [Southwest@sse.org.uk](mailto:Southwest@sse.org.uk)

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

## Our commitment to diversity, inclusion and accessibility

We recognise that discrimination of all sorts infiltrates every part of our society, and we are working hard to counter that wherever we find it. To that end, we actively encourage applications from people of all faiths, races, gender identities, sexual orientations, economic circumstances and backgrounds, as well as those from disabled communities. No educational qualifications are needed to join our programmes.

If you require adjustments, including financial support, to take part in the recruitment process or to participate in the programme due to a disability, neurodiversity, caring responsibilities or any other reason, you will be able to provide details in the application form or contact us by phone or email to discuss further.

If you need any of the information about this programme in another format, please let us know at [Southwest@sse.org.uk](mailto:Southwest@sse.org.uk) or call us on **01803 435084**.

## **FAQs**

**Which geographical areas do you recognise as being part of the Somerset community?**

Specifically, the Somerset County Council area. This includes Sedgemoor, Mendip, South Somerset, West Somerset and Taunton.

**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 about other requirements?**

You must also ensure that your project is acting within the law and that it has relevant approvals, permissions, licenses, and carries out any criminal records checks, required by law.

If you are providing therapeutic counselling services, you must be able to demonstrate that you are properly trained and supervised, e.g. through membership of an appropriate body or that you are undertaking training.

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

Previous participants have included people who have criminal convictions, some of whom have used their experience 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 convictions which may affect your ability to run your project, including working with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable, you must let us know. We may undertake checks during the course of the application assessment.

**Can I apply if I have already been on an SSE programme?**

You are welcome to apply if you have previously had training and support from SSE. However, we will not be accepting applications from anyone who is currently on a programme with SSE that includes a grant.

**Can I apply if I am connected to the School for Social Entrepreneurs, Somerset Community Foundation, or to any of the funders of this programme?**

We cannot accept applications from people who are staff or trustees of SSE or Somerset Community Foundation.

If you have a close connection with SSE, Somerset County Council, Somerset Community Foundation, Smart Communities Ltd or Spark Somerset or any staff, or



trustees of these organisations, then please contact us before making an application.

### **Can more than one person from our project apply?**

We will only assess one application from one person from your project or organisation. Please decide who you would like to attend the programme and they should be the one to apply.

### **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 this 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
- managing your grant claims and payments
- matching you with a mentor
- monitoring your progress and the impact of the programme
- sharing and promoting your story and the story of your social enterprise
- other lawful reasons

We may share your information with our funders and partners, including the Department for Levelling Up, Somerset County Council, Somerset Community Foundation, Smart Communities Ltd, Spark Somerset and other programme funders and partners 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 in [our data protection policy](#).