

Women's Enterprise Growth Programme 2024

Notes for Applicants



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Introduction

The Women’s Enterprise Growth Programme is run by The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) with support from Youth Business International (YBI) and funded by Standard Chartered Foundation as part of Futuremakers by Standard Chartered.

SSE was founded in 1997 by Sir Michael Young. We work with around 1000 social enterprises a year, helping leaders to start, scale and strengthen organisations that make a positive difference. But we’re not a traditional school. Learning with SSE is inspiring, action-based and accessible - no textbooks.

The Women’s Enterprise Growth Programme will work with 20 young women (under 35 years old) who are leaders of social enterprises each year to give them the best possible chance of success, through access to support, learning and funding. The programme will equip you with the skills and networks to grow your enterprise, build sustainability and resilience and grow your income.

Learn from experts and leaders from the social enterprise sector who will share their stories. They’ll explain challenges they’ve overcome, so you can learn from their experiences.

Build a support network through peer-based learning with other leaders in social enterprise.

Be in the running to win one of four Match Trading™ awards of up to £7,000. More on Match Trading can be found below.

Take action to overcome challenges through Action Learning Sets, small group work with a trained facilitator, to support you to overcome barriers in your organisation's development.

Programme overview

Do you identify as female or non-binary, are you aged 18 -35 and running a purpose-led organisation in London or Liverpool?

Do you want help and support to grow your organisation and develop your personal and professional goals?

Eligibility

The Women's Enterprise Growth Programme is aimed at leaders of organisations living or working in London or Liverpool (i.e. the City of London and the 32 boroughs of London or the Liverpool City Region) which have been running for less than 5 years and which have an income of between £10,000 and £100,000.

We are offering a **learning programme**, supporting you to develop new skills and get support from other purpose-led organisations, plus the chance to take part in a pitching event to win a **Match Trading award of up to £7,000*** which will challenge you to increase your trading.

We want to hear from you if:

- You have been running your enterprise for less than 5 years
- You have an annual income of between £10,000 and £100,000
- You are creating social and/or green impact
- You are 18-35 years old (at the point of application)
- You are living or working in Greater London or the Liverpool City Region
- You have the right to work in the UK.

We welcome applications from everyone, and particularly from historically underserved groups, for example care leavers, ex-offenders, single parents and carers. As well as from those who can clearly evidence their social and environmental activities and are from Black and minoritised communities, disabled people, LGBTQIA+ people, including trans women and non-binary people, and/ or those working with communities with less privilege.

**Please see further eligibility requirements associated with receiving an award on page 5.*

Learning Programme Overview

The Women's Enterprise Growth Programme is designed for organisations who want to grow their enterprise by building sustainability and resilience, increasing customer acquisition, and growing their income.

The nine-month learning programme will be focused on the needs of participants and is designed to respond to the specific challenges which female entrepreneurs may face. The learning content will reflect this by:

- Covering topics which are relevant to women, for example leading with confidence, managing your work life balance, and navigating imposter syndrome
- Providing role models and stories of success via witness and expert sessions with young, female, entrepreneurs/leaders

The programme will also focus on supporting you to achieve organisational financial resilience through:

- Delivering learning sessions on key topics such identifying customers, pricing, marketing, and generating sales
- Offering financial literacy support
- Incorporating content from SSE's government funded Contract Readiness support programme to support participants to develop the ability to tender for private and public sector contracts

We will be recruiting for one cohort of 20 students. Our learning programme will include:

- **8 learning sessions** largely delivered online and in-person from July 2024 - March 2025
- **4 action learning sessions** - this is smaller group work with a trained facilitator, designed to support leaders to share successes and challenges and learn from one another. You can [find out more about Action Learning here](#)
- **Bespoke 1:1 business development and modelling support**
- **A pitching event** at the end of the programme where you will have the chance to win one of four **Match Trading Awards of up to £7,000**. More info on Match Trading can be found below
- **Access to a diverse network of social entrepreneurs**, who will support your plans and help you through tough times
- The opportunity to collaborate and build a relationship with SSE and its **wider fellows' network**
- **A graduation event** in March 2025 to celebrate your achievements

Programme dates and location

The learning will take place through in-person and online study days, and via the SSE Community, a virtual learning online platform. The SSE Community will enable participants to access information about the programme and wider resources, connect with the other members of the cohort, and attend live online sessions.

- The in-person study day will take place between 10am - 4pm and will be held in Liverpool (venue details will be shared nearer the time of delivery and travel and accommodation will be covered for students from London)
- All online study days will run from 9:30am - 1:30pm via Zoom
- Action Learning Set (ALS) sessions will be delivered in-person in small groups in your home city and will run from 9:30am - 1:30pm.

Please note, these are provisional dates which may be subject to change:

Session	Delivery	Time	Date
Introductory session	Online	Arranged individually	Throughout June
Study day 1	In-person - Liverpool	10:00 - 16:00	Tues 2 nd July
ALS 1	In-person	09:30 - 13:30	Tues 16 th July
Summer break			
Study day 2	Online	09:30 - 13:30	Thurs 12 th Sept
ALS 2	In-person	09:30 - 13:30	W/c 30 th Sept
Study day 3	Online	09:30 - 13:30	Thurs 10 th Oct
Study day 4	Online	09:30 - 13:30	Tues 12 th Nov
Mid-point 1:1	Online	Arranged individually	Throughout Nov
ALS 3	In-person	09:30 - 13:30	w/c 25 th Nov
Study day 5	Online	09:30 - 13:30	Tues 10 th Dec
Winter break			
ALS 4	In-person	09:30 - 13:30	w/c 6 th Jan
Study day 6	Online	09:30 - 13:30	Thurs 23 rd Jan
Study day 7	Online	09:30 - 13:30	Tues 11 th Feb
Study day 8	Online	09:30 - 13:30	Thurs 6 th March
Graduation and pitching event x 2	In-person, held in both Liverpool and London	10:00 - 16:00	London: w/c 17 th March 2025 Liverpool: w/c 24 th March 2025

Match Trading Award



Your organisation will also have the opportunity to pitch for one of four **Match Trading™ Awards** at the two celebration events held at the end of the programme (one in London and one in Liverpool)*. A pitching panel will award two grant awards in each location:

- A first prize of a grant award of up to £7000
- A runner up prize of a grant award of up to £5,000.

With Match Trading grants, an organisation can draw down the full grant if it can at least match the amount of grant pound for pound with actual growth in trading income. The Match Trading grant is designed to challenge you to grow your trading income and help reduce traditional grant dependency. Match Trading has been proven to increase income from trading and boost resilience.

The successful social enterprises receiving awards will receive 20% of the award upfront. They will then work with an SSE Grant Manager over the 12 months following the graduation and pitching event to draw down the remaining amount based on their increased traded/earned income against the pre-award 'baseline year'.

Your grant can be used flexibly, helping you to put your learning into practice by developing your trading and purpose-led enterprise. [Visit the Match Trading website for more details.](#)

Further eligibility requirements

To be eligible to receive an award, your organisation must comply with the following eligibility requirements associated with receiving a grant at the time that the awards are granted (March 2025)*:

- **Your social enterprise must be active, have a legal structure and a governing document.** You may be a registered charity, a Community Benefit Society (CBS) or a Community Interest Company (CIC). We can also accept other companies, co-operative societies or unincorporated associations, if they have certain clauses in the governing document, specifically:
 - a) a social purpose,

- b) a restriction on distribution of profits, which means that 51% or more of all of profits are returned for social purposes and,
- c) an asset lock or winding up clause which means that if the social enterprise is wound up, its remaining assets go to a charity, CIC or other asset locked body.
- **Bank Account:** You must have a bank account in the legal name of your social enterprise managed by at least two unrelated people who release payments, OR an account where the participant has sole control.

*If you don't have this legal structure already, and you think it might be right for you, we can help you with putting this in place as part of the programme. As long as you have this in place by the time of the pitching event or are working towards it, you will be eligible to pitch for the award.

What can I spend my grant on?

Our intention is to be flexible as possible about how you spend the grant, but it must be used to support your learning and to put that learning into practice through developing your social enterprise.

Do spend your grant on...	Don't spend your grant on...
Your salary or staff salaries to support the development of your social enterprise.	Assets over £1500 in value, including refurbishment of buildings or purchase of vehicles unless agreed with us.
Developing products or services for communities in Greater London or Liverpool.	Work that has taken place before the grant was awarded.
Marketing and publicity: e.g. developing a website to support your trading - which in turn will support your work within Greater London or Liverpool.	Costs associated with the application or interview.
Travel and subsistence costs	Academic qualifications.
Supplementary training for yourself or others, directly relevant to your venture.	
Other costs that you can show are relevant to developing your social enterprise or putting your learning into practice.	

What support will I receive?

Each successful participant receiving an award will be assigned a grant manager who will work with them throughout the 12 months following the end of the learning programme, ensuring they have the correct paperwork and procedures in place to be able to draw down the full award.

Grant managers work hand-in-hand with social entrepreneurs in a coaching style, supporting them to understand, separate and report on their different income streams every quarter. Grant managers also work closely with the programme delivery team to ensure that we can tailor programme content to support with grant and financial management where needed.

Making an application

You must apply **online** by **12 noon, Monday 29th April 2024**

[Women's Enterprise Growth Programme The School for Social Entrepreneurs \(the-sse.org\)](https://www.the-sse.org)

You will need to provide:

- A copy of your most recent accounts, if you have them
- Your constitution if your organisation is unincorporated

Interview - If you are shortlisted, we will invite the lead applicant for an information session and an online interview in **late May - early June**.

Decision - We aim to make a final decision on places for the programme by early June and you will be informed as soon as possible. The programme starts at the beginning of July. (see dates above).

Support with applying

Questions: A downloadable set of application questions can be found [on the programme page](#). These questions are for your reference, you will need to apply using the online form. It is possible to upload voice recordings for the longer text questions if you prefer.

Information sessions: To find out more about the programme, help you understand the criteria and how to apply.

Monday 15th April, 12pm: [Register here](#)

Thursday 25th April, 5:30pm: [Register here](#)

Please note that you will need to register using the links above in order to receive an email with the meeting details including the link to join.

Helpdesk: Ask questions and get advice on completing your application. Contact Kate Campbell at kate.campbell@sse.org.uk

One-to-one support: If you have difficulty filling in forms because of dyslexia, language or disability, or need one-to-one advice about applying, we have a limited number of one-to-one sessions available. Please contact the helpdesk if you need to access these.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I apply if my organisation is based outside of Greater London or Liverpool?

As long as you meet the other eligibility requirements, you can apply as long as the majority of your work takes place in London or Liverpool, or the majority of your beneficiaries are based in these regions.

2. What do we mean by a leader of the enterprise?

A leader may be the founder, chair, CEO, or senior manager, who holds the vision for the enterprise, is responsible for the direction that the enterprise will take, and is able to make strategic decisions.

3. Can I apply if I have been on an SSE programme before or am currently on an SSE programme?

You can apply if:

- You have attended previous SSE programmes.
- You have applied to SSE before and were unsuccessful.
- You are attending a short course or programme which lasts less than 6 months.
- You are on a current SSE programme which lasts more than 6 months, and ends before June 2024.

4. Can I apply if my social enterprise has people that are connected to SSE or the funder?

If your social enterprise is run by people who regularly work for or are trustees of SSE, or the General London Authority or have a close financial or family connection with staff or trustees, please contact us before making an application to ensure that there is no conflict of interest.

5. Can I apply if I don't meet the further eligibility requirements associated with receiving a Match Trading Award?

We welcome applications from anyone who meets the basic eligibility requirements. You will be able to participate fully in the nine-month learning programme and will get as much out of this as anyone running a social or green enterprise. If during the time period of the learning programme, you put in place the further eligibility requirements within your enterprise structure, you will be eligible to receive an award.

6. What if I have particular needs, which may prevent me from fully taking part in the learning programme?

We are keen to enable people with disabilities and other access issues, to join our programmes. There is a separate small fund held by SSE to enable students who have particular needs to access the programme. This will be negotiated individually with participants. If you have specific needs and are concerned about this, please contact us to discuss.

7. What happens if my project will work with children under 18 or vulnerable adults?

You will be required to provide a Safeguarding Policy and may need enhanced DBS checks for staff and volunteers.

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8. How does Match Trading work?

[Visit the Match Trading website for more details.](#)

9. 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 organisation, including working with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable, you must let us know, as we may undertake checks during the application assessment.

Data protection

SSE has a Privacy Policy which is available [here](#). SSE also has a [Data Protection Policy](#). We are committed to protecting your personal information and acting in accordance with your rights under the Data Protection Act 1998. We may need to share your information in order to undertake assessment of your application, statistical analysis, research and monitoring, compliance and regulatory reporting and fraud prevention. We may share your information

- with our funders
- with our agents or subcontractors for operational reasons
- with other agencies in order to assess your application
- with others for the purpose of compliance and regulatory reporting and to confirm your identity for money laundering purposes and fraud prevention
- if compelled to do so by law.

Equal Opportunities

SSE is committed to equal opportunities. We expect our staff, participants and grant recipients to comply with equal opportunities in any activities supported by SSE.

At the end of the application form we ask for you to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form about the person applying for this programme.

This will be used for statistical purposes and it will not form part of your application assessment. If you do not wish to provide the details requested, you have the option to opt out from providing this information.

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of the running of the programme, SSE has a complaints procedure which is available [here](#).