

Social Impact Report

2020/2021



Circle Scotland CIC
Company No.
SC515218

Contents

Part 1: Welcome	Page 3
Part 2: Introduction	Page 4
Part 3: Covid	Page 5
Part 4: Our Year at a Glance	Page 6
Part 5: Our Growth	Pages 7-8
Part 6: Our Team	Pages 9-12
Part 7: Governance	Pages 13-14
Part 8: Funding	Page 15
Part 9: Our Core Activities	
The Community	Pages 16-23
The Academy	Pages 24-26
The Consultancy	Pages 27-30
Part 10: Our Social Impact	Page 31
Pioneering	Page 32
Inclusion	Page 33
Professionalism	Page 34
Fairness	Page 35
Empowerment	Page 36
Teamwork	Page 37
Part 11: Acknowledgements	Page 38



Donald McPherson
Chair

I'm delighted to present The Circle's 2020-2021 social impact report. Last year's report was overshadowed by the impact of Covid-19 but, while Covid continues to influence many aspects of our daily lives, we have seen how resilient communities can be when faced with extreme challenges. At The Circle, we have continued to provide a safe and welcoming environment for our clients, supporting them as they, in turn, support the communities which we serve.

At the same time, we have also looked to develop and expand the services we offer – we were excited to take on a second site in Easterhouse, Glasgow, with the support and encouragement of Glasgow City Council. We welcome funding from the Scottish Government for The Academy that will enable us to extend the reach of this innovative programme for the next generation of social entrepreneurs.

None of this could have been achieved without our remarkable team, led by Kirsty. Time after time they have risen to unexpected challenges and I would like to thank each and every one of them for everything they have done during the year – the achievements listed in this report are all down to their efforts.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board members whose support and guidance has helped us to chart our course in these challenging times.

Welcome



Kirsty Thomson
Founder & CEO

The Circle team have shown tremendous resilience and determination during this very challenging year. Our fourth social impact report really demonstrates the growth of our services and team. These have been challenging times for everyone, and I am delighted with the progress we have made over the past year.

It has also become very clear that now more than ever there is a need for our 'More Than Profit' approach. Business is changing and functioning for profit alone is no longer enough. Driven by consumer demand, and the non-negotiable need to address sustainability, companies are committing to outcomes beyond profit.

Concurrently, growing uncertainty around funding means third sector organisations need to radically adapt; adopting business models that encompass multiple income streams, and embracing profit. We believe that business leaders will need to future-proof their approach, placing equal value on income and impact.

I would like to thank our Staff, Board of Directors, Supporters, Tenants, Clients, and Funders for their support in helping us achieve this impact across Scotland and beyond.



More Than Profit

Organisations or individuals operating under any legal structure that have an aim to create positive social or environmental impact through ensuring sustainable, reliable, and diverse income streams.

Our Values

and how our social impact is measured

FAIRNESS
TEAMWORK
PROFESSIONALISM
PIONEERING
EMPOWERMENT
INCLUSION

Introduction

The Circle is an award-winning 'More Than Profit' social enterprise operating in Dundee and Glasgow. It was founded to create and contribute to a vibrant and sustainable community. The Circle supports businesses to make a difference to communities by providing affordable consultancy, training and workspaces.

We provide affordable offices and community spaces, as well as meeting and event spaces. We provide advice, support and training in all areas of business, including accessing funding, marketing, developing an entrepreneurial mindset, governance, and strategic planning. We run The Circle Academy, a 12-week online training programme focused on developing skills and knowledge in social entrepreneurship.

The Circle provides pathways to the third sector through volunteering, work experience, student placements and internships and by bringing organisations together, we are promoting collaboration and fostering social innovation across the country.

We are proud to be a Living Wage employer that has implemented the four-day work week, giving each member of staff a 'rest day', while maintaining their rate of pay.

COVID-19

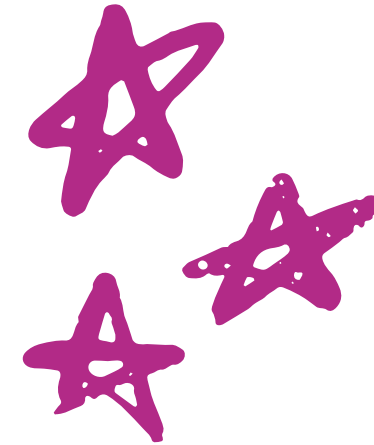
Covid-19 has continued to have a profound impact on our operations, our tenants, and our team. As a result, we have evolved as an organisation and adapted to new challenges brought about by physical distancing measures. We have conducted robust risk assessments allowing our team to continue providing a safe, clean physical space for our clients, many of whom fall into vulnerable groups.

The health, safety and wellbeing of our team and clients is paramount. Several members of our own team found exclusively home working to be difficult which had a negative effect on mental health. For this reason, we welcomed our team back to the office in May, where we are fortunate to have enough space for physical distancing alongside a solid cleaning schedule.

Our Year at a Glance



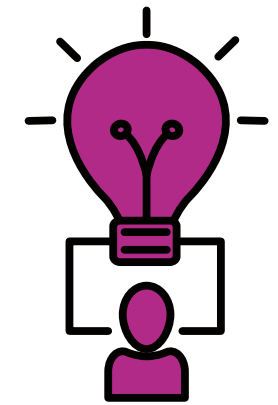
30 candidates to complete The Academy



100 Circle Superstars packs distributed



The Academy attracted global candidates



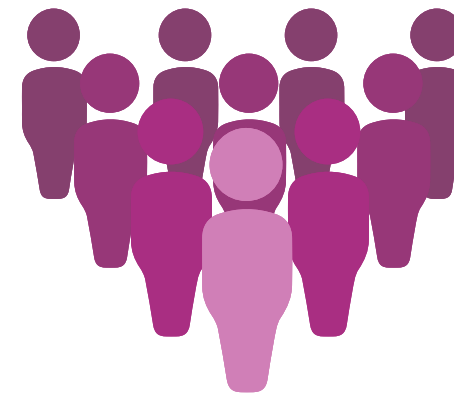
10 new tenants



31 partners that helped to deliver 3 social projects



Shortlisted for 5 national awards



14 members of staff



The Circle, Staffa Place

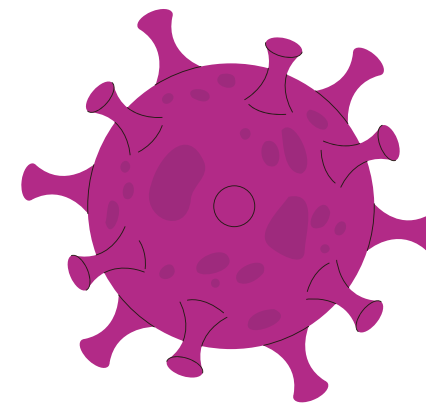
The Circle, Easterhouse



22 socially led organisations used The Circle to carry out their community projects



£307,000 funding secured



Our tenants continued to operate due to safety measures put in place

Easterhouse, Glasgow

It has always been the vision of The Circle to be present in many places across Scotland, the UK and internationally. Discussions began in 2019 to bring The Circle to Glasgow and Easterhouse was selected as the perfect location. The Circle's business model works best when embedded in the communities we support as opposed to being based in a busy city centre location. Those who will benefit from the venture will primarily be people who live in, work in, and visit these areas. They will benefit from access to the facilities and services provided at the venue as well as from the re-investment of any surpluses generated into further local initiatives.

“We’ve always wanted to run hubs in multiple locations and now, after operating in Dundee for almost five years we’re confident that we have created a model we can replicate. We’re very excited for this next step in our development and to expand our community.”

Kirsty Thomson, Founder & CEO The Circle

The new hub, like the existing Dundee space, offers a range of affordable office space as well as meeting and event spaces for hire and space for community events. Supporting the growth and sustainability of a range of organisations and encouraging collaboration for the benefit of the organisations, the local economy, and the wider community.



connections made with local organisations



Building improvements: recycling, 24hr access, improved facilities



3 members of staff

Easterhouse Tenants so far...



"At this early stage, there is already measurable progress in the creation of local jobs and the council sees the partnership with The Circle as a long-term commitment that will tackle poverty, improve community health and deliver inclusive economic growth.

The council is pleased that The Circle has chosen Glasgow as its first expansion out of Dundee. We believe The Circle's experience, drive and commitment will see the building realise its full potential supporting the people of Easterhouse and beyond."

David Plizga
Glasgow City Council.

The Space for Growth initiative has been developed to support start-up businesses, social enterprises, creative organisations and community groups to ensure they have every opportunity to grow and flourish in the city. In the North-East, the council has partnered with The Circle, resulting in the group taking over a former substantial business centre, supporting access to suitable space and facilities for such creative organisations.

A collaborative Shared Outcomes approach has resulted in a joint agreement to develop the property as a vibrant and enterprising Hub, enabling a wide range of opportunities to be made available to the local community. This collaboration is supported through the council providing development funding to enhance the facility to meet the needs of the organisations who wish to relocate to The Circle.



Team Scotland

Our team has grown over the past year, and we now have a strong team of 14 across both sites in Dundee and Glasgow. We have supported employees through furlough, through the Kickstart scheme as well as Community Jobs Scotland.

We now operate three distinct teams. Team Scotland, Team Dundee and Team Glasgow.

The Circle, Staffa Place



Kirsty Thomson
Founder & CEO



Paul Hastie
General Manager



Ruth Finnan
Financial Controller



Jenny McCarthy
Academy Manager



Kate Pickering
Marketing & Communications



Bradley Abbott
Finance Assistant

The Circle, Easterhouse

Team Dundee

Team Dundee looks after our building, tenants and guests at Staffa Place, Dundee.

The Circle, Staffa Place



Charli Perkins
Office Coordinator



Jennifer Gall
Front of House



Michael Ratcliffe
Facilities Operative



Michael Craig
Facilities Assistant



Brandon Bowman
Facilities Assistant

Team Glasgow

As part of our expansion into Glasgow, we have taken on a team of three locals to help with our growth. We have hired through schemes made available to us, including Kickstart and Community Jobs Scotland.



Holly Scanlan
Receptionist

My name is Holly, I'm 19 years old and I'm a receptionist for The Circle team in Glasgow. I was born in Glasgow and was brought up in Easterhouse. I studied Social Sciences at college and completed a modern apprenticeship before joining The Circle team.

Tomasz Fecinski-Gawel
Centre Manager

I am the oldest member of Team Glasgow. I'm originally from Poland but have lived in the UK for 16 years. I like to be challenged every day and my head is always full of ideas. I like to spend time actively with my family and my favourite sport is golf. My favourite quote which motivates me every day is "an optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty" by Winston Churchill.



Jack Joyce
Facilities Assistant

I'm the youngest member of the team and I've just turned 18. I am Glasgow born and bred and grew up in Craighend. I am the facilities assistant for Team Glasgow, I love country music, I have two huskies and a staffy and family means the world to me.

The Circle, Easterhouse



Retirement

In June 2021, our longest-standing employee, Christina Thomson and volunteer, Alex Thomson decided to retire. Christine was our facilities supervisor and Alex was our volunteer caretaker. They were both instrumental in the early days and throughout the development of The Circle. They were always there to help Kirsty and the team and step in when necessary to ensure weekends were covered, leaks were sorted, kitchens were plumbed in and so much more.

“We absolutely would not have coped without the support of Christina and Alex and cannot thank them enough for supporting us and being such valuable members of the team. Sure they won't be strangers.”

Kirsty Thomson, Founder & CEO The Circle

Our Board

The Circle is a Community Interest Company and is governed by a Board of Non-Executive Directors and Chair.

The Circle, Staffa Place



Donald McPherson
Chair



Mary Sneddon
Non-Executive Director



Ron Smith
Non-Executive Director



Natalie Lafferty
Non-Executive Director



Ann Gillies
Non-Executive Director



Campbell Archibald
Non-Executive Director



Caroline Lees
Non-Executive Director

The Circle, Easterhouse

Governance

The Circle said goodbye to Non-Executive Director, Pete Baillie, after 4 years with the organisation. Pete is Divisional R&D Portfolio Manager at WL Gore and deals with complex high-frequency electronics in the world of aerospace. During his tenure on the Board, he worked with The Circle team on the development of its operational strategy and supported individual members of the team, providing insights from his years of experience in leadership roles.

The Circle welcomed two new Non-Executive Directors.

The Board meets regularly during the year and receives financial and operational reports to allow it to measure The Circle's progress against its objectives. The Board also receives regular updates from management on new initiatives.

As we go through a stage of rapid growth, we are grateful to the Board for their support and guidance as they provide vital input as we look to the future.



Campbell Archibald
Non-Executive Director

As a proud Dundonian, working life started as a Gas Turbine Apprentice with GTC Gas Turbines in their Drumgeith facility as a Gas Turbine Fitter.

Moving to Aberdeen some years later I enjoyed gaining further experiences, skills, training and responsibilities while climbing the ranks with several global businesses before starting Alba Power in 2000.

From a standing start it was a joy to grow the business, now a Sulzer company, and the many clients and colleague relationships along the way and the experience and education this allowed.

With Nadine, the kids and Maple the dog we enjoy all the amazing things we can jointly find locally, as well as further afield in our family Motorhome.

I am keen to bring these many experiences to assist Dundee and the community, I hope I can assist The Circle and the many aspirations the team strive for.



Caroline Lees
Non-Executive Director

I have 30 years of experience as a communications specialist, including 20 years working as a journalist in national newspapers, in the UK and as a foreign correspondent. Most recently I have worked as a communications consultant for The Marshall Institute for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy, at the London School of Economics, and as Head of Communications at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. I have also given workshops in communications skills at London Business School.

My work in the voluntary sector – as an advocate and in various mentoring roles – combined with the experience of the social enterprise sector, led me to appreciate the excellent, ground-breaking work of The Circle and its 'More than Profit' approach to business. I am honoured to have the opportunity to work with The Circle, particularly at this exciting and challenging time in its development.

Funding

We are a 'More Than Profit' organisation meaning that we generate much of our income through trading activities and any profits made are invested back into the business. Our income is based on room hire, office rental and consultancy work.

With our Community Interest Company structure, we are able to access grant funding to carry out some of our projects.

In the past 12 months, we have secured over £307,000 in funding. This has allowed us to sustain our activities and provide new opportunities and projects.

We are grateful to these organisations for their support this year.



Mathew Trust



Foundation Scotland

Scotland's Community Foundation



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

George McLean Trust



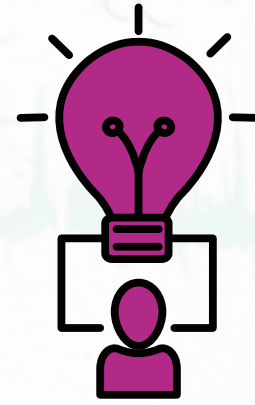
Lynne Henderson

The Community

The Circle is a hub for charities, social enterprises, commercial organisations, creatives, community groups, individuals, and socially aware businesses.

We provide affordable offices and community spaces, as well as meeting and event spaces. A range of charities, social enterprises, commercial and socially aware businesses are based at The Circle's Dundee and Glasgow spaces.

These groups are helping us to build a diverse community, doing great work across Scotland.



10 new tenants
across both sites



4 collaborative projects
between 6 tenants



Our corner shop is now
open for tenants in
Dundee, Staffa Place



5 new tenants in
Easterhouse, Glasgow



17 external
organisations
booked meeting
rooms at The Circle



5 tenants expanded their
business and moved into
larger premises within The
Circle, Staffa Place



Staffa Place Dundee

The Circle, Staffa Place, Dundee is full to the brim with incredible organisations doing good things in the world. From a rebellious, sustainable clothing brand, services for children, young people, and adults with support needs, those aiming to alleviate funeral poverty in the local community and a community craft workshop to tackle those in recovery.



To guarantee safety for The Circle team and tenants, we did not open our room bookings in Dundee until 10th of May 2021. We restarted our hot drinks service in August 2021. Before opening to the public, we completed risk assessments and additional hygiene routines.

Tenants were still able to take advantage of our additional spaces to meet at a social distance which may have been impossible in their offices.

All our tenants have the benefit of one free room booking a month included in their monthly rent and a discounted booking rate outwith the days allowance.

"Staff were extremely helpful and friendly. Thank you."

Argenta Global, September 2021

Wilde Mode

Founder Debz Breen, Tenant since February 2021

I moved into The Circle in February 2021 after struggling to find something suitable for my growing brand. Since then, Wilde Mode has gone from strength to strength and we quickly outgrew our initial space. We are an award-winning, sustainable, zero waste, slow fashion brand. We have 5 members of staff, we are a DHL fashion finalist, Dundee Business Awards finalist, we were nominated for a Business Women Scotland, Sustainable Brand award, we were the winner of the NatWest/Getty Images, Be the Role Model Award and we have planted 4138 trees through the sales we have made so far! And that's just in 2021!

The Circle have been nothing but accommodating. They have provided business advice, are always open to feedback and help when I need anything. The facilities team are great and the whole vibe is super friendly. Without The Circle, I would have had to stop production during COVID, they have provided me with a secure and safe environment to continue to work.

In 2022, I hope to be in an even bigger space within The Circle and continue to grow my brand, become even more carbon-neutral, inclusive and plant more trees.

"Having a space at The Circle has allowed me to manufacture and grow my business, incredibly, sales are up by 983%"



www.wildemode.com

Underground Cinema Club

Founder Ian Bustard, Tenant since June 2019

I run Underground Cinema Club, a production company. I have only been in Dundee for a few years and The Circle has given me a great base from which to build my business. The past year has been a very exciting one for the company. We have started working with several new clients and have made over fifty films for a variety of organisations. This work is keeping the company going whilst we are developing several projects aimed at television broadcast and cinema release.

It was through meeting the Kickstart employees at The Circle that I had the idea of bringing some Kickstarts into my organisation. The Circle staff are always really supportive and gave great advice about how to move forward with such things. We then moved into bigger premises within The Circle to deal with this growth.

Since coming to The Circle I have moved room three times with the room size increasing considerably every time. It's a perfect place for me to grow my business.

"The dream of Underground Cinema Club is to establish itself as a company that produces exciting original work and tells stories from this part of the World. The Circle is a great place for me to be around such stories, meet inspiring people and be in touch with what is going on in Dundee and Angus."



UNDERGROUND
cinema club

www.undergroundcinemaclub.org

Uppertunity

Founder Daniëlle Gaffney Du Plooy, Tenant since September 2017

Uppertunity started in 2015, running creative groups for people with additional needs within community centres.

The Circle gave us the opportunity to figure out what we not only wanted but needed. By having a permanent space and a supportive community around us, we were able to develop our vision and make them a reality. We were able to develop our garden project, offer more groups, provide more support and offer events.

Since moving in, we've made so many connections that have helped us grow. And the space has been perfect for us in our journey. We've just taken on another space within The Circle and the support from The Circle team has been unmeasurable. If they've not been able to support us in a direct way, they've been able to direct us to someone who can support us. And not only that, having the genuine caring vested interest in us from The Circle has meant the world.

“The Circle itself has been so grounding for us, it’s given us that safe space for us to explore and grow with extra support.”



www.uppertunity.org.uk

What our tenants say about us...



"We create an environment where our customers, our team and our visitors experience are working together for the benefit of all."

Kirsty Thomson
Founder & CEO The Circle

Eddie Baines

"The one thing with The Circle, it has a genuine community feel"

Eddie didn't gain many grades at school, he has battled with depression and addiction, he was diagnosed with Dyslexia and Dyscalculia but gained a degree in Engineering and Renewables and Criminology. He set up Kirkton Community Larder and is now working for the National Lottery Community Fund and has an office at The Circle.

He has been involved in The Circle for many years, he first started volunteering as a receptionist and helping us with odd jobs around the building. He then joined The Circle Academy where he learned the skills to strengthen his existing business.

"It taught me that I had done everything with the Kirkton Community Larder wrong. I had passion but no business sense at all.



www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

The academy team were great, and they taught me loads which I implemented and took the larder from £20 out of my back pocket, to a thriving new charity with two shops and a great future helping the Strathmartine community. Over covid, thanks to the lessons taught, I was able to keep it going and raise nearly £60,000.

Now I am a tenant at The Circle, working for The National Lottery Community Fund and I love being back here as it's a great, warm, friendly community and the staff are amazing. It's great to be working in a place that is so diverse and where better to network and keep on top of the amazing things in Dundee than the place that gave me so much in the beginning.

I feel I have come full circle."

[Read the full inspiring story on our blog](#)

The Academy

The Academy is a 12 week online, accredited, practical and educational social entrepreneur training programme for individuals and organisations interested in running a 'More Than Profit' business.

The programme is open to anyone who wants to create positive, social or environmental change, in a sustainable and commercially viable way.



Attracted global candidates



Partnered with Eden Project



Secured funding from The Scottish Government

“Genuinely the first thing I’ve done like this that actually feels helpful! I’ve done so many similar things and they all felt like cookie-cutter versions of each other.”

Gillian Ferguson, Twisted Empire Bakes, Academy candidate



30 candidates joined the programme



Appointed a new Academy Manager

[Read our interview on our blog](#)



Worked with 20 external expert speakers

Funding

In August of 2021 we were awarded a grant from The Scottish Government to allow us to fund 25 places on the fifth cohort of The Circle Academy to contribute to 3 key areas of the Social Enterprise Action Plan:

1. Developing an entrepreneurial mindset and behaviour
2. Funding and Finance
3. Engaging Young People in Social Enterprise

These funded places were targeted at these specific groups:

- People from, or working in, rural communities
- People whose business is in the environmental space
- Young people under 30

As a result of this funding, we've reached more candidates than ever and have a wider geographical spread, with interest from candidates internationally. Because of this, we have been able to expand the criteria for funded spaces to include international candidates moving forward.



eden project

Eden Project

The Eden Project, an educational charity and social enterprise which works to build relationships between people and the natural world are preparing to open a new project in Dundee, in 2024. Its centre in Cornwall was established in 2001 and throughout 2021 they have been working on bringing Eden Projects across the world, including Dundee.

"Eden Project Dundee will be a transformative project for the Scottish city, drawing on its rich history and playing an important role in the regeneration of the Dundee waterfront."

Eden Project

The Circle has an established relationship with Eden Project where we hosted an Eden Project Big Lunch event, and we were delighted to offer candidates on the fifth cohort (2021) of the Academy a free place on Eden Project's AimHi Climate Course. The partnership will continue into 2022 and beyond.

Hardkore Inc.

Mike Fletcher - Cohort 4 2021

Mike was a former professional wrestler for 11 years until a neck injury forced him to retire and when redundancy hit during the pandemic, Mike had time to pursue a passion. Mike set up HardKore Inc. with a desire to make a sustainable clothing brand that reflected his love for combat sport while creating a positive impact on the environment and people alike.

HardKore Inc. is a Scottish, Sustainable, Streetwear and Sportswear brand based out of Dundee, Scotland. They sell a wide range of products that are made using ethical processes and sustainable, recyclable materials. HardKore Inc. is part of the Circular Economy through the processes and supply chain it uses.



www.hardkore-inc.com

"The Circle Academy literally, is one of the best moves I've made in my life. Both personally and professionally, it helped me mould my idea into a reality. I cannot thank Kirsty, Ruth and Jenny enough for how they aided and educated me in my journey.

I urge anyone with an idea, no matter how big or small to contact The Academy."

Mike Fletcher - Cohort 4 2021



The Consultancy

The Consultancy offers advice and support on a range of topics, from determining the legal structure of your organisation to writing grant applications for all types of businesses. We have supported organisations and individuals at all stages, both in the UK and internationally, including clients in Sweden, Switzerland and Canada.

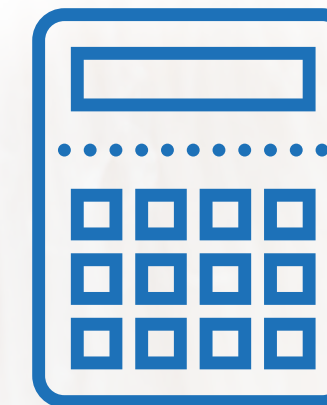
Our team have over 50 years of combined experience working with the third sector and with commercial organisations. They bring a broad range of practical knowledge and skills to the consultancy service.



5 organisations supported by The Consultancy



Finance Assistant hired to support Financial Controller



11 Payroll/Bookkeeping clients

"Working in partnership with The Circle has allowed UnLtd to support social entrepreneurs in Dundee who we otherwise wouldn't have found."

Eileen Inglis, Award Manager UnLtd



£80,000 distributed to Dundee social entrepreneurs in partnership with UnLtd



Assisted tenants with furlough claims



Partnered with UnLtd to assist social entrepreneurs in Dundee

Violet Community Trust

The Violet Community Trust is a Charitable Organisation operating from Glenesk Park, home of Dundee Violet JFC. The trust aims to provide opportunities for the local community to get involved in life changing programmes and experiences.

www.facebook.com/violetcommunitytrust

"The passion and person-centred approach of Kirsty and her team has been invaluable in helping us overcome any challenges and difficulties we have experienced."

"The Circle consultancy team has been integral in helping us – Violet Community Trust (VCT) set up and become a registered SCIO. Kirsty and her team have guided and advised us throughout every step of the process in a proactive and supportive manner.

Thanks to the consultancy team, we have, from the onset, been able to focus on the overarching goals/aims of the community trust; this has helped us to clearly communicate our vision to agencies and services, securing them to work in partnership to implement our vision.

Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, The Circle's consultancy team have been ever-present in supporting us to secure funding (£5000 from UnLtd) and helping us secure a Community Learning and Development Student on placement, supporting their learning and development within this."

Violet Community Trust

Marco Notarangelo, Violet Community Trust

UnLtd

UnLtd finds social entrepreneurs with bold solutions to today's challenges. Through funding and support, they help them to realise their potential and create lasting change.

A total of £80,000 has been distributed to Dundee social entrepreneurs over the past four years. UnLtd's Resilient Communities Programme was funded through the People's Postcode Lottery. This project supported and worked with social entrepreneurs to build resilient and enterprising communities in areas throughout the UK.

This funded project successfully concluded in 2021 however our relationship with UnLtd will continue.



Jillian Elizabeth - UnLtd Awardee
www.thelittlegreenlarder.com

“Working in partnership with The Circle has allowed UnLtd to support social entrepreneurs in Dundee who we otherwise wouldn't have found. The partnership has given us access to physical space where together we've run a range of successful events and has opened wide-ranging new networks for UnLtd in Dundee across the business and creative industries and the third sector.”

Eileen Inglis, Award Manager UnLtd



www.unltd.org.uk

“UnLtd will continue working closely with The Circle and social entrepreneurs in Dundee.”

“Supporting our payroll provides both myself and our Trustees at Funeral Link with real reassurance that this is always carried out professionally and if we ever have any queries then Ruth is so approachable and knowledgeable.”

Linda Sterry, Funeral Link, The Circle tenant



Finance Consultancy

Our finance team can handle every aspect of payroll administration and they design the systems to meet clients' needs at an affordable price. Our team are currently working with 11 organisations, including 3 of our tenants. With the addition of our Finance Assistant, Bradley, we have now been able to offer this as an external consultancy service.

“Making sure your staff are paid on time and accurately is a key priority for any organisation. DIAS have had the support from the Circle to calculate and process their wages since 2019.”

Mary Sneddon, DIAS, The Circle tenant

Our Social Impact

We provide an inclusive, creative, social and enterprising hub for the whole community.

Although our services are still being impacted by Covid-19 we have pivoted and are experiencing a period of growth within the organisation. Supporting the community is at the core of what we do and, with every step, we make within the business. This is demonstrated through our values explained in the report.



We measure our social impact by our core values

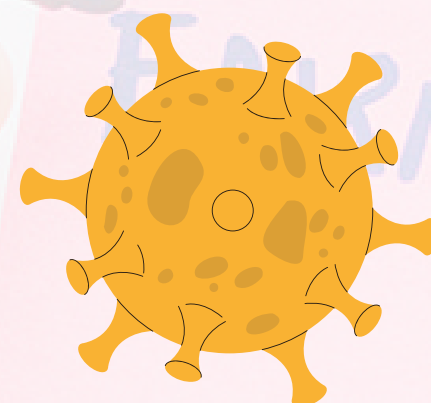


Fairness

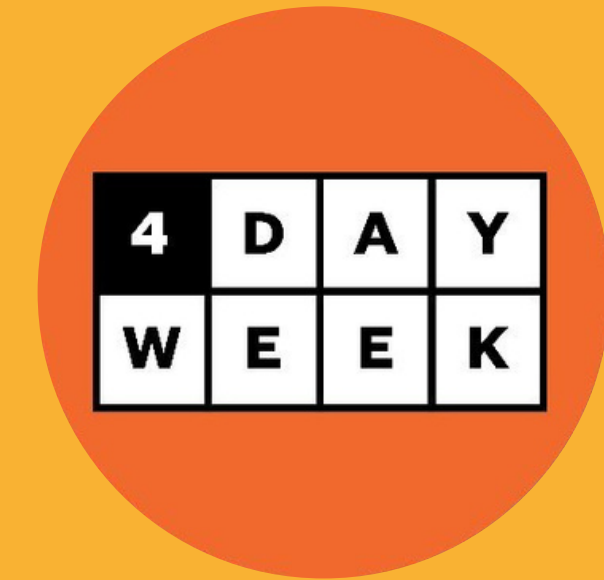
We commit to doing what we say we will do as we work to redress the imbalance of society.



Despite the challenges, The Circle has continued to grow its operations including opening our second site. Our team has grown and we have retained staff.



We made it possible for our tenants to access their workspaces and continue to operate. From May 2021 Dundee was made fully operational.



The 4-day week was introduced to improve the wellbeing of our team, in turn, increasing productivity. The working patterns of the team have been altered a few times to get this right but as we exit our first year's trial of this, we can honestly say we have seen an improvement in the health and work-life balance of staff with no loss of productivity or pay.

Teamwork

We aspire to have an inclusive organisation where collective strengths overcome individual weaknesses and show that our pioneering approach is best attained by many people working as a highly effective team.



We have encouraged members of the team to go on a lunchtime dog walk to step away from the computer and get some fresh air. It's been great for the team's well-being and productivity.



We now operate three distinct teams. Team Scotland, Team Dundee and Team Glasgow. This has allowed the whole team to have a bigger, local as well as national impact.



The growing team continues to retain great culture and remains an incredibly supportive work environment, fostering great teamwork.



We work together as a team to combine our skills with various departments contributing to the overall funding applications.



Kirsty worked with Career Ready and took an intern from the local high school, Harris Academy.

“Through Career Ready I was able to have an internship at The Circle, which was honestly an amazing experience as it helped me develop and gain so many skills that I will need to thrive in work in the future. I also met amazing people who showed me what a good and friendly work atmosphere looks like. I first wanted to join Career Ready because I thought it was a great way to help me build my confidence. Now I am a part of Career Ready's first youth advisory board and get to work with other young people across the UK to help Career ready, this wouldn't have been possible without Kirsty or the internship at The Circle.”

Beth Ward, Career Ready Intern

Professionalism

We should be identified as different within our sector, showing professionalism in all our interactions.



This year we accessed the Flexible Workforce Development Fund partnered with the Open University. The funding allowed The Circle to access £5,000 of external training and education. Learning highlights included Managing for Sustainability, Developing Your Leadership Style and New Managers' Toolkit.



The Circle's new website, funded by the Scottish Government's DigitalBoost Development Grant, enables users to view and book our spaces for the first time.

We employed local businesses including filmmaker Dylan Drummond, designers Avian Studio; photographer, Yulia Skulskikh and web developers Blue2.



By investing in staff upskilling, we can be sure to have a workforce better prepared to deal with future uncertainties and business challenges. Facilitating the professional development of our team remains a key factor of our approach to professionalism.

Paul Hastie, our General Manager completed a postgraduate master's module in Managing for Sustainability

Kirsty received a scholarship to attend Oxford University and take part in the pioneering Impact investing programme

The Scale-Up programme resumed following a break due to the pandemic and Kirsty continued her learning.

Pioneering

We want to do things differently and do more than just exist, avoiding the 'because it has always been done that way' attitude.



Now that The Academy is run solely online, we're able to promote our 'More Than Profit' approach to a much wider array of candidates from a larger geographical spread.

We are reaching more social entrepreneurs than ever from across Scotland and into Asia and Africa.



We have now rolled out the 4 day-week model across both of our sites and learning from what works well and opportunities to improve.

To be pioneering, we need to try new ways of doing things and share these ideas with the wider community.



Being recognised through awards and lists is one of the ways we can promote our work and be shown as leaders in the sector.

Listed in



Finalist in



Empowerment

We believe in the value of enabling our customers and our team to reach their full potential.



All Facilities and Front of House staff have completed Ellis Whittam health & Safety training. From January 2022, office workers will begin their course list.



We strive to empower our tenants and with that several have grown during this year, including Wilde Mode, Uppertunity and Partners in Advocacy.



Through The Academy, we provided social entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills and support to develop their ideas and projects into successful enterprises with long-term viability.

Over the past four years, 19 individuals have received 'Do It Awards' of up to £5,000 towards the start-up costs for their ideas to improve and empower their local community.

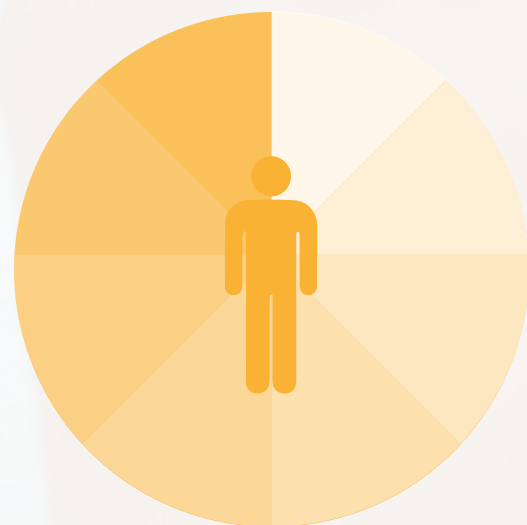
Jillian Elizabeth received a top-up award through the programme this year for her zero-waste shop, The Little Green Larder. As an anchor organisation, The Circle identified Dundee-based social entrepreneurs including Jillian as potential recipients of these grants.

"We are going to use this to introduce a new sustainable delivery service with an electric van. This means that we can deliver our sustainable products to customers who may not be able to visit the shop."

Jillian Elizabeth, Founder The Little Green Larder, The Academy Alumnus, Cohort 2.

Inclusion

We create an environment where our customers, our team, and our visitors experience working together for the benefit of all.



The Circle makes a conscious effort to be an inclusive workplace. We believe in unlocking the potential in everyone, most of all our own team. The Circle is a member of the Disability Confident scheme, and we intend to increase our status from Committed (Level 1) to Employer (level 2) over the coming 12 months.



We have accessed funding through schemes including Kickstart, Community Jobs Scotland and StepUp Glasgow. These schemes allowed us to recruit from pools of candidates who are typically furthest from the jobs market, creating inclusive opportunities for everyone to apply to join our team. This year we created 8 roles through these schemes.



The Circle Superstars was a project we started in 2020 in partnership with candidates from The Academy cohort 2. The aim of this project was to provide children and young people in the local Dundee community with activities during the pandemic.

Following the Summer programme, we received further funding to distribute more packs. In December 2020 we sent out 100 activity packs to people in the Strathmartine area. We worked with St Luke's Café Church, The Attic, Kirkton Community Larder and St Mary's Community Centre to distribute the packs.



Acknowledgements

The Circle would like to thank our sponsors, funders, partners, our tenants, our team and the local community for all their support and encouragement over the past year.



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