



Levelling Up by Powering On

September 2020

This report describes the journey taken by the Northern Power Women (NPW) community through Covid-19 and their response to it. 150 cross sector female leaders and influencers, from six regions across the North met monthly to define the new future. Podcasts, webinars, new campaigns and projects were born as the NPW pivoted.

We want to share our stories and invite you to a seat at our table and take action to level up the country through gender, race and socioeconomic status to support our people and support the economy to recover, grow and thrive.

Adele Mitchinson - Venture Stream Adrienne Kelbie - Office of Nuclear Regulation Alex Cousins - Alex Cousins Consulting Alice Choi - McCann Health Medical Communications Alison Lobb - Morecrofts LLP Alix Bolton - Northumbrian Water Group Andrea Edwards - Tusk/52/TIE Angela Lockwood - North Star Housing Anne-Marie Wallace - DXC Technology Anu Kaura - Malhotra Group Barbara Bray MBE - Alo Solutions Beckie Joyce - Lancashire LEP Carol Ann Whitehead - Zebra Project Caroline Carruthers - Carruthers and Jackson Caroline Noble - James Cropper plc Caroline Theobald CBE - First Network Carolyn Ferguson - The Go-Ahead Group Christine Hewson - KPMG Clare McColgan - Liverpool City Council Colleen Martin - Liverpool City Council Dame Julie Kenny CBE DL - Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust Debbie Francis - Arcadis Di Keller - Northumbria Police Dr Joanna Berry - Durham University Dr Liz Mear - Innovation Agency Dr Marilyn Comrie OBE - BURN Elia Montorio - DLA Piper Elizabeth Vega - Informed Solutions Emily Cox MBE - Lloyds Banking Group Emma Cheshire - FutureGov Erika Rushton - The Beautiful Ideas Co Estelle Blanks - Innovation super Network Faye Dyer - ACC Liverpool Gill Hall - Square One Law Giselle Stewart - Ubisoft Heidi Dawson - BBC Helen Brain - Square One Law Helen Millne - The Women's Organisation Helen Ridge - Pinsent Masons Helen Tindle - Iceland Helen Whitfield - The NBS Irene Afful MSC - Ametrine Consultancy Jane Armitage - Jacksons Law Jane Dalton - Groundswell Innovation Jane Meek - Carlisle City Council Jane Woods - BNY Mellon Jayne Moore - Moore Media Jen Lee - KPMG Jen Robson - NE LEP Jenn Hazlehurst - EY Jo Whitfield - FW Capital Karen Finlayson - PwC Kate Bradley - Newcastle Football Club Katherine Richardson - Department for International Trade Katrina Morley - Tees Valley Education Kellie Rixon MBE - Rixon Associates Laura Hepburn - Greenology Lesley Ilderton - Northumberland Estates Limited Lisa Pearson - Arriva North Liz Dean - Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Liz Slater - Bayford & Co Ltd Louise Cheeseman - First Group Lucy Byrne - Dot-Art Lynn Collins - Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Maggie O'Carroll - The Women's Organisation Marian Sudbury OBE - Department for International Trade Michelle Cooper - County Durham Community Foundation Michelle Walters LLB - evolve Consultancy Miranda Barker - East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce Natasha Hanson - DRSL Nicky Chance-Thompson - The Piece Hall Nicola Hallworth-Rudd - Michael Page Olive Strachan MBE - Olive Strachan Associates Pam Smith - Stockport MBC Pamela Doherty - Axia Origin Professor Alison Shaw - Newcastle University Professor Jane Turner OBE - Teesside University Professor Sue Black OBE - Durham University Professor Udak Archibong MBE - University of Bradford Ruth Harrison - Thoughtworks Sam White - The Freedom Group Sandy Lindsay MBE - Tangerine Sarah Glendinning - CBI Sarah Stewart OBE DL - High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear Sarah Tulip - EY Sarah Waddington - Astute Work Sharon Amesu - IoD Sharon Jandu - Yorkshire Asian Business Association Sharon Kemp - Rotherham MBC Sharon Lane - Tees Components Sharon Watson - Northern School of Dance Siobhan McArdle - The Strategy House Sophie Lawler - Total Fitness Sue Barnard - British Business Bank Sue Harris - Walker Morris LLP Susan Black PGDIP, MCIPR, MSC - Liverpool FC Susan Waterhouse - Department for International Trade Sylvia Brett - Harrogate Ladies' College Tracey Gore - Steve Bikho Housing Trica Williams - Manchester Airports Group Victoria Brow - Distinction Doors Victoria Heron - National Nuclear Laboratory Victoria Stewart - The Alchemist Wieke Eringa - Yorkshire Dance Yvonne Harrison - UA92 Zohrah Zancudi - Calderdale Borough Council

CONTENTS

1. Foreword	3
2. Context	4
3. Our Asks	5
4. Journal Entries	6
4.1 NPW Storming	6
4.2 NPW Cracking on	7
4.3 NPW Calling it out	10
4.4 NPW Calling to our table	12
4.5 Hey Rishi - this is what we want (what we really really want)	14
5. How our community has responded	15
5.1 A new style new style of Leadership - Professor Jane Turner OBE	15
5.2 #BeHeard - Simone Roche MBE, Founder of NPW	16
5.3 Future ways of working - Emily Cox MBE, Chair CBI North East	17
5.4 Coffee Break Careers - Philly Strahan, NPW team	18
5.5 Covid-19 Changemakers campaign - Alex Cousins	19
5.6 NP Futures Podcast series - Eleanor Keegan, NPW team	20
5.7 BURN - Dr Marilyn Comrie OBE FRSA & Sharon Amesu	21
5.8 Two Zero: Female - NPW and Groundswell Innovation	22
5.9 Supporting Apprentices through Covid-19 and beyond - Sandy Lindsay MBE	23
5.10 Creating Growth - Laura Hepburn, Greenology	24
5.11 #ForgottenLtd - Gina Broadhurst	25
6. Our recipes for the new norm	26

Stay in contact

www.NorthernPowerWomen.com



[NorthernPowerWomen](https://www.linkedin.com/company/NorthernPowerWomen)



[@NorthernPowerWomen](https://www.instagram.com/NorthernPowerWomen)



[NorthernPowerWomen](https://www.facebook.com/NorthernPowerWomen)



[@NorthPowerWomen](https://twitter.com/NorthPowerWomen)

Foreword

Dame Julie A Kenny DBE DL

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the world for all.

New ways of working and living and for some, surviving. The schools closed first with children at home, the larger venues next and then on 20th March we all had to stay in and work from home, the elderly and vulnerable could not leave the house, and the homeless were given beds. In many households it was the women who faced the burden of the new responsibilities, home schooling, caring for parents and others, getting food for the family and others, all whilst working from home.



The pandemic forced us all to change the rules. We rose to the challenge and for many, especially women, it was a positive change. No more presenteeism in the workplace, hours spent travelling to get to appointments, rushing home from work. We used that time creatively for better ways, more time with the children or family, exercise, and in many cases additional and more effective and efficient work. I worked from my home every day during lock down and I worked more effectively and efficiently getting through huge amounts of work and meetings on Teams and Zoom yet managing to do two things never before achieved, having a break for lunch every day and taking an hour's exercise. I loved the experience.

It's in our hands whether we take the positives from this experience and make a permanent change or slip back to old habits. This report can be used as a guide for recovery, building forward better and a force for change.



There is so much hope offered in this report, yet it does not take away from the reality of the consequences if we do not proactively encourage change. Now is the opportunity for freelancers, the self-employed, businesses, employers of all kinds to actively re-write the rules.

The multi-level approach including personal, business and community experiences encompasses the ethos of Northern Power Women led most ably by Simone Roche MBE. A group of women who want to amplify voices and bring people to the table.

This report is considered and contributed to by a huge number of Northern Power Women, who met virtually on a monthly basis across the North to work to build a framework to build forward better and challenge those who might not want to address the disparities of how Covid-19 has affected individuals and businesses. The resounding message is that we can do better, we can make a difference for the future, but we must all work together to do so.



This report asks that we work together to level up the opportunity for Women:

- Give Women a seat at the table
- Invest in Women and not just financially
- Invest in Women as Future Talent

Investment in Women especially those from the black, Asian and minority ethnic communities has been shown to be vital in creating a more diverse and productive economy. The Asks (page 5) together with the bitesize Menu cards (page 26) provide a basis to start from and encourage us all not to sleepwalk back into pre-Covid ways of living. This report is a wake-up call that identifies new leadership, best practices, and highlights where there are already plans and where there are gaps in the recovery plan. This report offers hope for a better future.

Invest in building forward better. Invest in Women. Invest in the future



Context

Simone Roche MBE

Between May and July 2020, we spoke with over 150 women by holding Power Circles across six regions of the North. The Power Circles, which started in 2018, have previously been a series of dinners with senior leaders and influencers across the regions with the objective to connect peers to discuss business matters prevalent to their region. When Covid-19 struck we made the decision to curate a virtual series to 'check in' with each other and offer support. The first series of virtual Power Circles were uplifting and hopeful. We knew that history was being made, and from adversity could come opportunity. We could see changes to how we work, how we engage and how we learn that could level up the north, across genders and race.



“

Remember we are making history, there is no path to follow

Andrea Edwards, Non-Executive Director”

By the second round of Power Circles our organisations had mobilised and we all 'cracked on' with creating new ways of working, pivoting our organisations, supporting our future talent and supporting our families. We felt tired – long hours on Zoom, home schooling, the emotional toil of making redundancies, being made redundant, closing businesses, opening new businesses, refocussing businesses to help them survive, managing our people, our families and our staff. Some felt isolated, and some could see the benefits of working from home. So, we started to define an expanded list of workstyles that would remain with us post Covid-19. We shared stories of some of the great things we had done and seen, then started to create the new rules we want to work by (pages 26 - 27).

We must campaign to work differently – create a new rule book – capture it now otherwise we will forget and revert back to old ways

By the third round of Power Circles – people had already started to forget – presenteeism had returned for some, the lack of childcare making it impossible and incredibly hard. New reports and surveys were showing the disproportionate impact Covid-19 had had on women from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and there was a sense that no one in leadership was listening or cared enough to address this. What was also frustrating was that the Women Count report shows how having diversity in the boardroom could support the economic recovery massively – so where was the sense of urgency to invest in women and black, Asian and minority ethnic employees? It is inexplicable, especially given what we know and fear around the economic forecast. Our optimism went into decline but our resilience to make sure our voices are heard and determination that we contribute to the solution ascended. We are women at the top of our game, we have a wealth of knowledge and skills and want to support our country and our people to move forward positively.

**POWER
LIST**
2019



**FUTURE
LIST**
2019



Our Asks



Let's innovate our way out of this, support those who really want to innovate and grow



Dr Joanna Berry, Associate Professor Entrepreneurship, Durham University

Invite us to the table – in the boardroom, in the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined Authorities, on advisory panels, in policy making. Some of our community are already at your tables and even more could be. So, get in touch and invite us in. Equally you are invited to join our table, we want to collaborate. We represent a wide range of industries and sectors, a diverse group of talented people. Utilise our Power Platform to share opportunities for board memberships, speaking opportunities, thought leadership papers and more. It's as simple as that.



Invest in us - as directors of businesses, support us not to be forgotten, as carers support us with childcare, and choice to work more flexibly, as entrepreneurs, support us to lead the way to innovate and create new wealth, support us to look after our people, their mental health and well-being through care and culture. Have a look at our rules for the new norm, explore, debate, and embed them into new policy and legislation. Listen to our stories, hopefully they will inspire others. Help us level up across the country, gender and race. It's as simple as that.

Invest in our future talent - help us to support our future talent, young and old, the apprentices, the recently redundant, the SMEs ready for growth. Have a look at how our community has mobilised – Supporting Apprentices, Covid-19 Changemakers and others (pages 15 - 25). Use this opportunity to galvanise this business community around supporting future talent, future skills and industries – with green digital and diversity embedded at its core. It's as simple as that.



Women-run businesses are the strongest contributors to local communities and levelling-up regional economies. We need to be properly represented on your Advisory Boards, Leader forums and have access to finance and markets



Elizabeth Vega, Group CEO, Informed Solutions

Journal entries

We wrote a series of blogs to timeline our journey through Covid-19. They have been left unedited to highlight how rapidly things changed and the ways we have adapted.

4.1 NPW Storming

Northern Power Women – powering change, opportunity and possibility.

Published

29 May
2020

We're a 60k strong network, born initially out of a need to accelerate gender equality from the North. But now our community is spread across the UK (and beyond) and spans all sectors, genders and race demographics. But many people have never heard of us. In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, Northern Power Women has been quietly going about our business and adapting to the new way of life. And we've also had some things to celebrate. Over the last six months, we've marked our fifth anniversary; launched our skill sharing and networking Power Platform; created a new Northern Power Futures podcast; and won silver at the British Podcast Awards for our (now weekly) Northern Power Women podcast.

In the last year, we've built amazing, collaborative partnerships with the likes of EY, the Co-operative Bank, United Utilities, Natwest and Liverpool FC. We've developed a mentoring programme, worked with the BBC 50:50 Project and been to Number 10 to discuss gender equality with the PM's advisors. But maybe we've been just a bit too quiet about what we've achieved and what a powerful resource we are to communities, businesses, individuals and young people. We're not solely about women and we're not just about the North. We're a passionate and purposeful community, a force for change, proactively offering opportunities to support, empower, guide and share skills.

The focus is very much on support. What can we all do to help each other and help those in our community, local region, or sector, whose lives and jobs have been affected by the global pandemic? We're also thinking about what the new norm might look like as we start to come out of all of this. The phrase 'build back better' is being used a lot – but the resounding message we're getting from our community is, actually, let's not go back, let's just build the future better.

There are a lot of positives coming out of all of this, in terms of innovative solutions, attitudes to the home/work/travel balance and, hopefully, a more thoughtful, empathetic mindset. This pandemic is an unprecedented global event, with no existing blueprint. This is the chance to make history and set a completely new pathway. It's a huge opportunity for change on a personal level, business level and community level. As one of our community said: "We are entering an unrecognisable period and the danger is that we try and apply old solutions to new problems, when what we need is some new solutions and a strong network of support".

And that ethos is very much at the heart of our new Power Platform – a hub for expanding your network, supporting others, making meaningful connections, developing new skills and offering your skills to help others with their careers. It's a living, breathing project, we want people to come and join the platform, use it and tell us what they want from it, so we can develop it further. As we look ahead to the new world, we want to grow our network and level up social mobility, diversity, economic and individual growth across the globe. And the quicker we grow it, the more impact we can make.

How the Northern Power Women community is responding to the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced people, leaders and organisations to respond, re-evaluate, and, in many instances, innovate. There’s a shared and tangible sense of reflection and renewed purpose – the feeling that real change is more possible than ever. Our Northern Power Women community has used this time and opportunity to really up the ante with solid plans to support our regions.

Pre-pandemic, we held ‘Power Circle’ dinners, with representatives from our growing numbers coming together, in person (remember that?) to discuss local issues and develop plans to tackle them. Trying to coordinate a dinner with 20 busy industry experts was hard. Home commitments, work diaries, plus travel commitments meant we could only meet twice a year per city/region. Now, with everyone at home, over 150 of us have been able to meet virtually across Liverpool, Lancashire and Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Newcastle, Yorkshire and Tees Valley on a monthly basis. From these more open and energised conversations focused on the current situation, we’ve noticed clear themes emerging. Common themes that our communities see as the priorities to address, both during and post-pandemic.

Our six post-Covid-19 priority themes:



Tell the story



New Leadership



Promote Regions and Talent



Innovate to Build Forward Better



Support Each Other



Employability for our Future



Telling the Story At times like this it can be hard to find the positives, but there are many inspiring local stories to tell – and learn from – about resilience and recovery. Stories from our past, but also stories about what’s happening right now. To address these issues the NPW community is already undertaking projects to start the recovery process right across the north of England.



Defining the new leadership It is safe to say that everyone has learned something about effective (and ineffective) leaders and their leadership during the last few months. What kind of leaders have not just ‘dealt’ with such a huge and challenging event, but have thrived? And what can leaders do, moving forward to create a new and better ‘normal’?



Promoting regions and talent The key to recovery and prosperity in our regions is supporting and investing in local talent and spreading the word about that talent and its potential.

We need to seize opportunities to share skills, collaborate and co-create.



Innovating to build forward better

There are some amazing examples of organisations pivoting and diversifying quickly to adapt to the current situation. And many are asking 'why go back?'

Old business models are being ripped up and those who haven't upped their game risk being left behind in the new world.



Supporting each other Supporting each other and the community has always been central to our network, delivering local projects, volunteering, mentoring and celebrating success. We're here to make a difference to individuals and their personal and professional networks and to deliver what matters. This is now more important than ever.



Employability for our future A recent report by the [Resolution Foundation](#) confirmed that young people will be the hardest hit in the current crisis. [Northern Power Futures](#) already works to bring together schools, further and higher educational establishments with relatable role models from corporate organisations. The under 25s we are talking to in our 'drop in' virtual sessions are worried, and we are responding to their concerns via our brand new [NPFutures podcasts](#). We all need to take responsibility for their future and wellbeing by offering our skills and opportunities to help pave their journey.

Region	Project Ideas	Themes
Liverpool City	Future Tellers project/ Recovery & BAME	
Greater Manchester	Investing in women's & BAME business	
North East	Potential resilience programme	
Lancashire & Cumbria	Innovation, enterprise & pollination	
Tees Valley	Defining the new Leadership	
Yorkshire	New Rule Book Recipe cards	

A phrase we use a lot is 'cracking on'. We don't just talk lofty plans, we put them into action and we definitely don't hang about.

The Northern Power Women community is just that. Not a talking shop, but a community of proven leaders and tomorrow's leaders who want to make a difference, not just in their world of work or home, but in the wider community. Working together and supporting each other means the ability to make a difference becomes a reality. Times are a-changing, and we will drive that change.

Dame Julie A Kenny DBE DL, Chair, Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust

In Liverpool we are scoping the Future Tellers project, starting with students from Liverpool John Moores University. We're supporting them to create their own campaign and content by connecting them to mentoring networks and platforms to tell their stories and share their concerns, to uncover areas for research and present their work at the Good Business Festival which will take place virtually in October 2020 and face to face in Liverpool in March 2021.

In Greater Manchester we're focusing on supporting female and black, Asian and minority ethnic led organisations, connecting them with investors and with other businesses, as well as members of our network from the finance sector, the development community and diversity organisations, such as the 6% club.

The Power Circles are so important to drive the rules for the new norm – and particularly the black, Asian and minority ethnic community, as allyship is invaluable right now.

Sharon Amesu, Chair of the Institute of Directors, North West

Linked to this, we're expanding our existing scaleup programme for women, part of Lancashire's Two Zero project, which supports women-led businesses in Lancashire to scale up and innovate. Our Tees Valley members are re-defining a new kind of leadership, starting with a survey, which will be available on the Power Platform, our networking hub, and I'd encourage everyone to take part in shaping that research.



Catalysed as always by Simone, Northern Power Women is collaborating and co-creating to address the challenges we are confronted with. The Power Circles are a positive force for good, enabling senior women to engage in honest, debate and discussion, while pushing for actions and outcomes. We're just scratching the surface of opportunity and it's pretty energising and exciting.

Professor Jane Turner OBE, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Teesside University

And our Yorkshire cohort will also be using the Power Platform to look at what the new post Covid-19 'rules' might be when it comes to, for example, employability, place and culture. What are the recipe cards for the new world? (page 26 - 27)

Covid-19 has changed everything. Power Circles have been an important way for me to stay connected, drawing strength from others, make a difference in the world and have some fun. We discuss challenging subjects, take action and find a human connection.

Emily Cox MBE, Chair, CBI North East

All of these projects can be run remotely and replicated or extended to other regions. That is what we're all about after all. Sharing ideas, working collaboratively, supporting each other and making a difference – powerful principles that are at the heart of everything we do.

4.3 NPW Calling it out

Published

10 July
2020

Chancellor, make room at the table for women entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs, and particularly women of black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, are just what our economy needs – but women need to be invested in, involved, given a voice and given the right support.

There has always been a much-discussed gender and ethnic imbalance for start-ups and entrepreneurs when it comes to accessing financial support creating huge untapped potential. Potential that could transform the UK economy. Don't waste it. It's no coincidence that there is also a marked lack of diversity around the table when it comes to investors, advisory boards and policy makers.

While July's mini budget brought truly encouraging news for 16-24 year olds, it brought no news at all for those left unsupported by the Government's existing Covid-19 financial support measures – such as new start-ups, newly self-employed and those struggling with home schooling and childcare. Certain parts of society have been seemingly forgotten during the current pandemic situation, making the need for diverse voices more important than ever.

I (Simone Roche MBE) had the opportunity to talk about this in a BBC interview with Victoria Derbyshire on the day of the budget and it has also been a very recent topic of discussion among the Northern Power Women community at our regular Power Circles. And, unsurprisingly, we are all agreed.

There are issues – and they are all pretty much solved by one thing...

When it comes to private investment, not only are entrepreneurs frequently faced with a room full of white, male investors, but also a room with little knowledge and experience of start-ups and how they operate. One of our circle, Elizabeth Vega, founder and CEO of Informed Solutions, also pointed out that male and female entrepreneurs tend to operate differently – and male and female investors invest differently. And all these differences should be considered and reflected, both through diversity among decisionmakers and in the investment options available. There are institutional biases and preconceptions to overcome too e.g. that women are more risk averse, or even that they are not as numerate. We talked about an article in the Harvard Business Review, which stated the many assumptions made about women in business regardless of whether they are positive or negative, but the overarching themes was they all hold us back. And the science and data don't support them.

66

We're just as ambitious, we're just as gutsy, but society won't seem to accept us like that.

Elizabeth Vega, Group CEO, Informed Solutions

99

Government schemes don't seem to be working either. The Future Fund, for example, delivers a double whammy in that it is dependent on certain criteria, one of which is having already secured private investment – which we know is a problem for women, non-white and minority ethnic businesses.

Of the 252 companies approved for funding from the Government, just three had all-female management teams, and just 12 had either all non-white or all minority ethnic management. Female, non-white and minority ethnic representatives need to be at that table, to ensure that schemes are well thought out from the ethnic and gender perspective and can be marketed better.

And look what we deliver and enable...

Within the Northern Power Women Community, we have:

The 6% Club who are committed to diversity and to accessible deal making in the North West. The community is named after the fact that only 6% of senior investment professionals in UK private equity firms are female.



Greenology – established by Tees Valley entrepreneur Laura Hepburn. Her vision for her green business has seen tonnes of material recycled, preventing it from being taken to landfill sites or incinerated. Her business has thrived, even during the pandemic, even despite a devastating fire at the site. She has powered through and is growing and now recruiting for 50 jobs.

The Black United Representation Network (BURN) – a new organisation set up to challenge and tackle racial inequalities in Greater Manchester. It has a range of campaigns, one of which is to ask for 1% of Greater Manchester Combined Authorities' spend to be ringfenced for black-owned organisations, to deliver services in a city region that is made up of 25% black, Asian and minority ethnicities.

The effective exclusion of black-owned businesses from the public supply chain impedes their growth and inhibits economic development within our most disadvantaged communities, who have already been disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Dr Marilyn Comrie OBE, Principal Founder, BURN

There are many structural barriers for women business owners to get past, but there are also psychological barriers to overcome. Through our ground-breaking scheme, mindsets have shifted, and business behaviours are following suit.

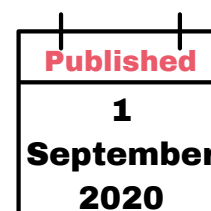
Jane Dalton, Founder, Groundswell Innovation

By the end of one Two Zero: Female workshop, for example, all of the business owners (including ourselves) applied for the bounce back loans. It just needed to be demystified, explained and discussed in terms that we could all relate to.

In the autumn, Northern Power Women will be hosting an investment circle, bringing together investors, women, black, Asian and minority ethnic businesses. We'll advertise it on our Power Platform, so please do get in touch if you're an investor or a business that's seeking investment and you want to get involved.

Like we've said before, we don't hang about. Northern Power Women is a proactive and collaborative community, committed to positive change and always seeking the art of the possible.

4.4 NPW Calling to our table



Covid-19 is increasing inequality – and our economy won't cope

Our Northern Power Women community has been discussing the stark reality of life and work right now. The mood is less optimistic than before, but we haven't lost momentum. And, believe me, this country is going to need people like us.

Back in April we talked about how we, like many, were seeing some positives potentially coming out of the pandemic: new ways of working, a different attitude to the home/work/travel balance; a more thoughtful, compassionate leadership mindset; the potential to rebuild differently. But, four months on, we are already hearing of organisations slipping back to the pre-Covid ways. Presenteeism, old school leadership and disregard for parental / care responsibilities are all creeping back into our working lives. All of which are most demanding of, you've guessed it, women. Are we really that hard-wired?

On top of that, who can and who can't return to work, and who gets financial support, is – just like the wider effects of the pandemic itself – exposing inequalities based not just on gender, but also on age, wage, employment status (i.e. small business owners, self-employed), class and ethnicity.

The doughnut way of thinking

You may have heard the announcement recently that Amsterdam is adopting economist Kate Raworth's doughnut model to help the city rebuild its' economy post-Covid. Her model (shaped like a doughnut) sets out that GDP is not a true measure of progress. To hugely precis: progress and a thriving economy should be measured through a bigger goal – delivering human societal needs, but within the environmental limits of the earth. No one should be left in the hole in the middle of the doughnut, without the essentials needed to lead a good life, based on the UN's sustainable development goals. Essentials such as food and clean water, housing, sanitation, energy, education, healthcare, gender equality, income and political voice. Anyone not attaining these minimum standards is living in the doughnut's hole.

As Amsterdam's deputy mayor, Marieke van Doorninck, said in a Guardian interview: "I think it can help us overcome the effects of the crisis. It might look strange that we are talking about the period after that but as a Government we have to ... It is to help us to not fall back on easy mechanisms." And that's just it, we mustn't slip back. We need to think holistically, we need to build new – and, to do that, we can't afford to ignore large swathes of the population. Not only because it's the right thing to do, but because they have a fundamental role to play.

But the evidence so far is not encouraging – for women, for the black, Asian and minority ethnic population, for the under 25s, and for the 'forgotten'.

Melinda Gates has published a warning, that unless leaders recognise the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on women – in terms of health, economic and societal damage – recovery will be longer and slower and could cost the world economy trillions of dollars.

A recent Pregnant Then Screwed survey is a tough read. Fifteen per cent of mothers either have been made redundant, or expect to be made redundant and, of those, a shocking 46% have said that a lack of childcare provision played a role in their redundancy – and 65% of those furloughed say a lack of childcare was the reason.

Covid-19 is having a devastating effect on the black, Asian and minority ethnic population. Here, all sorts of factors seem to be at play, not least socio-economic: e.g. geography, age, deprivation and career. The NHS, for example, naturally has higher exposure to the virus and a disproportionately high number of staff from ethnic minorities.

Under 25s have also been particularly hard hit, as reported by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, particularly those just starting out on the career ladder, with work placements cancelled and job offers withdrawn. For those still in education, there are seemingly no clear plans for next year's A-levels and GCSEs. This year's exam results chaos initially saw A-level students from disadvantaged backgrounds being the worst affected and private school students benefitting the most. And, while the Government eventually backtracked and reverted back to the original teacher assessments, its grading algorithm had revealed a very telling systemic bias against students from poorer areas. And then there are those dubbed 'the forgotten' and 'excluded' – such as the newly self-employed, new businesses, or owners of limited companies – all left unsupported by the Government's existing Covid-19 financial support measures. An estimated 3.1 million taxpayers.

All of these groups are falling out of work, out of the economy, and into the doughnut's hole. How frustrating to know that lazy thinking and reluctance to change is holding us back from recovery. Research consistently shows that the companies whose leadership has the most gender and ethnic and cultural diversity are now more likely than ever to be more profitable than their less diverse peers. So, it seems like utter madness to ignore what's going on.

It's time to level up – and we can help make that happen

Our three asks are:

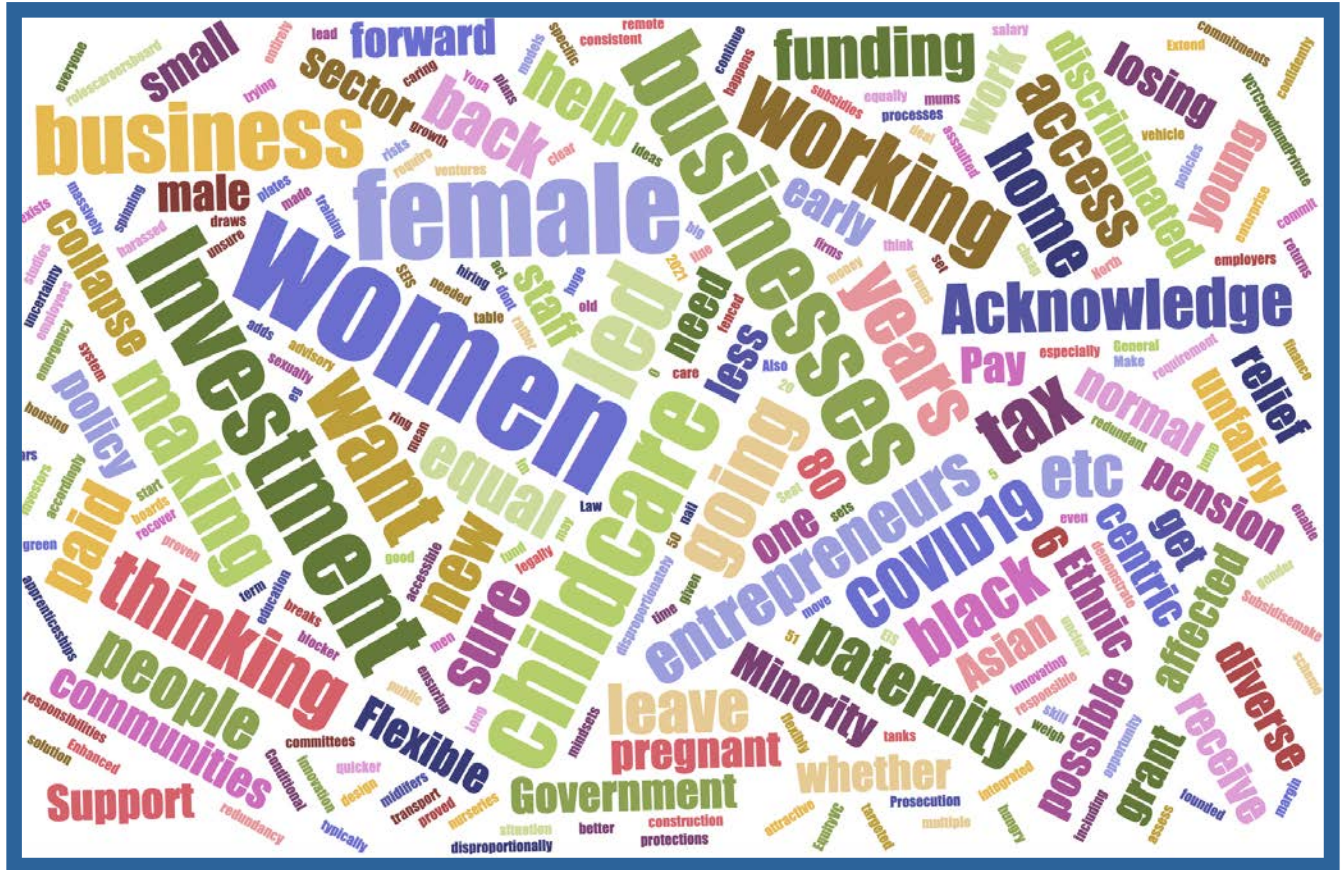
Invite us to the table... while some of our Northern Power Women are already at a table in the boardroom, in Local Enterprise Partnerships and combined authorities, on panels, and involved in policy making, it's time to have a table of our own. So, get in touch, and come and join a network who will support you. We represent a huge range of industries and sectors and we're a diverse and talented bunch. And our Power Platform is there to share opportunities for board memberships, speaking opportunities, thought leadership papers and more.

Invest in us... as directors of businesses, support us so as not to be forgotten; as carers, support us with childcare and the choice to work more flexibly; as entrepreneurs, support us to lead the way to innovate and create new wealth; and, as humans, support us to look after our people, their mental health and wellbeing, through care and culture. In September we'll be publishing our new rules for the new norm – explore, debate, and embed them into new policy and legislation. Read our stories hopefully they will inspire others.

Invest in our future talent... help us to support our future – young and old, the apprentices, the recently redundant, the SMEs ready for growth. We have inspiring stories and proactive campaigns – Supporting Apprentices, Covid Changemakers and others. Use this opportunity to galvanise this business community around supporting future talent, future skills and industries – with green digital and diversity embedded in its core. We have a wealth of knowledge and skills ready and waiting to support our country and our people in moving forward positively. Northern Power Women is a 60,000-strong network, born initially out of a need to accelerate gender equality in the North. But now our diverse community is spread out across the UK and spans all sectors, genders and demographics.

4.5 Hey Rishi - this is what we want (what we really really want)

In advance of the Chancellor's mini summer budget we put out a tweet and LinkedIn post to ask women what they wanted from the Government in order to build forward better and these are the themes that emerged:



Our Power Circles



How our community has responded

The following collection explains some of the initiatives we have created either as a collective or individually in response to Covid-19. They also contain stories of our experiences of working differently, pivoting our businesses and supporting ourselves, our family's and colleagues through this period. The Northern Power Women community are mobilisers and this has come to the fore by our response to the pandemic.

5.1 A new style of Leadership - Professor Jane Turner OBE

Jane is part of the Tees Valley Power Circle and represented on the NPW Power List

We have been working with senior leaders, influencers and future talent throughout the pandemic to understand and identify leadership best practise. The Power Platform and Northern Power Women, in association with Teesside University, are developing a purposeful piece of research, to look at what the new traits of leadership are in a Covid-19 world.



The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted leaders in all walks of life to respond to challenges and make judgements in a way that none of them expected in their lifetimes.

On the world stage particularly, there are a number of female leaders who have navigated effectively through this global health crisis. They appear to have averted the collapse of health and well-being in the countries they represent displaying compassion, reasoning, preparedness, clarity, empathy, inspiration and collaboration. They have also demonstrated an ability to take difficult decisions, listen and build trust.

We believe that their example has created an opportunity to challenge the embedded assumptions around leaders and leadership and that it is time to highlight the qualities that appear to have created more positive outcomes. To that end, we have developed some questions to help build a better understanding of leaders and leadership by capturing peoples' experiences, thoughts and feelings during the pandemic.

The purpose of the research is to deepen our knowledge and understanding of leadership best practice and to help provide people with the knowledge and skills to lead and drive careers.

5.2 #BeHeard – Simone Roche MBE (Founder of NPW)

The need for more equal representation in the media, both in front of and behind the camera, is vital in ensuring that a diverse range of voices are heard. We want to accelerate this change and have therefore created the #BeHeard campaign. We appreciate how hard producers work in sourcing people to contribute, often at short notice, and know that by creating a portfolio of individuals willing to speak in the media on a wide range of subjects will be helpful to more accurately reflect the world we live in. This is from both a gender perspective and in terms of ethnicity as we know it is important to address both of these factors.

Although only recently launched, we have had a fantastic response to the campaign from both speakers and media companies who have cited it is an invaluable resource. The survey used to sign up gathers information on the individual's passions, topics they are willing to speak about on air, their side hustle and an example of a story they would want to share. We are making it easier for producers to make more thoughtful decisions on who they invite onto their programmes, facilitating the ultimate goal of equal representation. Covid-19 has proved that people can contribute virtually making geography irrelevant in an individuals' ability to participate in the conversation and this then opens up more opportunities for a range of voices to be represented.

The campaign builds on two 50:50 project events Northern Power Women hosted for the BBC over the last twelve months. We brought together producers and potential contributors to encourage 50:50 representation in the media. Through these events we showed attendees that speaking in the media is not a scary experience and that you do not have to be an 'expert' to talk about a subject you are impassioned by. We saw the power of this type of event which has enabled over 60 media appearances across tv and radio so far and will strive to continue to amplify voices that may not have previously been heard.



66

So clearly you don't need to be media-trained to be able to speak about true life on the airwaves with confidence and conviction! So excited to be an ambassador for the #BeHeard campaign creating more equal representation in the media #WeAreNPW

Dr Marnie Millard OBE, #BeHeard Ambassador

99

This campaign will encourage a huge pool of untapped talent whose insights are invaluable to the wider community to speak up and become contributors on tv and radio. By connecting them with the people that source contributors we lower the barriers to be heard and create more inclusive dialogues.

5.3 Future ways of working - Emily Cox MBE

Emily is part of the Newcastle Power Circle, member of NPW Steering Board and represented on the NPW Power List

For many of us the Global Pandemic meant a significant change in our ways of working. It was like a giant experiment that tested our tech, our connectivity and our people in ways we could not have anticipated 12 months ago.

And it has challenged our preconceptions and our biases about whether we have to be present to be productive. As we level up and think about more and better jobs in the North the learnings from the Global Pandemic could be a game changer. I believe we can think about different workstyles and role types:

Workstyles for the new norm (for full and part time working)

Office bound role

100% in the workplace
i.e. 5 days per week

- These roles either cannot be done away from the office due to the nature of their requirements, or we have chosen for them to be entirely based in the office due to customer, risk or productivity considerations
- A modern, safe and engaging workplace, near to skills hubs will be essential to these colleagues

Rotational type role

50-75% in the workplace
i.e. 2 days / week or 1 week in 3

- These roles are typically and historically office based e.g. Connect.
- However recent digitisation and testing throughout Covid-19 has proved viability of remote working
- These roles are often customer facing and benefit from regular or rotational time in the office for coaching, escalations, Compliance, risk mitigation, peer and line manager interaction

Activity-based role

40-60% in the workplace
i.e. Irregular days or blocks of days or weeks

- These roles work from the most appropriate location for the activity being performed that day
- Colleagues may require geographically located hot-desks for a short period, or for fixed space within an office for a prolonged period of time while certain activities are performed

Remote role

10-30% in the workplace
i.e. 1 to 2 days per fortnight

- These roles can be performed remotely in 'home offices' for prolonged periods of time, with no impact on risk, customer or productivity
- Provision will be required to ensure colleagues are safe, comfortable and productive
- Colleagues will travel on a regular basis for face to face contact, but behaviourally they will go to the office to connect, not to work.

Home role

<10% in the workplace
i.e. rarely in the office

- These roles can be performed remotely in 'home offices' for prolonged periods of time, with no impact on risk, customer or productivity
- Provision will be required to ensure colleagues are safe, comfortable and productive
- Colleagues will travel on a regular basis for face to face contact, but behaviourally they will go to the office to connect, not to work.

5.4 Coffee Break Mentoring - Philly Strahan (NPW team)

Philly started volunteering over lockdown and is now working on a full-time contract with NPW

Coffee Break mentoring was initially suggested by furlonteer, Philly Strahan in her first virtual meeting who quickly became part of the Northern Power Women team. Having been made redundant due to Covid-19, Philly knew first-hand how difficult it can be to expand your network and get back on the career ladder.

Short one-off conversations with people in various sectors proved to be the most useful research she could do.

From this NPW wanted to scale the idea and facilitate one off mentoring conversations in which time-poor mentors were able to impart well-founded wisdom without committing to a full-blown mentoring relationship whilst curious mentees were able to get a wide-range of advice.

We wanted to provide guidance to those who most needed it and might feel daunted by the prospect of sourcing a full-time mentor. The campaign has already had a huge number of signs ups from mentees and mentors

There is huge potential for this to be expanded, creating non-hierarchical relationships as well as reverse mentoring that will be highly beneficial to both the individual and businesses.

alike and NPW are in the process of matching them.

With such a large and diverse community, we know that the calibre of mentors is one to be admired, from CEOs to Executive board members, there is a huge talent pool waiting to give back.

Coffee Break mentoring is an ongoing series and will serve to connect individuals with a wider network to help them on their path in such an uncertain time.

It is completely free to sign up and has also been received well by multiple corporate clients who would like to roll out the program internally, facilitated by NPW.

As the furlough scheme comes to an end, redundancies will continue to rise, and we know it is vital to support this group and minimise loss of confidence and purpose.

We see these one-off virtual conversations as being a catalyst for getting people back on track. Something as simple as a 20-30 minute conversation with an industry professional can provide that much needed encouragement to apply for jobs, make a career move, choose further education or decide not to go to University at all. Impartial advice can be a rare but precious thing to find for those in their early careers where friends and family are heavily invested, and this is what we are offering. Coffee Break mentoring is our way of keeping the conversation going and making sure that both young and old have opportunities to make connections meaningfully and with purpose.

5.5 BURN – DR Marilyn Comrie OBE FRSA & Sharon Amesu



Marilyn and Sharon are part of The Manchester and The Race Equality Allies Power Circles, and both are represented on the NPW Power List

Greater Manchester has an acute shortage of people of African descent in senior leadership positions that can influence policy and decision-making.

Black United Representation Network (BURN) was created to fill this gap.

Greater Manchester has a population of 2.7 million and is the second most populous urban area in the United Kingdom. Manchester also has the third largest economy in the UK and is the third most visited city after London and Edinburgh. The ethnic minority population in Manchester alone, as measured by non-white residents increased by 104,300 between 1991 and 2011. The second largest ethnic group in Manchester is African, which has grown fourfold and faster than any other group since 1991 (Geographies of Diversity report. Manchester University). The largest group is Pakistani.

BME people in the city are more likely to have a degree or higher than white people. Around 26% of white adults in Manchester have no qualifications compared to just 17% of all BME adults, while 28% of white adults have a degree-level qualification or higher compared to 32% BMEs.

However, people from black backgrounds are nearly three times as likely to be unemployed. This confirms anecdotal stories of BME degree holders driving taxis or working as cleaners in the NHS because they can't get a degree level job.

33% of people living in Manchester in 2011 (168,000 residents) were from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background compared to 7% across the UK. This has continued to grow in recent years, with new economic migrants joining well established BME communities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Nigeria and Somalia.

Research from the Resolution Foundation for the Independent Prosperity Review (IPR) found that across Great Britain as a whole, workers from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be low paid than white workers. It found:

1 in 3 black employees are low paid in Greater Manchester, a figure that is 12 percentage points higher than that for white people. Asian employees are six percentage points more likely to be in low pay than white people in Greater Manchester. Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees were found to be more likely to be paid less than the living wage in Retail & Wholesale, Hospitality, Tourism & Sport, Health & Social Care.

The Solution : BURN will act as a one stop shop providing quality services to win investment, large contracts and create thousands of well-paid jobs to level the playing field as Greater Manchester Builds Back Better. Our activities will focus on three main pillars:-

Representation

Recruitment services to support the transition of black professionals into senior decision making and leadership roles within civic, public and business sectors and build the pipeline of future talent.

Procurement

1% of the GMCA's £8 billion annual budget to be ringfenced for black organisations to level the playing field.

We will develop the pipeline of contract ready black VCSEs and businesses through capacity building and supply chain inclusion.

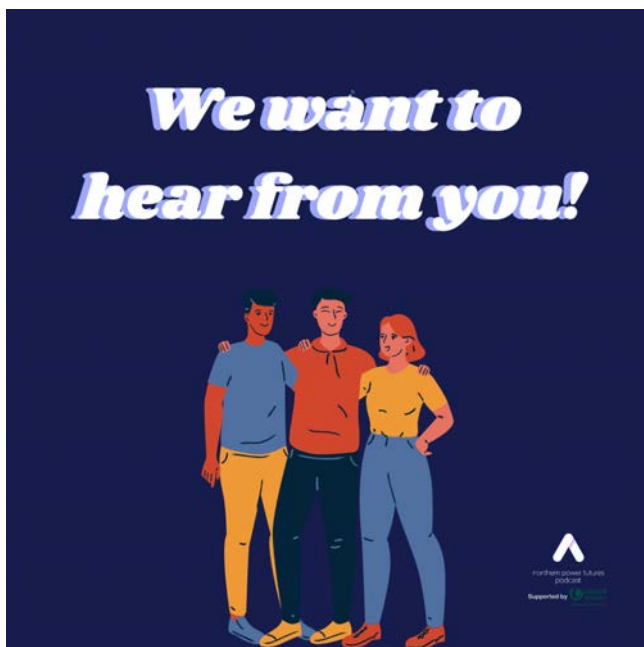
Intra-Commonwealth Trade

Act as a gateway for undertaking business in Africa and the Caribbean to grow wealth, prosperity and jobs as the UK transitions from the EU.

5.6 Northern Power Futures Podcast - Eleanor Keegan (NPW team)

Eleanor started volunteering for Northern Power Futures and is now the Digital Content Assistant

We were growing increasingly worried by the statistics that showed young people being most impacted by Covid-19 (a trend that has continued over lockdown) and wanted to offer support. We benefitted from the talents of nineteen-year-old Eleanor Keegan who, whilst furloughed, was volunteering for Northern Power Futures. We listened to Eleanor and mobilised virtual 'download' sessions to find out what was really concerning young people. These focus groups identified worries and questions which we then put to industry experts, who offered practical and actionable guidance to prevent leaving a generation in the dark. Eleanor became instrumental by researching and engaging with young people and went on to become host of the Northern Power Futures podcast.



Over the first five seasons themes have included mental health in lockdown, gaining skills and finding work, financial planning, building your business network, unleashing creativity and the next steps after exam results. The content has been driven by our Northern Power Futures community, who desperately need support in such a challenging time. Disruption to their education and career progression has meant impartial advice from experts across all sectors has been invaluable. Whilst encouraging listeners to be open minded and positive about the future, we also recognised that their concerns were and still are valid, providing a space to show they are not alone .

When we were asked to support Northern Power Futures in reshaping response to Covid-19 by creating a proactive podcast supporting young people we jumped at the chance

Julie Newton, Head of Organisation Development, United Utilities

The podcast also resulted in a form of 'reverse mentoring' as it can now be used as a resource for researching how young people are reacting and adapting to the pandemic. It is vital in our recovery plan to listen to the young as they are inevitably the ones who will suffer the consequences if decisions are not made using an inclusive approach. We have started a conversation between individuals that may never have had access to one another and know that it is important to continue this conversation.

5.7 Covid-19 Changemakers campaign – Alex Cousins

Alex is part of the Liverpool Power Circle, member of NPW Steering Board and has been a key advisor and advocate to the NPW campaign taking part in every Power Circle

Over 4million people are expected to be unemployed in the fall-out from Covid-19. We have a raft of experienced professionals made redundant and ‘furlonteers’ expecting to be made redundant once the scheme ends - creating an army of talent. At the same time, in some sectors, we have had an explosion in opportunity, businesses pivoting, new businesses starting up and start-ups scaling up.

The Covid Changemakers campaign was created to bring these communities together to provide mutual benefits, economic growth, and seek to reduce mental health and anxiety. We are campaigning for support from the public, private and investment community to enable people to have access to funding, to let them take part. We aim to become self-sufficient and rewarded when the growth is delivered.

We are seeking funding to enable the SMEs to pay for these skills, to enable people to work with the SMEs and to help each other grow. Growth brings the potential to offer properly paid work and offer employment, either part or full time.

£10,000 could pay for up to 300-500 hours of time and help 10-15 SMEs- a flash mob of hands on support.

With one tweet we had 100 people sign up to Covid Changemakers! This has connected us with a community of people who could really help grow the economy.

One of the first companies we will be supporting is Frog Systems who offer video based mental health and wellbeing solutions that captures the power of the lived experience to offer hope and support to those in need. If we can help them to grow, they will help address the rise in mental health issues and support productivity.

During the first weeks of Covid-19, Frog Systems found that there was a marked increase in people accessing their resources on suicidal thoughts, abuse and anxiety. This data is extremely powerful and can ensure organisations take action to address mental health and support our economy.



**Let's get our people and the economy
back on their feet!**

5.8 Two Zero: Female – NPW and Groundswell Innovation

Jane Dalton is part of the Lancashire and Cumbria Power Circle and brand ambassador for NPW

Having successfully bid to deliver one of four Two Zero programmes on behalf of Lancashire County Council, Northern Power Women and Groundswell Innovation came together to create and deliver the first Two Zero: Female programme.



The programme's aspiration was to grow ambitious female-led Lancashire businesses 20% year on year and to build companies that are productive, efficient and profitable during a sustained period of high growth.

The original 12-week programme was based on a schedule of working sessions, panel discussions and peer mentoring, but as the programme kicked off in early 2020, Covid-19 hit. All programmes had the choice to postpone, or crack on.

Within a few days we had re-designed *Two Zero: Female* as a 6-month all-virtual programme of support and from the outset we have travelled alongside these outstanding entrepreneurs as events have unfolded. Anyone can hibernate on their own. The point of pulling together was to provide shelter, but also to build a launchpad.

From dismay and legitimate concerns for business stability, these resilient entrepreneurs quickly got on the front foot and grasped opportunities for short-term and long-term growth. Far from folding, these women emerged from the crisis as positive, confident and bolder business leaders.

None of the companies who took part in the *Two Zero: Female* programme are making people redundant or scaling down their level of trading.

From not having engaged with any form of external finance prior to the programme, all of them are now actively considering it and over half have already sought and gained funding in order to grow.

All of these women have taken part in podcasts, panel discussions and radio shows that have earned them national coverage as experts in their field.

And no-one says it better than the cohort members themselves:

“There was a real buzz and energy as a collective group which helped fuel and channel this forward and make us all excited about our businesses and being part of something bigger together.”

“It certainly was a corona coaster and in hindsight, was also a lifeline during such challenging times - both personally and for the business.”

“The programme has really planted little seeds of ideas, affirmations and confidence that have then been watered with our accountability and we have flourished.”

5.9 Supporting Apprentices through Covid-19 and beyond – Sandy Lindsay MBE

Sandy is part of the Manchester Power Circle and represented on the NPW Power List

Apprenticeships play a prominent role in the UK's workforce, providing vital skills needed by employers in myriad sectors and giving a gateway to much needed careers for young people. To aid short and long-term economic recovery, apprenticeships will be even more important, and the fear is that once furloughing has ended there might be a wide scale cull of those already employed and all predictions indicate a double-digit percentage drop in new starters for 2021 and beyond.

The following recommendations are those of North West Business Leadership Team and London First.

Current (and furloughed) apprentices

Cover/subsidise the salaries of all apprentices employed by SMEs (at least) until the end of their current apprenticeship – this way they'll have a qualification to help them gain another job (see below*) and furloughed apprentices will be able to get back to work!

Allow levy payers (maybe in agreed sectors) to use their levy funds to pay the salaries of apprentices already employed.

Remove the need for SMEs to pay the co-investment fee.

Recently redundant apprentices

Sold correctly these part-trained young people could appeal more to potential employers as they are not as raw as other apprentices. Again, they could be 'saved' by their salaries and training costs being covered/subsidised for SMEs and levy payers (maybe the latter out of their own levy funds?) This needs to happen quickly as their training can only be paused for a limited time before it – or they – are lost.

Flexibility

Reverse the rule change preventing companies from sharing apprentices as they once could, as this will enable more new starters as the costs are shared.

Levy transfers

Allow levy payers to bulk transfer large amounts to LEP/CA pots in simple, single, digital transactions, with no future liaison/admin responsibility.

*Levy to cover salaries

We believe some of the costs of the above could be covered by allowing salaries to be paid out of the levy transfer pots. By making it simpler for levy payers to transfer money, liaising with LEPs and Combined Authorities, we believe these pots will quickly fill and could become substantial and useful.

5.10 Creating Growth - Laura Hepburn, Greenology

Laura is part of the Tees Valley Power Circle and represented on the NPW Future List



Greenology was established by entrepreneur Laura Hepburn. Her vision for her green business has seen tonnes of material recycled, preventing it from being taken to landfill sites or incinerated. Her business has thrived, even during the pandemic despite a devastating fire at one of her sites. For Laura, a film director and mother-of-three, the decision to turn down the chance to work on the latest James Bond movie has been rewarded.

Laura, of Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire, began looking into the plastic problem ten years ago while studying a Masters degree in future design at Teesside University. But to fund her dream of setting up a company to turn non-recyclable waste into energy, she spent time last year as a director on *Game of Thrones*, *Gentleman Jack* and *Danny Boyle's Yesterday*.

It was whilst Laura was working for the Happy Egg company that she says she started to think about how they dealt with waste. She said: "The Ministry of Defence have used a process called pyrolysis for many years, which turns plastics into energy by heating it without oxygen so it can be returned to its previous state, such as a fuel or oil."

“

It is not only dealing with problem plastics, but also creating an energy source... It is a fantastic solution for lots of businesses.

I am so thankful for the support and recognition the Northern Power Women have offered myself and other women wanting to just do our job – I'm also passionate about women helping women.

”

She said it had been a tough first year for the business, facing scepticism from some about her chances of success. And she added:

“

I'm so thankful to my team for having the same belief as me in what we are doing... I think it is a fantastic opportunity for the area for skilled people to move into green industry.

”

Now she has secured funding to create a plant in Teesside which will provide more than 20 new jobs. World-leading technology at the new plant will turn tyres that were being dumped into the sea and land, into power with zero emissions and Greenology wants to help other businesses to become self-sufficient and join the full circle economy. She has powered through and is recruiting for 50 positions including apprentices and trainees.

5.11 #ForgottenLtd

Liverpool Power Circle member Jayne Moore introduced us to Gina Broadhurst founder of ForgottenLtd

Calling for fairness and equality for small limited companies excluded by the UK Government's Coronavirus financial support packages.

Gina Broadhurst, Founder, #ForgottenLtd

The reality we face is that female entrepreneurs who have chosen to structure businesses as limited companies have largely missed out on essential financial support from the Government throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The lack of support is placing millions of jobs at risk and imminent job losses, closures and insolvencies.

The #ForgottenLtd campaign have proposed a rescue package for small businesses. At a time when we should be focussed on Levelling Up, the first step has to be ensuring business owners are supported to survive this period of disruption. Only then will the Government be able to truly drive the Levelling Up agenda.

Karen Chomse, Founder, KCR Solutions

Karen owns a recruitment business with her brother, and they have been left out of Government support.

Down 70% in turnover, they have had to use savings and are struggling mentally.

Karen said,

"I feel bitter, sad, disappointed and excluded. Why have I had to use my pension/savings when for years I have been employing staff?"

I am exhausted, miserable and feel mentally broken. We have brought the team back part time, but it isn't enough. I want the Government to care and help us."

Tracy Bedwell, Managing Director, Sales Training International

Tracy set up Sales Training International 20 years ago, a global business which has delivered training to 20,000 delegates in over 80 countries with 2 directors and 20 associates. Turnover was growing, however, the pandemic hit and so much of what they had worked for was lost totalling over £200,000. Tracy pivoted, but found that the marketplace did not naturally translate and one of their biggest clients shut down due to the pandemic.

Tracy had to take some difficult decisions for her business, furloughing one director and keep the other on so as to keep the business operating. There was no chance of business grants as the company operates from home and therefore does not pay business rates. On top of this, Tracy soon found that they were not eligible for the furlough scheme as the payroll was filed annually at the end of March by the accountant, so did not qualify on a technicality.

Understandably, Tracy and Karen are frustrated. There are 750,000 small Ltd Co. businesses that have been affected with 650,000 of these having the option to furlough staff. This leaves 100,000 receiving nothing at all. Millions of businesses have been affected and in turn millions of jobs are at risk - and many have been forgotten.

We are asking you to put pressure on the Treasury to:


- Give Limited Companies a corporation tax rebate
- Convert Bounce Back Loans to Grants
- Increase the discretionary grant fund allocated to local authorities
- Create parity across all discretionary award authorities across the UK to avoid postcode lottery allocations
- Reconsider putting directors of small Limited Companies on an equal footing with the self-employed income support scheme (SEISS)
- Allow furlough for all Limited Company directors to continue to work to support their businesses
- Allow furlough for all Limited Company directors paid via #AnnualPAYE
- Extend Business Support Grants to all small businesses

*correct at time of publication

6. Our recipes for the new norm

Born out of conversations in our Yorkshire Power Circle


Having conducted our Power Circles, we knew we had gathered a fantastic amount of knowledgeable and well-founded advice that we needed to utilise. The idea was to provide digestible and practical tips in the form of menu cards that will help individuals and businesses to build forward better throughout the Covid-19 recovery. They can be used as frameworks or simply reminders in order not to lose sight of the many things that we have learnt from the pandemic.



Talent Pool

Looking in non-traditional spaces for talent and creating opportunity


1. Invest in people: nurturing talent and giving people the opportunities to up-skill can create both individual and collective benefits
2. Elevate voices and allow people a seat at the table who might not have been invited. There is a need to create inclusion in all levels of business
3. Role models: when executive boards reflect their communities this can provide tangible motivation for people as they see themselves reflected
4. Create incentives: prevent brain drain by challenging employees to reach targets and be rewarded
5. Network: create meaningful relationships (using the Power Platform) in order to support yourself professionally in the future
6. Adapt: as digital skills have increased in value make sure you equip yourself and are aware of up-and-coming ways of working
7. Think holistically: do not pigeon-hole people but rather look at how soft skills can be versatile and vital in all industries
8. Be understanding: as humans we cannot be expected to perform at 100% all day every day and so allowing for a compassionate response can be both helpful and powerful
9. Recruitment: find different ways to recruit a diverse and inclusive work force by using channels that reach new networks and find ways to reduce unconscious bias
10. Share skills, whether this is through mentoring or a skill swap it can be mutually beneficial to pay it forward



Place

Planning, designing and managing spaces to promote health, happiness and wellbeing

1. Plan with people, not for people: the community will have useful insights as well as a historical perspective and knowledge of what is crucial to them
2. Be Patient: things are not going to get back to how they were anytime soon
3. Adapt: places are not static and are constantly changing and so be prepared
4. Create an inclusive and accessible built environment that works for people with physical disabilities and those who are neurodivergent
5. Be innovative and forward thinking: just because it has not been done before doesn't mean it cannot be done
6. Support local businesses within your community
7. Make sure access to essential amenities are covered for everyone whether this is through a neighbour network, delivery, click & collect etc
8. Be sustainable environmentally, socially, financially - planning for the future is vital
9. Understanding the anxieties created by either being isolated vs people living overcrowded to enable these to be addressed
10. Acknowledge that Covid-19 has changed our sense of place but we can re-imagine it and build forward



Culture

Positive and progressive policy and education that embraces difference

1. Capture the data within companies so that they can take action in creating more inclusionary and diverse cultures
2. Listen to your employees: listening to different views can help shape best practice for everyone
3. Rip up the rule book: a call to action (not just lip service) to build forward not back
4. Be understanding: creating empathetic and fair business practices should be a priority
5. Create ethical business mission statements to set a precedent of the culture in your business
6. Ask "what is your why?" Knowing why a company conducts itself how it does, can help identify what is and is not working
7. Accommodate different types of working: office, remote, rotational etc - by trusting people to complete their work whilst fitting in with their personal lives you create a better relationship
8. Encourage staff to meet set targets and goals rather than complete a certain amount of hours
9. Create inclusivity networks in your business for employees to seek advice and support
10. Invest in your employee's mental health

Agility



Being flexible whilst running businesses and supporting colleagues acting in the most responsible way

1. Get familiar with the many online platforms for virtual working and meetings
2. Think before travelling
3. Give yourself time between virtual meetings
4. Physical presence (and perceived gravitas) are no longer important
5. Feel liberated and get out of the long meeting habit
6. Give equal voice to all to take the opportunity to level up
7. Increase your virtual presence with staff - especially those living alone - it is valued
8. Support your family with the Tech, the young and the old - have patience
9. You can still support your family from a distance - be imaginative
10. Agility and flexibility are key to survival - business and personal

Employability



Being open and adaptable to new ways of working

1. Employability is not simply about getting a job
2. Be positive through adversity
3. Be agile and flexible and continue to learn new skills, as the world evolves
4. Seek out mentors and mentor others to develop your skills and networks
5. Don't limit your ambition, or put yourself in a box, consider roles from across the world and sectors
6. Follow your passion: enjoying what you do is important
7. Be generous with your time and skills it will be appreciated and recognised
8. Collaborate, don't compete, you will gain more in the long-term
9. Volunteer your skills and time, you will learn lots about yourself
10. Showcase your range of skills, abilities and attitudes and attributes that you have developed throughout your life and across all settings

Well-Being



Creating a sense of community where people are kind, thoughtful and understanding even in a virtual world

1. Connect: Become part of a network who can support you personally or professionally
2. Check in: ask people how they really are
3. Be kind: ask yourself 'Would say that to a friend?' before criticising yourself
4. Offer to help others: volunteering your time can be as rewarding for you as it is to the other party
5. Be present: sitting with your feelings can allow you to detach from them
6. Learn new skills: this can increase self-confidence and impact all parts of your life
7. Be grateful: keeping a daily gratitude list can create a positive mindset just from re-framing situations
8. Detox digitally: switch off from social media every now and again and see how you feel
9. Know when to say no: create boundaries to allow yourself to recharge and reset
10. Exercise: whether this is a walk around the park or a bike ride, getting your body moving can help create more positive thinking

Inclusion



Advocating for yourself, friends and colleagues and being an ally

1. Educate yourself and engage with resources that expand your knowledge of matters outside your immediate sphere
2. Celebrate differences: diverse teams perform better than homogenous ones
3. Create goals and measure progress
4. Ask the difficult questions: uncomfortable conversations are important in the process of addressing inequality
5. Call out injustice when you see it. This can start new ways of thinking and holding people accountable is important
6. Check your privilege and address your unconscious bias
7. Be pro-active: prevention is better than a cure
8. Amplify voices and lift them up: if you have access to spaces, pay it forward
9. Respect others: this is vital for moving forward and understanding other peoples' experiences may be different to your own
10. Be kind: use kindness in corporate and legal language to foster more inclusive ways of doing business