



The Women's Organisation

October 2020

Rethinking the Economy for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future



Foreword



"The report addresses the impact of Covid-19 on the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and its business ecosystem in a thoughtful, systematic, and solidly empirical way".

I am honoured and delighted to be writing this foreword. Honoured because of the quality of the work by the team at The Women's Organisation. This report addresses the impact of COVID-19 on the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and its business ecosystem in a thoughtful, systematic, and solidly empirical way. Crucially, The Women's Organisation has the courage to look forward creatively, not only at the challenges, but at the opportunities facing the local economy.

I was delighted because this work is firmly rooted in this great City Region. The report highlights its astonishing resilience when the City fought back from earlier challenges - most recently the financial crisis. It shows how this prompted a recovery based on entrepreneurship, often from non-traditional groups (especially women), building new kinds of business – such as social enterprises - and bringing new life to the leisure and service sector. Like any great fighter, this City never gives up.

However, the report is unapologetic in looking forward, seeing the opportunities as vividly as the challenges. The COVID-19 shock to the national and local economies is spelt out in detail, but the report highlights ways forward that will not just take us back to the pre-COVID position, but to a stronger, healthier economy and society, both locally and nationally. COVID-19 highlighted gross unfairness and inequality which challenged our self-image as a society. This report demonstrates the new and improved approach that is emerging from a greater sense of community and local determination to shape a better future.

This report presents a solid case for moving forward on two interconnected levels. Firstly, in dealing with the continuing threat of COVID. Secondly, building an economy which is based on: widening opportunities, as was the case after the last recession; rethinking ways of organising business; and exploiting new opportunities - notably the green and knowledge economy. The core strength of this report lies in practical proposals for action, while avoiding blame and the backward glance seen too often elsewhere.

The report merits close attention by every policy maker in the City Region and beyond, reflecting The Women's Organisation and the City Region's determination to move forward, aware that good business is good business looking forward.

Signed

EM Professor Tom Cannon,
University of Liverpool

Executive Summary

The global Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has significantly impacted Liverpool City Region (LCR), its business ecosystem, and the people at the heart of its communities. This report explores the impact of COVID-19 on Liverpool City Region and concludes there are four key priority sectors and three broader programmes of change that are essential for a successful and inclusive recovery plan. These priority sectors include Social Enterprise, Self-Employment and Micro Business, Care, and the Green Economy. The broader programmes of change essential for a sustained recovery are inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality, improved educational attainment and new approaches to measuring economic wealth.

Key recommendations for creating a greener, fairer, and thriving City Region economy are outlined under each priority sector and broader programmes of change offering an economically ambitious, socially impactful, sustainable, and inclusive means to Build Back Better.

The challenges faced due to COVID-19 bring into focus the other deep-rooted structural problems in the City Region economy, notably stark health inequalities, diversity deficits, low educational attainment, social exclusion, low skill levels and business density. This report emphasises the importance of the Region's recovery response in meeting the needs of communities of interest, especially women, people of BAME groups and social entrepreneurs.

The four specific priority sectors which should be a focus of Liverpool City Region's recovery plan include:

1. The Social Economy, especially social enterprises

Accounting for nearly one in every ten people employed across the City Region, the social economy sector is thriving and provides significant opportunities for growth. Harnessing their ability to adapt, social enterprises are filling the gaps within public and private responses to COVID-19 and providing vital services across the Region.

Our recommendation

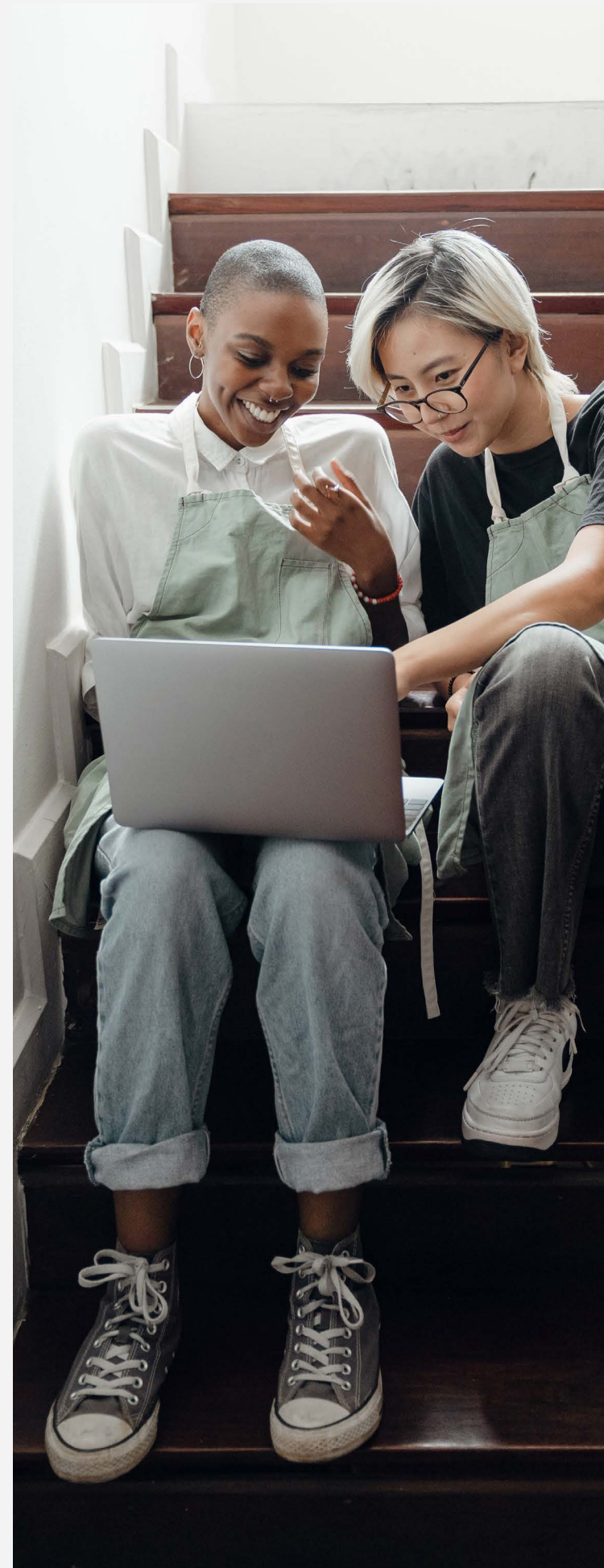
Develop and implement a £50 million investment programme in the social economy sector to accelerate its growth and the multiplication of social enterprises. Investing in the social economy, the Region will fully capitalise on the sector's potential in helping to Build Back Better by creating better quality jobs and apprenticeship opportunities, delivering vital services, creating new enterprises and leading a green revolution. It is imperative to establish a clear and sustainable social economy strategy which embeds and harnesses support provisions such as the emerging 'Kindred' and 'The Social Economy Innovation Hub' to drive the growth of the sector.

2. The Self-employed and Micro Businesses

Small businesses are the lifeblood of the UK economy, representing over 60% of all private sector employment. Evidence from the 2008-2009 recession highlights how small business creation was the key driver in the economic recovery, creating the majority of new jobs. Prior to COVID-19, Liverpool City Region boasted a developing business ecosystem which supported a marked growth in entrepreneurship and enterprise creation across the Region. Since the onset of COVID-19, the business ecosystem has moved swiftly to adapt its services to successfully support Liverpool City Region businesses to pivot and sustain. The business ecosystem now faces an increased service demand but also a significant resource deficit.

Our recommendation

Invest in and expand the current effective support for those currently in, or seeking, self-employment in order to propel the creation and growth of new businesses, and provide viable, good quality and sustainable employment opportunities for all across the Region. This support must be specifically designed to tackle the issues associated with self-employment and address the lack of diverse representation amongst SMEs, for example including female and BAME led business.



3. The Green Economy

The development and delivery of local and national COVID-19 recovery plans provide us with the opportunity to create real clean growth focused change. From greening the city's spaces, to providing incentives for businesses and individuals to cut carbon emissions, a green-focused recovery would be beneficial for all. Liverpool City Region is well positioned to become an internationally recognised leader in the green economy.

Our recommendation

Implement and invest in green economy opportunities and initiatives which go beyond the current national and international targets and aspirations to make transformational environmental impact across Liverpool City Region. Include ambitious initiatives such as the greening of every public and commercial building in Liverpool City Region through energy efficiency measures, accelerating and equipping electric vehicle demand and infrastructure, and encouraging large scale greening of community spaces.

Simultaneously, the three broader programmes of change that can benefit the wider economy and society include:

1. firmly **embedding inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality** across the Region;
2. providing **transformed educational attainments, skills, and opportunities** for everyone;
3. and **addressing and redesigning how we measure economic wealth**.

These priority sectors and the broader programmes of change will deliver a successful Regional recovery, provide specific gains, and reinforce the capacity of the other hard-hit sectors, notably the arts, creative, and visitor economy.

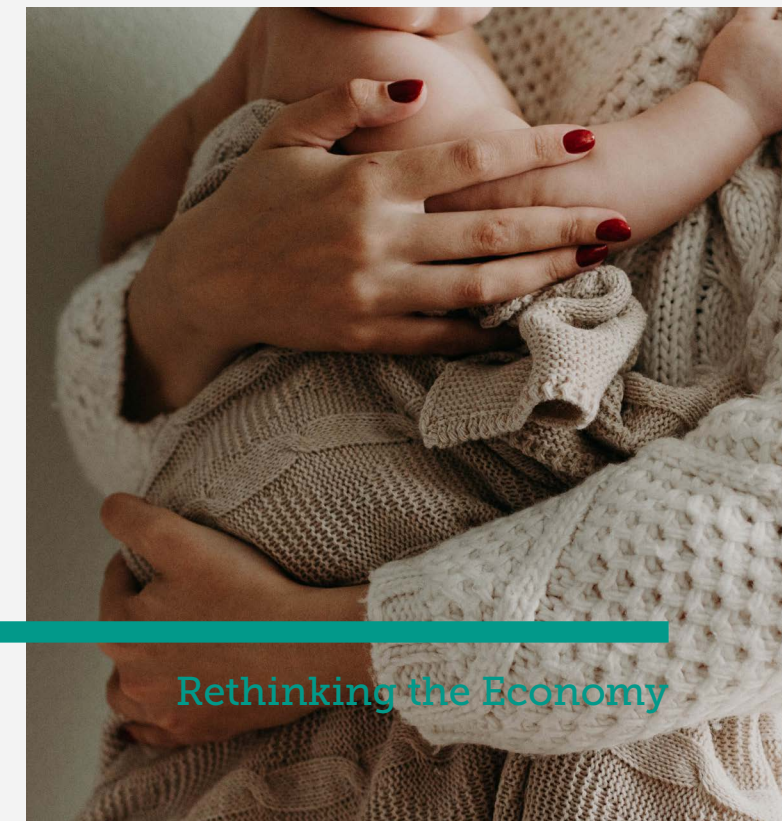


4. The Care Sector

Nationally the care sector contributes £46.2 billion to the UK economy, and represents 6% of total employment with an estimated 1.8 million jobs. Overall, the purchases made by those employed in this sector are estimated to have contributed £11.1 billion of GVA to the economy and a further 251,300 jobs. The economic contribution of the care sector in Liverpool City Region reflects the national economic impact profile. The sector also provides vital social value, and that, combined with its economic potential merits it being a key focus in the recovery plan of Liverpool City Region.

Our recommendation

Reposition the care sector as a high value contributor to the Liverpool City Region economy. Develop and implement a transformational approach to the design, delivery, and scale of investment in the sector by creating an integrated Liverpool City Region-wide model of professional training and support, parity of esteem with NHS staffing and pay structures and inclusive procurement processes which prioritise social value.



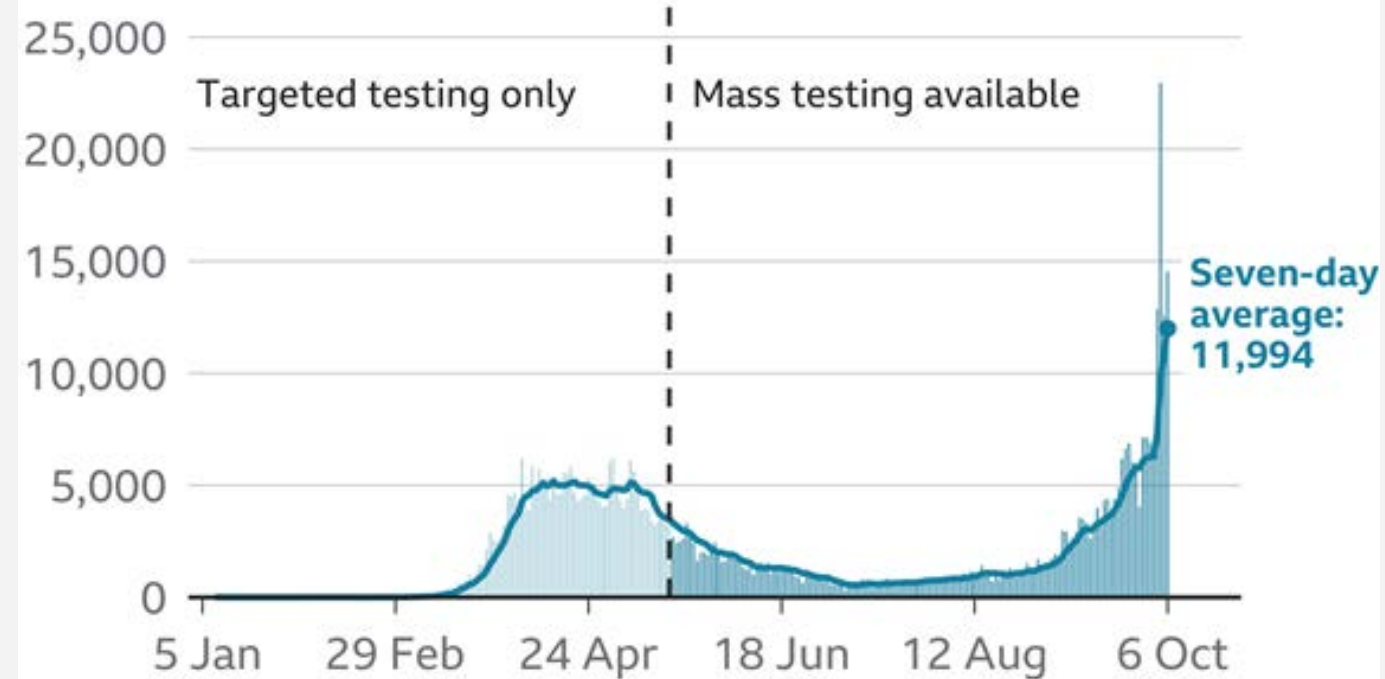
The Coronavirus outbreak has delivered a profound shock to the UK, directly impacting public health, wellbeing, jobs, care, education, social inclusion, productivity and the wider economy. Research highlights key disparities in the impact of the pandemic upon society: the risk of dying from COVID-19 is far greater amongst those living in more deprived areas than those living in more affluent areas: it is higher amongst BAME people

than in white ethnic groups; and higher amongst males than females. Further to this, the challenges facing specific marginalised groups of society (such as BAME people, women, disabled people and lone parents) have been deepened by COVID-19. Due to these pre-existing inequalities, different groups of society are experiencing unparalleled socio-economic crises differently and often disproportionately.

National picture of COVID-19

Daily confirmed cases rise

Daily confirmed coronavirus cases by date reported



Cases spiked on the 3 & 4 Oct due to 16,000 unreported cases being added in bulk

Figure 1: Daily confirmed cases of coronavirus in the UK



The pandemic has had a catastrophic impact upon the national economy. The UK is calculated to have suffered between a 25% - 35% economic decrease in the second quarter of 2020, driven by a broad decline across all sectors of the economy. Based on the hope that the economy bounces back relatively quickly, research forecasts a 13% overall economic contraction in 2020. To this end, the government has employed new economic tools to try and

ensure the economy does not collapse, whilst also responding to the immediate crisis of the UK's health and social care system. However, the focus seems to have now shifted from supporting the fallout caused by the pandemic, to planning the economic recovery, without recognition of the need for these two priorities to happen simultaneously.

Liverpool City Region Picture: Pre- COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19, Liverpool City Region was the most productive city region in the North, with an economy valued at £32.4 billion. The Region has the ambition to build a truly inclusive economy, achieve greater labour market equality and eradicate the pockets of concentrated poverty caused by its skills and employability gap. With a proud history of being an innovative, creative, diverse, ambitious and connected society, the Region's progress is recognised locally, nationally and globally. Liverpool City Region stakeholders worked hard over a number of years to ensure the Region's economy was growing, realising and playing to its significant strengths and huge potential.

Liverpool City Region Picture: During COVID-19

Although Liverpool City Region was on a positive trajectory and within a position of growth prior to COVID-19, the Region was also suffering pre-existing inequalities and persistent economic difficulties.

Liverpool City Region has a long history of entrenched challenges: poor health and wellbeing; gender and race inequalities; social and spatially excluded communities; high unemployment; and severe skills gaps, especially amongst young people. The Region's historic employment gap and high levels of economic inactivity - low employment, high unemployment, a relatively low jobs density and a high share of workers with no qualifications - resulted in a significant productivity

gap. Further, despite a 1.7% increase between 2015-2018, the Region's employment growth was predicted to decline to 0.5% between 2018-2021. The Region suffered severe economic fallout from the 2008-2009 recession. The damages associated with economic fallout, paired with its ongoing and deep-rooted socio-economic challenges, have continued to impact the Region's economic performance. These entrenched social and economic issues facing the Region have been detrimentally impacted by the pandemic.

Infection and mortality rates are significantly higher in Liverpool City Region than many other areas of the country, likely a consequence of higher levels of deprivation. Employment rates are at an all-time low, with an unprecedented number of residents now claiming Universal Credit. Economic output is forecasted to fall by at least 50% as several sectors across the Region have been required to stop trading, including those vital to the growth of the City Region such as leisure, retail, culture, and tourism. Not least, the significant health, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19 have been felt more desperately and acutely in the City Region.

With the depth and severity of the impact of COVID-19 upon Liverpool City Region predicted to be significant and long-term, it is clear that the City Region is not facing the global pandemic from a position of strength.

National Business Impact of COVID-19

The spread of COVID-19 has generated substantial uncertainty for UK businesses, which are navigating the financial and operational challenges caused by the pandemic. Millions of workers and business owners have found themselves in employment and sustainability crises. Although the Government business support schemes provided immediate financial aid to businesses, many fear the support is only keeping firms afloat, with UK banks now lobbying the Chancellor to prepare for the collapse of hundreds of thousands of small firms as the support comes to an end. The impact of these support systems upon UK businesses will only reveal itself in the long term. Nearly half of businesses accessing the Government's £18.5 billion Bounce Back Loan Scheme state they are unlikely to be able to repay the cash injection. Similarly, as of April 2020, 59% of businesses said they only had three months or less cash in reserve, leaving many firms in precarious positions with no bounce back options and the distinct possibility of an L-shaped downturn to the UK business economy.

Furthermore, COVID-19 is having a profound effect upon the UK labour market. The drastic rise in claimant count - an increase in 1.4 million people from March to July - indicates the UK is facing an unprecedented increase in unemployment. Research suggests the national unemployment rate could peak to 10% before falling back down as the economy opens back up. Already over 730,000 people have lost their jobs since March, and 30% of business were planning to lay off more

staff over the next three months (August - October 2020). Many argue the Job Retention Scheme, which has financially supported 9.4 million employees since it was introduced in March, has only delayed the mass unemployment crisis expected to occur once this support ends.

The social and economic impact of the pandemic has been unparalleled, and unlike anything the country has experienced previously. Research, using the 2008-2009 recession as a benchmark for assessing the potential impact of COVID-19 and to forecast a possible timeframe of recovery based on the findings, suggests a 7½ year recovery period for the UK economy from the recession. However, the OECD's evaluation of the initial impact of COVID-19 upon UK economic activity suggests the crisis could far outweigh anything experienced during the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. This research suggests the UK economy could actually face an even longer period of recovery - more towards a decade-long timescale - from the pandemic.

Moreover, it is reasonable to question whether the self-employment led recovery from the 2008-2009 recession - the total number of people working as self-employed rose by over 750,000 during the 7½ year recovery period - reflected changes in the nature of employment and attitudes to venturing into work, rather than a post-crisis shift towards flexible, insecure forms of employment as an alternative to long-term unemployment. This rapid growth in self-employment was a cause of concern, as much of the self-employment work following the

2008-2009 recession was at the lower-skilled end, rather than high-skilled or professional roles. If the pattern of recovery from this COVID-19 recession is the same as the 2008-2009 recession, we can anticipate a further surge in self-employment in response to the mass unemployment caused by the pandemic. A shift will need to be made in support for self-employed people if we are to ensure this surge in self-employment provides viable, good quality, sustainable jobs.

UK SMEs are particularly vulnerable within the current climate, with many predicted to not have the capabilities to withstand the COVID-19 shock. Sectors which depend on customer footfall such as leisure, entertainment, retail, and tourism are most significantly affected, whilst UK scaleup companies – including those which have moved from a business start-up phase to a growth phase - are found to be especially vulnerable, with 22% already at severe risk of closure, and 615,000 start-up and scaleup jobs at risk. Undoubtedly, UK businesses are already suffering a mass decline in productivity and profit - with more to be endured - and many fearing they may not weather the COVID-19 storm.

Liverpool City Region Business impact of COVID-19

Businesses and sectors across the Region are suffering a significant downturn; many businesses have been forced to temporarily close, and a third are uncertain whether they will be able to survive. The sectors in which the economy is heavily reliant, including manufacturing, tourism and visitor economy, retail and motor

trades have been forecasted to see a fall in output of at least 50%, making the Region more exposed to extreme sector impacts than other parts of the country. Liverpool City Region business economic performance has historically been impacted by deep-rooted socio-economic challenges. COVID-19 has deepened these pre-existing challenges, detrimentally impacting the Region's business ecosystem at a disproportionate rate. Moreover, despite the national support schemes, a sharp increase in business failure across the Region is expected as a result of the pandemic, which will further add to the already low business density and low employment rate of the Region's pre COVID-19 business ecosystem.



Dealing with the now

The UK has deployed core support schemes and aid to tackle the immediate and long-term challenges occurring throughout the nation, with thousands of businesses and individuals still in the thick of the crises unfolding. However, the local and national lens seems to be focused on developing and delivering a recovery plan. This is despite the rapid rate at which COVID-related crises are still unfolding across the country, when simultaneously there is still an enormous amount of work to do in responding to the crises happening right now. National and local leaders are aware that the current support schemes which are keeping people afloat, out of debt and with food on the table, have end dates looming closer every day. The damages and catastrophes which are currently presenting themselves may actually just be the tip of the iceberg.

Stakeholder evidence from SMEs and social enterprises clearly indicates that the crises are far from over; they may only be just beginning. To that end, immediate attention needs to be given to dealing with the current crises and planning for the fallout of future potential spikes.

The UK Government has implemented a range of Coronavirus support schemes, including the Job Retention Scheme; Self-Employment Income Support Scheme; Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan; Business Grant Fund; Bounce Back Loans; and the Coronavirus Future Fund. Whilst these schemes have provided immediate support to those eligible, multiple

groups of people have fallen through the cracks of the support, including women who have taken maternity leave in the last three years; newly self-employed people; and company directors who earn their income through dividends.

Recent reports predict the UK economy will be recovering from the fallout of COVID-19 for many months, if not years, with the impact affecting different groups and parts of society at disproportionate rates. Failure to take into account the social and economic challenges facing particular groups of society within the recovery plans (such as women, people of BAME groups, and disabled people) will widen existing inequalities and entrench them even further.

As detailed previously, the pandemic is having a catastrophic impact upon the UK economy, with a predicted 13% contraction overall in 2020. UK businesses have been at the forefront of the fallout, with an unprecedented amount still at critical risk of closure, which would leave thousands out of jobs and millions of households vulnerable. Gaps within the Government support schemes are still being identified. Many firms are only just managing to stem the tide of the impact on their business, unable to predict whether they will survive and sustain through this current climate, let alone thrive in a post-pandemic world. By focusing on recovery, local and national Government are simply ignoring the catastrophes still unfolding daily and failing to support the

thousands of businesses and individuals still in crisis.

Furthermore, with the tide turning toward recovery, many fear the economic crisis is being underestimated and policy makers are not appreciating what it could mean to be in the “deepest recession since the Second World War”. The UK has implemented drastic support scheme infrastructures across the board to support the livelihoods of the nation, consequently placing many into a false sense of security as they are being shielded from the impending crises still ahead when the schemes grind to a halt. These crises, including mass unemployment and a record low productivity rate, are far reaching and could impact society and the economy for many years to come. The Job Retention Scheme, which will total £80billion+ at its end date in October, has been praised for providing a “lifeline for millions”. Its successor, the recently announced Job Support Scheme, intends to help businesses retain their employees during a period of lower demand. However, the need for employer contribution, and the cap set within the scheme does not recognise the scale of plummeting demand. Therefore many viable businesses will be unable to retain employees.

The sectors most vulnerable to mass unemployment include those predominately occupied by women and people of BAME groups and are usually low-paid sectors such as hospitality, retail, and leisure. Nationally, women equate to nearly 60% of the Retail sector, and 26% of the Hospitality, Travel, and Leisure industry, whilst 18% of workers from BAME groups are in low

paid and insecure work (compared to 15% of white workers). Due to this, women, and people of BAME groups have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and experts are now warning that the devastating effect the pandemic is having upon gender equality could set women’s progress back decades.

The long-term consequences of the pandemic could be far-reaching for women; a recent study identified that mothers were 47% more likely to have permanently lost or quit their job, and 14% were more likely to have been furloughed since the start of the crises. Dr Sara Reis, Head of Research and Policy at the Women’s Budget Group worries that “the impact on women’s earnings and employment prospects will widen existing gender inequalities, not least the gender wage gap”. Not only that, the Government’s guidance on easing lockdown and opening non-essential shops and offices, whilst providing “inconsistent and incoherent” guidance surrounding schools and nurseries traps more parents, especially women who do the majority of the childcare, between a rock and hard place.

Local and national Government should focus on planning the recovery from the fallout of the support schemes as a matter of urgency, otherwise the initial “euphoria will quickly fade in the grimmest of winters”.

Recovery Planning Priorities

This report concludes there are four specific priority sectors which should be the focus of Liverpool City Region’s recovery plan and three broader programmes of change that can benefit the wider economy and society. The key sectors are:

1. The Social Economy, especially Social Enterprises

2. The Self-employed and Micro Businesses

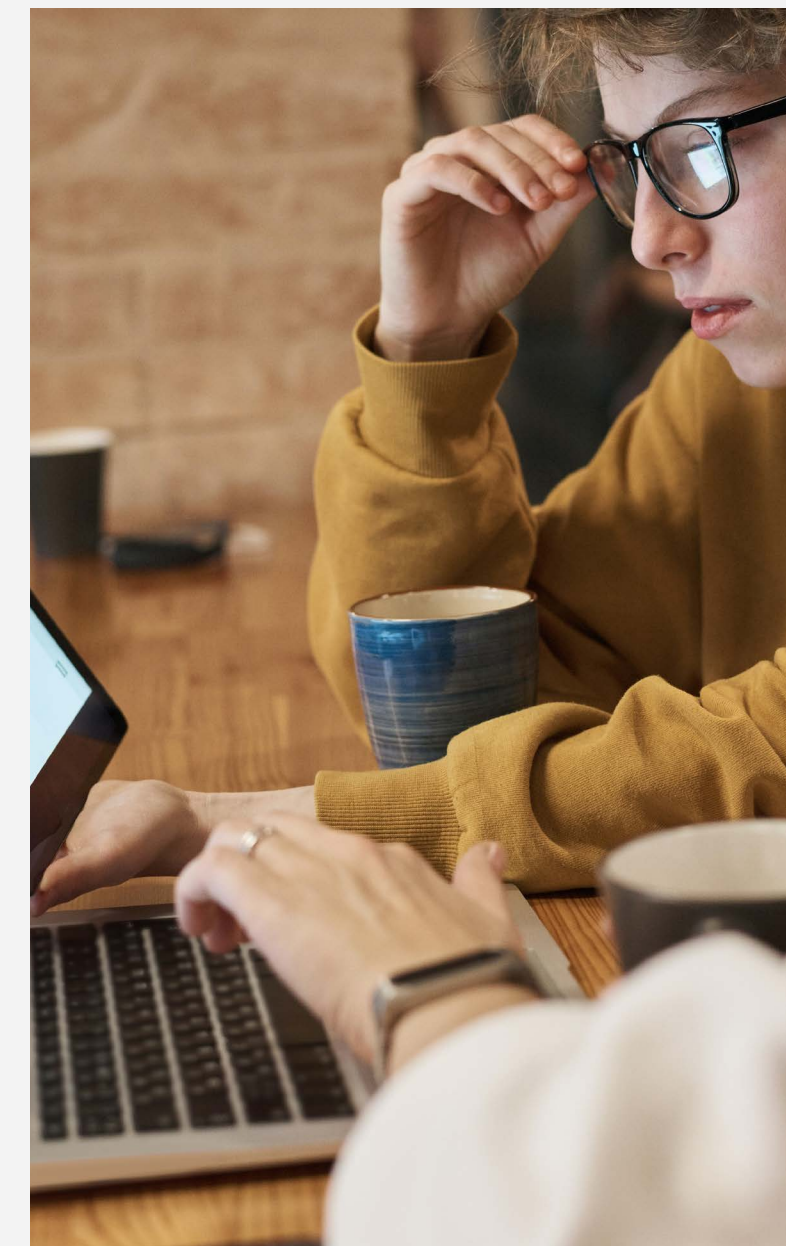
3. The Green Economy

4. The Care Sector

Simultaneously, the three broader programmes of change that can benefit the wider economy and society include:

1. firmly **embedding inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality** across the Region;
2. providing **transformed educational attainments, skills, and opportunities** for everyone;
3. and **addressing and redesigning how we measure economic wealth.**

These priority sectors and the broader programmes of change will deliver a successful regional recovery, provide specific gains, and reinforce the capacity of the other hard-hit sectors, notably the arts, creative, and visitor economy.



Specific Priority Sectors

The Social Economy Sector

In terms of key economic drivers, there is a significant body of research and data which acknowledges the social economy sector to be an accelerator of local economies, reaping better economic, social and productivity outcomes both locally and globally. Not only do the sector's innovative approaches make it more competitive than traditional firms, it also commits to environmental sustainability, provides necessary services, creates well paid good quality jobs, and generates and distributes income fairly. The social economy works alongside the private and public sectors to blend self-help with mutuality to work for the common good.

Liverpool City Region's social economy is a prime example of the breadth and depth of economic and social productivity achieved by social enterprises. The sector accounts for nearly one in ten people employed across Liverpool's 500,000 employees, generating an annual income of £3 billion. The sector's 1400 community-owned organisations, with their significant advantages such as resilience, distributed risk, diversity, and high innovation capabilities, provide goods and services aimed at addressing the primary challenges facing the Region. Social enterprises are harnessing their power to adapt and



are working tirelessly to fill the gaps within public and private sector responses to COVID-19 and provide essential goods and services to their local communities. However, although the region's social economy sector was valued at £4.3 billion prior to COVID-19 - only marginally less than the Region's £4.6 billion visitor economy sector - the sector's full potential for growth, and its ability to adapt to the current impact of the pandemic, has not been harnessed.

The social economy is recognised to improve inclusive growth by providing employment support services and/or good quality jobs with fair pay for the

most disadvantaged workforce, whilst also building diversified local economies and contributing to wider economic and institutional transformation. The social economy sector must be harnessed, and invested in, as a priority sector within the Liverpool City Region recovery plan. By investing in the social economy sector, LCR acknowledges the potential the sector has in delivering vital services to the people of the Region and provides the sector with essential support to harness its growth and self-sustainability.

An example of an investment opportunity to support and grow the Liverpool City Region business ecosystem is The Social Economy

Innovation Hub. The Social Economy Innovation Hub will be a National Centre for Social Enterprise, acting as a flagship facility and key driver of social enterprise growth and development locally, nationally, and globally. The Social Economy Innovation Hub will help the social economy and the Region's business ecosystem to respond to, and recover from the social and economic damage caused to the region's communities and economies. The Social Economy Innovation Hub will be an internationally recognised exemplar of social enterprise formation and development. It will create and provide new and sustainable jobs, and contribute to the creation of new social businesses.

Social Enterprise Activity

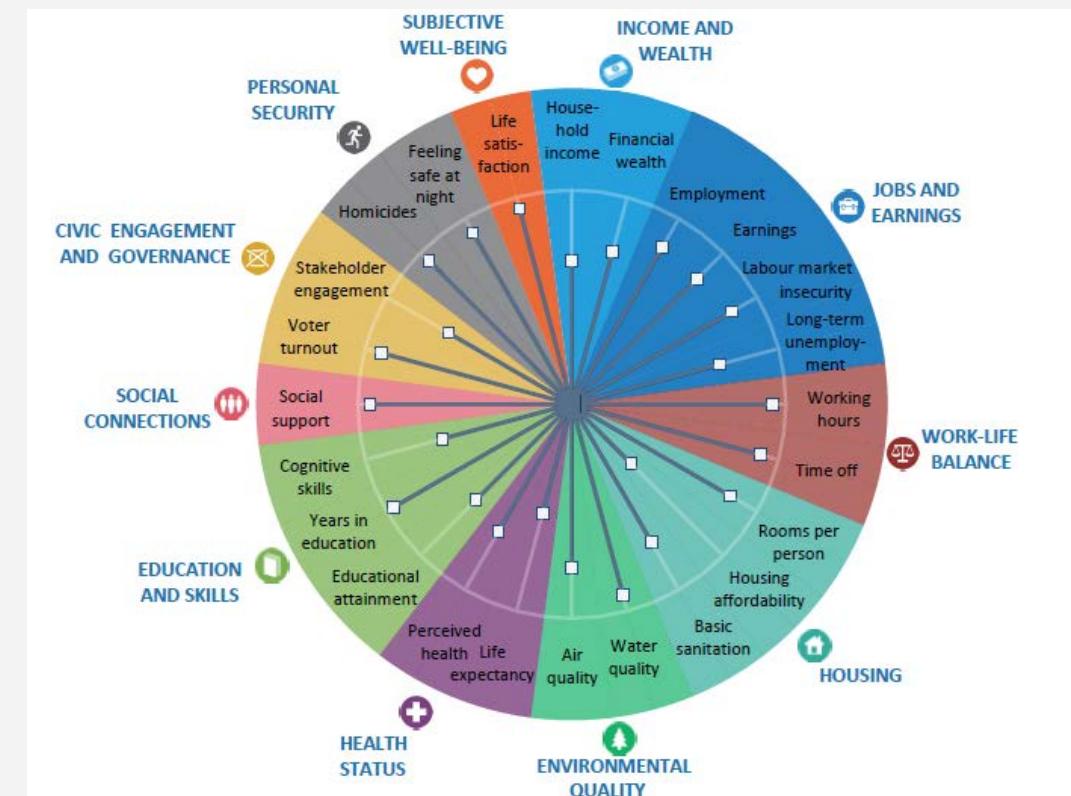


Figure 2. Scope of social enterprise activities within the social economy

The Self-Employed and Micro Businesses

The growth of self-employment and the creation of micro-businesses was a central tenet of Liverpool City Region's response to the 2008-2009 recession, highlighting how small business creation was and will be a key driver in the recovery. Research reports small businesses have been disproportionately impacted by lockdown due to social distancing measures, particularly those within the leisure sector and customer-orientated services. Although the self-employed are an exceptionally diverse group, certain sections of the workforce have been struck especially hard compared to others, with women and people of BAME groups being impacted at a disproportionate rate compared to their counterparts. Immediate support, designed to meet the needs of self-employed people and micro businesses who are facing, and will continue to face, multiple crises, particularly among women and social enterprises in areas of deprivation, is required.

Legitimate concerns have been highlighted on the efficacy of the Government support provided for self-employed workers, as well as other arguably inadequate policy measures such as grants, loans, and changes to Universal Credit. Research reports many self-employed people have been unsure whether they are eligible for support, suggesting many have fallen through the cracks of the available Government support schemes altogether. Self-employed people deserve clear and concise eligibility guidance for the Government support schemes as a

matter of urgency, both locally and nationally, to ensure no more self-employed people are overlooked.

There are clear opportunities for growth despite the disparities of the sector; only 15% of SME employers are women-led and only 5% of SMEs have at least 50/50 representation of people from BAME groups on their senior management teams. Research identifies the health, education, accommodation and food service, and administration and support sectors to be occupied by 20-40% female-led SMEs, whilst the construction and transportation sector has only 8% women-led SMEs. Whilst, 60% of new growth within the UK can be attributed to women and this will increase to 80% when gender balance is supported through policy or law. Whilst these figures echo the marginalisation and inequality faced across the entrepreneurial sector, by investing in support which addresses these disparities, the Region will be able to harness the sectors potential innovation, growth and community investment.

Nia Black Business Hub and Writers Bloc are both prime examples of investment opportunities for Liverpool City Region to grow and support the self-employed and micro business sector. The Nia Black Business Hub will focus on supporting and driving the growth of BAME entrepreneurship and BAME enterprise creation across the Region. It will enable BAME-led businesses to harness their economic potential by providing specifically designed provisions which address the challenges of enterprise creation amongst the BAME community and support BAME businesses to move out



of residential homes into business premises in the City. Whereas Writers Bloc will provide an Arts Business Development Centre in the heart of the City, offering business support and physical business space specifically designed for Arts organisations across the Region. Both would sit within the Enterprise Hub collaborative. By investing in these opportunities, Liverpool City Region is harnessing the economic potential and innovation of the self-employed and micro businesses to drive the growth of the sector.

LCR must continue to invest in and expand the effective and coordinated business and entrepreneurship support in order to drive the growth of Region's business ecosystem and ensure self-employment provides good quality, sustainable jobs for all. The

support must address the issues associated with self-employment, provide vital access to funding support, and address the lack of diverse representation in SMEs, in order to accelerate the Region's growth and multiplication of micro businesses. Enhanced levels and scale of support for small business creation is critical in Liverpool City Region to help address the mass unemployment resulting from COVID-19 and will specifically help tackle youth employment which is at an all-time high. Investing in Enterprise Hub for example, which provides pre-start, start-up, and early phase business support to would-be and early stage entrepreneurs across the Region, will facilitate small business creation, growth, and sustainability, and deliver large scale economic and social dividends.

It is recognised that local and national COVID-19 recovery plans provide the opportunity to create clean growth led change and achieve the UK's net-zero carbon ambitions. Although decarbonisation is recognised nationally and globally as essential, more targeted, specific, and ambitious action is now needed. Liverpool City Region must harness the recovery plan as an opportunity to create and implement vital and widespread environmental change, from greening the City's spaces, to providing incentives for businesses and individuals to cut carbon emissions.

A green-focused recovery would be beneficial for all. Change should be both locally and nationally motivated with community driven evidence-based solutions. With so many jobs at risk across the Region, investing in innovative ways of greening the economy will help tackle mass unemployment, create good quality jobs, and address the pressing environmental crisis. It is not enough however to simply create jobs and provide retraining opportunities, the Region must ensure equal workforce representation is a priority for both existing and developing green-focused industries. This includes women being encouraged into these sectors through incentives and subsidies, such as paid educational leave, to access training or development programmes to ensure that there is equal participation.

Transport is the most emitting sector in UK, with emissions continuing to steadily grow prior to the pandemic. Calls for more holistic approaches to

transport in the UK were already widely regarded and have only become more pressing as the country commences its economic recovery plans. Liverpool City Region has already gone some way toward decarbonisation in their future transport plans during COVID-19, committing £30 million to the first phase of the 600km network of new and updated cycleways and footpaths. Liverpool City Region has the capacity to lead the way in making significant climate-focused changes to their transport system, which will have long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits, and help the Region reach its net carbon neutrality target date of 2040. Whilst transport plans correctly aim to discourage car use, they should also aim to accelerate the use of 100% electric where cars are required. Good access to fast charging points in the City Region is important for this to be viable. Liverpool City Region should now harness the recovery plan as an opportunity to make shifts in travel approaches to maintain a low carbon lifestyle, including implementing local funding and policy mechanisms for electric vehicle manufacturers and charger installation, and for those businesses and individuals who are wanting to make the shift.

Due to the global footprint of the products they import and consume, the damage cities have caused to the environment has long been of concern. Cities count for 60% of global energy used and more than 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, Liverpool City Region should deliver a recovery plan which focuses on investing in the 'Circular Economy' and low carbon businesses whose mission

reflects a drive to be socially and environmentally responsible in a post-pandemic world, and who provide good quality jobs for all in the Region.

The framework of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is recognised as presenting the UK with a multi-million-pound opportunity to improve health and wellbeing and accelerate the transition to low carbon. The SDG framework provides 17 progressive targets to achieve a prosperous, equitable and more sustainable future for all. Integrating the SDG framework across all national and local COVID-19 recovery planning should be a priority in order to create real and positive environmental change. Moreover, through the unique opportunities in tidal energy and hydrogen, Liverpool City Region are well positioned to become an internationally recognised leader in green economic activity by aligning their recovery planning with the SDG framework. In order to achieve the

ambitious green economy opportunities of the region, Liverpool City Region must harness participative working across key public, private, and third sector stakeholders to implement and deliver key strategy and policy changes.

Setting ambitious targets and investing in diverse and innovative solutions which push the boundaries of national and international aspirations as part of the recovery plan will help achieve a leadership position in the fight against climate change. Solutions include investing in the creation of green and circular economy small businesses as well as bold initiatives such as the greening of every building in the Region through the deployment of energy saving measures; encouraging and enabling the use and infrastructure of clean transportation; and the large scale greening of community spaces.



The Care Sector

Over the last decade, not only has the care sector experienced unprecedented cuts across the board, impacting the quality, delivery, and amount of care being provided, it has also suffered a reputation of being low-skilled work. According to Centre for Cities, Liverpool had seen the biggest drop in local government spending per head in Britain, forcing the council to reduce the number and range of services they provide. Prior to COVID-19, care was seen as a profession which is low-skilled and low-paid, despite the rising numbers of patients and clients dependent on NHS and social care support. Undoubtedly, the Region's care workers are facing the crisis from an already severely overstretched sector.

COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated the deep inequalities of gender, race, disability, and wealth within our society. Women make up the majority of care sector workers who are providing vital health and social care services across the UK. Women also carry out on average 60% more unpaid care than men, with this responsibility having increased due to school and nursery closures during COVID-19. Research conducted by Carers UK calculated the economic value of the unpaid care provided by women in the UK prior to the pandemic to be estimated at £77 billion per year – a value which has surely increased in light of COVID-19. Due to pre-existing inequalities in the labour market and the economy, and because of the amount of paid and unpaid care work they provide, women have been disproportionately socially and economically impacted by COVID-19.

There is a need to reposition the care sector as a high value social and economic contributor to the Liverpool City Region economy. The critical role the sector plays in providing care to vulnerable individuals and as an underpinning facilitator of economic activity needs to be reflected in the Region's recovery plan. The sector experienced extraordinary additional pressures due to COVID-19 and has demonstrated care work as highly skilled and essential element of the local economic landscape. The Liverpool City Region recovery plan should therefore address structural inequalities within the care sector which relate to pay, parity of esteem with other health professionals, and training and support.



Broader Programmes of Change



The three broader programmes of change that can benefit the wider economy and society include:

1. firmly **embedding inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality** across the Region;
2. providing **transformed educational attainments, skills, and opportunities** for everyone;
3. and **addressing and redesigning how we measure economic wealth**.

These priority sectors and the broader programmes of change will deliver a successful regional recovery, provide specific gains, and reinforce the capacity of the other hard-hit sectors, notably the arts, creative, and visitor economy.

Embedding an Inclusive, Diverse, and Gender Equal Economy

Research recognises the power of a fundamentally reshaped economy which achieves a diverse, gender equal society by putting the care and well-being of people and the planet at its centre. Prior to COVID-19, socio-economic analysis of the City Region identified specific groups, such as BAME groups, women and disabled people, to be facing economic marginalisation and social disadvantage, and to require specific and targeted support.

Gender equality and diversity are essential to fulfil our economic potential as a Region. There is a recognised need for a shift to bring in gender-aware policies to help support those who are some of the hardest hit by the pandemic. Research identifies the cause and consequence of gender inequality and lack of diversity across the LCR - low productivity, lack of public investment, increased automation, an ageing population, as well as various social challenges including low pay, in-work poverty and a crisis in public services – to have been deepened due to the global pandemic. More specifically, women make up the majority (69%) of low paid earners, whilst 1 in 3 people from BAME groups are in insecure, low paid employment. However, research concludes that 60% of new growth both nationally and globally can be attributed to women, which increases to 80% in those areas where gender balance is supported in policy and law. Not only is gender equality and diversity good for

growth, it is also necessary in order to build an economy that is fair, prosperous, sustainable and resilient.

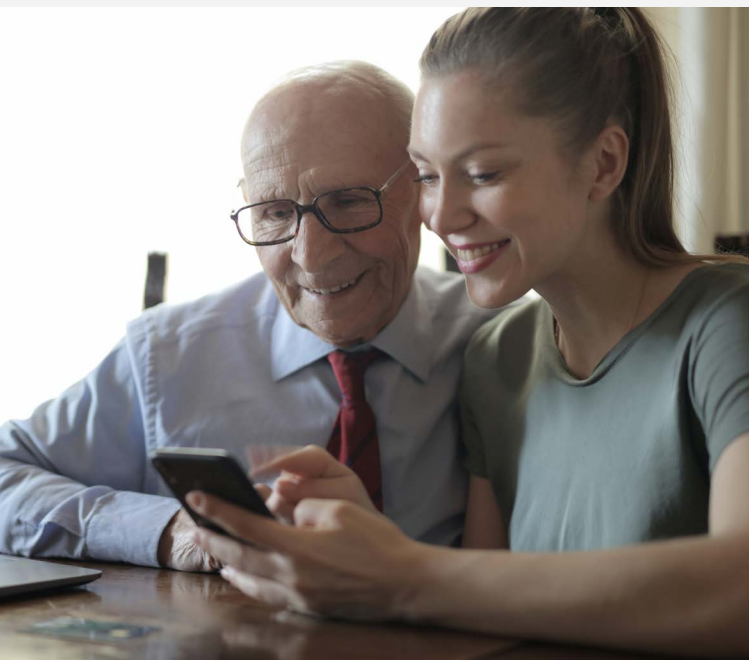
Without accepting that certain marginalised groups of society are affected disproportionately by policy outcomes, there is no way of creating long lasting change.

Without a system-wide change, the economy will continue to only serve to exacerbate inequalities. Women and other marginalised groups need to be a part of the decision-making processes, so the value of equal representation can be seen. To make an economy fairer for all, all need to be involved. This argument is supported by the work around 'doughnut economics', which focuses on identifying societal shortfalls in relation to ecological areas that are overshooting to see where adjustment and recalibration is needed. Economic indicators that measure the failings in society, and can address them, lead to an economy that can activate real change. By embedding diversity and gender equality within policy-making decisions, the region can harness the long overdue cultural shift needed to tackle the structural inequalities impacting marginalised groups of society. It is vital that Liverpool City Region makes key structural changes in order to harness diversity and gender equality as a key economic driver to fulfil the economic potential of the Region, and address the pre-existing challenges facing marginalised groups which have been further deepened due to the pandemic.

Firmly Rooted Educational Attainment, Skills, and Opportunities for All

There is an increasing polarisation between the economic growth and social progress of the region, a divide which has been further deepened due to the impact of the pandemic. As well as entrenching pre-existing inequalities, the pandemic has had a detrimental impact upon the skills, jobs, and wellbeing of the Region. Liverpool City Region needs to place a relentless focus upon providing educational attainment, skills, and opportunities for all across the Region. The priorities outlined in the local Skills Strategy, including creating good quality jobs, improving skills, and providing better opportunities for all, could not be more relevant.

Around 7.6 million jobs are at risk due to COVID-19, impacting 24% of the UK workforce. Research has found these risks to be highly skewed, with people and places with the lowest income to be most vulnerable to job loss. Those



in casual employment are most at risk, with 50% of all jobs at risk earning less than £10 per hour. Unsurprisingly, jobs at risk and pay are both correlated with levels of education; only an estimated 24% of employees within the most affected sectors - the hospitality, retail, and construction industries - have a higher education qualification, and more than 50% of workers in each do not have qualifications beyond GCSEs. Although this does not exclude highly educated people from lockdown risks, clearly evident within the arts and entertainment sector which has 45% tertiary educated employees and is the second most affected sector.

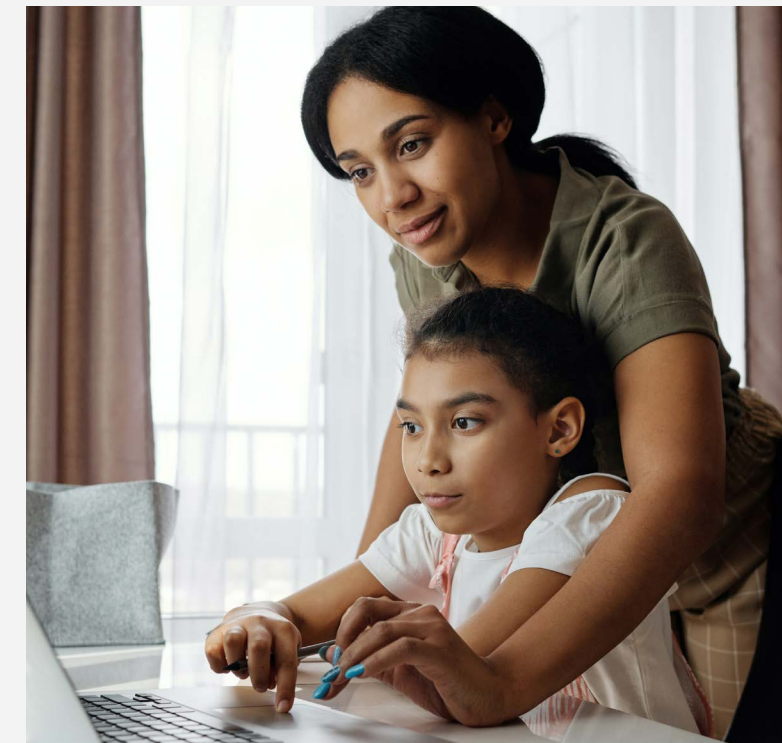
Education, or the lack of, is playing a clear part in the prosperity and success of the UK's workforce.

By the end of June, the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) was recorded to be keeping 9.3 million furloughed workers out of unemployment by providing financial support. However, a large proportion of those protected under the current scheme are predicted to be forced into mass unemployment after August when employers are expected to subsidise 40% of JRS support. The mass unemployment caused by COVID-19 only exacerbates the challenges associated with the unemployment and skills gap previously identified across the country, particularly within the Liverpool City Region. Liverpool City Region needs to implement a people-focused recovery plan to address the unemployment and subsequent retraining needs of those facing employment crises due to the pandemic.

Categorised as 'the lost generation', young individuals such as school pupils, university students, and graduates look set to bear the brunt of the damage caused by COVID-19. Not only that, a third of employees aged between 16 and 24 have lost their jobs or been furloughed, compared to only a sixth of working adults aged 25 and above. Young people are the most likely age group to work in 'atypical' jobs within the retail and hospitality industries and are therefore being directly impacted by lockdown measures. The City Region has major higher, further, and other educational assets that need to be effectively mobilised in the immediate post-COVID-19 period to deliver city-wide transformations. To date, these partners have played important local and national roles, and the challenge now is to turn this good will into a powerful engine for change, ensuring that no generation is lost.

Local and national Government should prioritise targeting support at those who are entering the labour market for the first time, providing additional skills and learning to young people who are projected to face reduced pay and a 13% lower employment rate during the crisis than they would have been before the crisis. Liverpool City Region must provide targeted support for the Region's young people and help tackle the elevated risks of them spending long periods in unemployment, by providing job guarantees for young people and focusing apprenticeships on young workers.

Recent research already confirms the very real impacts COVID-19 is having



upon the mental and emotional wellbeing of young people, with nearly half of young people across the UK not feeling in control of their lives at the moment. Local and national Government needs to focus their support in helping the 'Corona class of 2020' stay in education for longer to improve skills, increase job prospects, and help them gain back control of their future. The benefits of staying in education for another year are staggering, with the risk of reduced employment halved by leaving education in 2021, compared to leaving in 2020, even before the benefits of additional learning are included. Liverpool City Region should introduce new maintenance support for young people across further and higher education, as well as funding for short courses at college and university to make it easier for people to stay in education for up to six months to boost their skills.

Addressing and redesigning how we measure economic wealth

GDP is used as a measurement of economic progression was created from a need to measure necessary resources during the war. Research states GDP should be treated as an economic snapshot, and part of an aggregation of measurements and indicators. However, GDP has become synonymous as being the only measurement used to calculate economic growth and progression.

There is no doubt that the Region's economy has been detrimentally impacted by the pandemic, along with inequalities and environmental crises which have only been exacerbated. These unprecedented times have forced us to re-address and re-evaluate what we value, and how we work - with a UK poll stating only 9% of people want to return to how things were pre-COVID-19. It is clear an economy solely focused on monetary value will struggle to stay relevant in a post-COVID-19 world.

This crisis has proven that how we measure economic growth needs to be reassessed and redefined in order to shift the view of progress being a monetary value only, to an economy focused on quality of life.

There is historical debate surrounding the alternatives to GDP to measure economic wellbeing, and while no specific method has been agreed upon, there is a reoccurring theme that GDP is not enough. Research suggests alternative measures that look at the environment, good-quality jobs, inequalities and people's health and

wellbeing, as being the indicators of economic progress. Further, GDP does not represent who is benefiting from wealth and does not reflect the value of a region's economy and its areas of strength, such as care - the majority of which is done by women.

Research recognises the need to re-evaluate priority sectors of society within the measurement of economic growth. These sectors, such as the care sector – employing

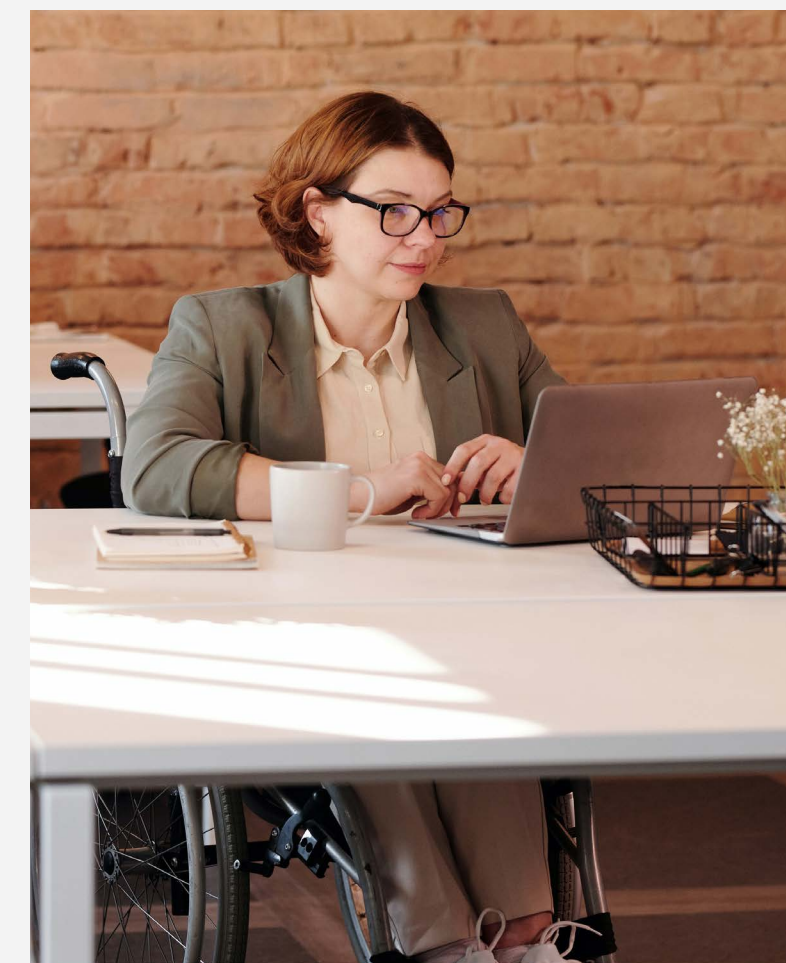


crises of the region.

Liverpool City Region must harness the period of recovery from COVID-19 as an opportunity to re-examine how the Region measures its economic growth, and the quality of its progress, in order to tackle its long term, pre-existing challenges and deliver a better future for all. By repositioning the current goals surrounding economic growth, the Region is able to establish where its future growth lies, and to develop an investment strategy into industries and sectors which reflects this. This will also enable Liverpool City Region to address the potential unemployment crisis occurring across the region, with 160,000 jobs predicted to be at risk as a result of COVID-19.

predominantly women – are undervalued and underinvested in within the current economic climate. Women-led sectors are usually excluded or seen as irrelevant within traditional economic plans and investment strategies. Formally identified as low-skilled employment, the impact these sectors have upon society has been amplified due to the pandemic, and the work they provide is now being addressed for what is it – essential. This appreciation has been further endorsed by the Government's recent plan for pay increases for public sector workers in England.

Moreover, the automotive manufacturing industry has been a key economic driver of the Liverpool City Region and recognised as a strength and area of potential growth for the Region, despite global research confirming the industry is causing catastrophic environmental harm. By continuing to place a strong emphasis on this area, Liverpool City Region are missing out on the potential of other more sustainable and innovative sectors. For example, the fashion and textiles industry, which hires three times as many people as the automotive industry, is excluded from the Region's areas of potential growth. As well as being damaging to the environment, the automotive sector only employs 15% women, compared to the 80% women employment rate of the fashion and textile industry. Economic value alone should no longer be the only required outcome of investment; instead, the emphasis should be placed on industries that provide social benefits, deliver good quality jobs and tackle the inequalities and environmental



Recommendations

Through an intensive and in-depth research process, this report outlines several recommendations, categorised into the specific priority areas, for the development and delivery of a successful and sustainable recovery plan.



The Social Economy

Liverpool City Region must invest in the social economy in order to accelerate its growth and multiplication of social enterprises. Investment could involve developing a social economy growth strategy which aims to provide availability of grant and investment funds, business training and support for scaling up and growth, as well as regionally identified centres of support to gain peer-to-peer guidance. Kindred, which aims to connect, support, and harness local entrepreneurialism for social good, is an example of Region's investment in the social economy. Kindred provides socially trading organisations with sector-specific support and works collectively with organisations and funders to maximise the sectors socio-economic potential. The region should harness Kindred and other support provisions as part of a social economy strategy to drive the growth of the social economy.

Now more than ever, it is vital that the region invests in organisations providing services which actively benefit and advance the social and economic wellbeing of its residents.

Recommendations include:

- Establish a clear and sustainable “social economy” strategy harnessing Kindred and The Social Economy Innovation Hub support provisions to drive the growth of the sector
- Invest in the social economy sector in order to accelerate its growth and provide the sector with essential support to harness its self-sustainability
- Recognise the social economy sector's potential of delivering vital services to the Region
- Ensure large employers are engaging in responsible business activities aligned to the principles of the City Region and paying the Real Living Wage
- Invest in local socially owned, responsible organisations who reinvest and share their wealth
- Prioritise the distributed and diverse growth of the social economy through its community-controlled organisations - across people and locations – to reduce the high risk of concentration and dependence on a few large employers, providers and places

The Self-Employed and Micro Businesses

Liverpool City Region must invest in and expand the support and training for the sector to harness its socioeconomic potential, and ensure the thousands of self-employed people and micro businesses who are facing multiple crises - particularly among women and social enterprises in areas of deprivation – are supported to sustain and grow their business.

Recommendations include:

- Invest in and expand effective support for self-employed people and micro businesses across the region to tackle the well-documented issues associated with self-employment, and ensure the expected surge in self-employment is harnessed to provide viable, good quality, and sustainable jobs
- Ensure appropriate support is provided for people of BAME groups and women
- Embed a robust enterprise culture across Liverpool City Region to promote entrepreneurship and enterprise creation
- Invest in self-employment and micro business support provision to successfully drive the continued growth of the region's enterprise ecosystem
- Employ key structural changes to policies impacting self-employed people to ensure Liverpool City Region utilises the full potential of self-employment in recovering and growing the region's economy
- Provide clear and concise eligibility guidance of the Government support schemes as a matter of urgency, both locally and nationally, to ensure no more self-employed people fall through the cracks
- Address the lack of diverse representation amongst SMEs through an innovative recovery plan

The Green Economy Sector

A green-focused recovery can be beneficial to all in many ways. With unique opportunities in tidal energy and hydrogen, Liverpool City Region are well-positioned to become an internationally recognised leader in green economic activity, which creates viable jobs and tackles inequalities by aligning their recovery plan to the SDG framework.

Recommendations include:

- Make buildings fit for the future by delivering major infrastructure programmes across the region to decarbonise buildings and improve energy efficiency
- Encourage and equip the use and infrastructure of clean transport methods
- Deploy large scale greening of public and community spaces
- Pedestrianize public spaces
- Protect, restore, and increase access to nature-rich green space to provide sustainable economies, and improve social and mental wellbeing
- Support new green and circular economy business development
- Align the recovery plan with the SDG framework to create real and positive environmental change and become an internationally recognised leader in green activity
- Implement policies that centre on environmental change to achieve the goals of net-zero emissions, drive economic growth, and educate the next generation

The Care Sector

The care sector has experienced crippling pressure due to the pandemic. Liverpool City Region should reflect the solidarity and appreciation shown to the care sector by our communities within its economic recovery plans by rewarding and investing in the sector. There is a need to reposition the sector as a key economic driver, and to recognise the enormous contribution that unpaid care makes the economy. Liverpool City Region should invest in care at the same rate at which it invests in the physical redevelopment of the Region.

Recommendations include:

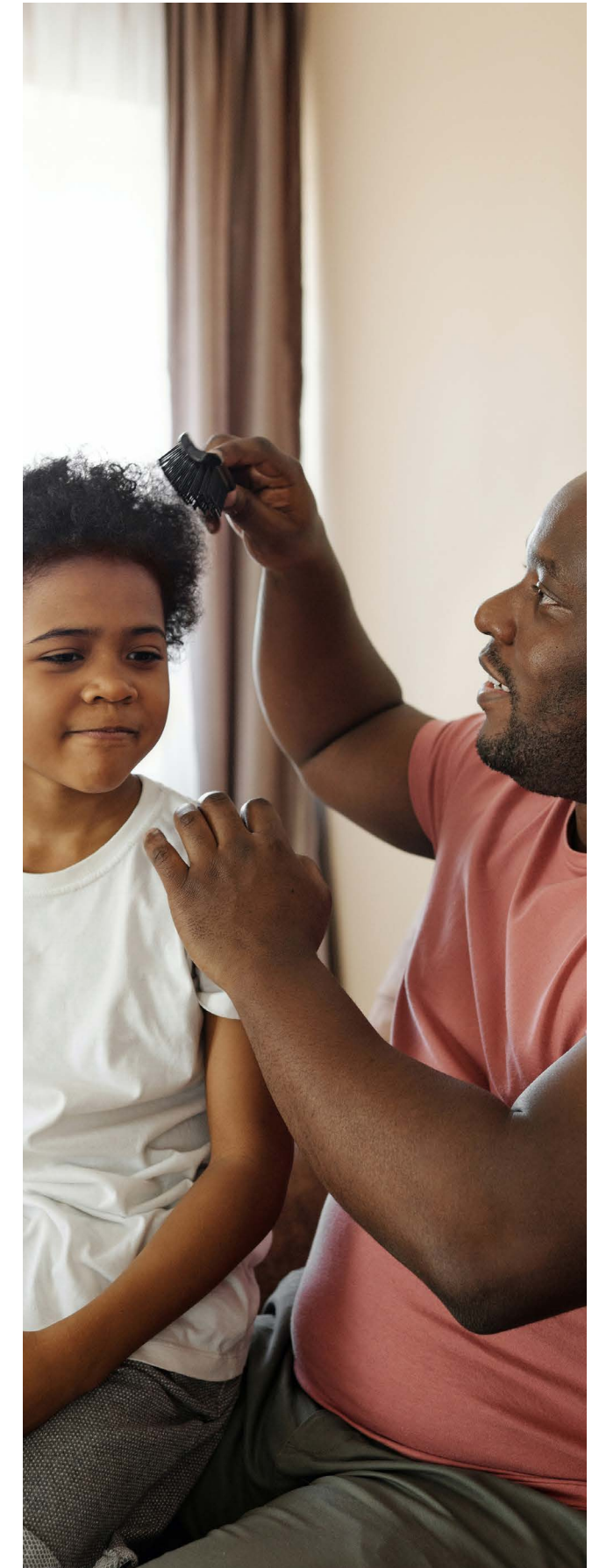
- Reposition the care sector as a high value economic and social contributor to the Liverpool City Region economy
- Develop and implement a transformation approach to the design and delivery of investment in the sector by creating an integrated Liverpool City Region-wide model of professional training and support
- Parity of esteem with NHS staffing and pay structures
- Inclusive procurement processes prioritised on social value
- Set and achieve progressive targets for diversity, inclusivity, and intersectionality in each of the four key gender equality indicators used by the World Economic Forum.

Embedding an Inclusive, Diverse, and Gender Equal Economy

It is acknowledged structural changes need to happen on every level in order to fully harness the potential of the region. The One Day Report, along with other associated research, outlines the need to target these changes into sections of society with the most immediate impact, and in Liverpool City Region's case, that is the regional leadership. Liverpool City Region has the possibility to fulfil its economic potential as a Region, whilst also acting as a national and international exemplar of realistic gender and diversity centred change.

Recommendations include:

- Inform investment priorities with the gender-focused evidence provided by various gender and diversity studies such as the Women's Budget Group
- Adopt criteria that encourages organisations to have at least 30% women (with a target of 50% in a given timescale) on their boards and leadership teams
- Set and achieve progressive targets for diversity, inclusivity, and intersectionality in each of the four key gender equality indicators used by the World Economic Forum: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and political empowerment.
- Commit to providing everyone with full employment and the right to a valued role, including recognition of unpaid care



Transformed Educational Attainment, Skills, and Opportunities for All

Time is of the essence for Liverpool City Region to limit the long-term effects of the economic downturn upon the Region's people by providing vital support and creating workplace opportunities.

Recommendations include:

- Bring together the City Region's people-focused education, training and skills resources and assets in a unified way
- Implement a people-focused recovery plan to address the unemployment and subsequent retraining needs of all those who lose their jobs as a result of COVID-19
- Ensure focus is placed upon addressing the inequalities of the region through the Recovery Plan
- Prioritise targeting support at those who are entering the labour market for the first time, providing additional skills, and learning to young people, to help alleviate the risks of them spending long periods in unemployment
- Introduce maintenance support for young people across further and higher education to help the 'Corona class of 2020' stay in education longer to improve skills and increase job prospects



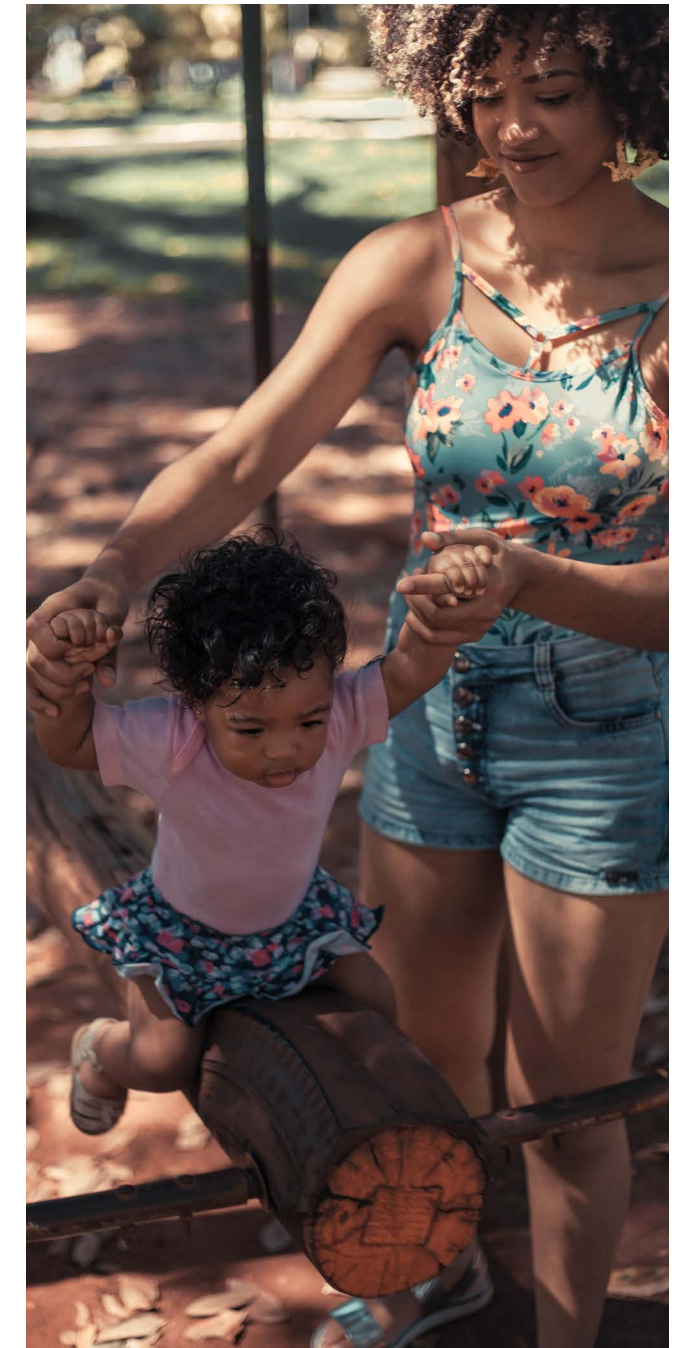
Redesigning How We Measure Economic Wealth

A gender-fair and more diverse recovery with a focus on green investment would serve as the foundation from which to create a more socially and environmentally responsible economy. The Liverpool City Region needs to harness the research and debates surrounding the alternative metrics of a successful economy to create a forward-looking agenda for the world beyond COVID-19. The pandemic has affected this region differently to others, so our response needs to be through locally driven solutions for the challenges that lay ahead. By looking at the environment, good-quality jobs, inequalities, and people's health and well-being instead of solely GDP, we can ensure Liverpool City Region adapts to survive and thrive post Covid-19.

Recommendations include:

- Utilise Liverpool's energy and resilience to put the people of Liverpool at the heart of the Region's transformation into a fairer and more sustainable city
- Reassess what the Region values and how it measures economic growth in order to shift view of progress being solely monetary to an economy focused on quality of life
- Do not promote areas of the economy that damage the environment or further entrench inequalities to ensure they are actively trying to prevent damaging procedures/sectors being promoted

- Reposition current goals surrounding economic growth to establish where future growth potential lies
- Re-evaluate drivers of economic growth and invest in industries which prioritise female employment, provide social benefits, and tackle deep-rooted inequalities and environmental issues



Further Information

About The Women's Organisation

The Women's Organisation is an award-winning social enterprise working in the UK and internationally, providing business support and economic development services. It contributes to policy development through its panel of research experts.

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