

Upshot evaluation of the Participatory Grant Making Fund: End of year one

Since 2018, the Rank Foundation has invested some £4m in supporting Plymouth's vibrant social purpose sector.

More recently, in 2021, Rank's Board of Trustees restated its commitment to Plymouth by approving a second phase of their place-based investment.

One of the strands of phase two was a ground-breaking £1m Participatory Grant Making (PGM) fund aimed at combating and addressing some of Plymouth's most acute loneliness and social isolation challenges. PGM is a process where people with lived experience of an issue participate in the decisions about how grants to address the issue are awarded.

As a result the following 13 organisations were funded by the Rank Foundation:

Plymouth Argyle Community Trust, Plymouth Play CIC and Scrapstore, Fotonow CIC, Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality Council, Bikespace CIC, Four Greens Community Trust, Routeways, Plymouth Firestone, Diversity Business Incubator CIC, Memory Matters CIC, Nudge Community Builders, Plymouth Hope, and Trevi.

The priority issues were identified by an Advisory Panel of senior executives from Plymouth's principal health and health-related organisations. The grant applications were assessed and decided upon by a panel of people drawn from the local Rank Network, plus those with lived experience of the identified priorities.

Each of the funded organisations committed to using a shared monitoring system. Upshot is an easy-to-use on-line system to help organisations monitor, evaluate and learn the extent of their impact from the data and evidence. With 13 organisations collecting data across shared overall outcomes (as well as project-specific outcomes), we have been able to measure their cumulative impact on addressing and combating issues relating to loneliness and social isolation across Plymouth.



MEANINGFUL DATA

Each organisation established their project's target outcomes as part of their original application for funding. This detailed how many people they intended to support and how they were going to track, monitor and evaluate their performance.

As the overall aim of the grants is to tackle social isolation and loneliness it was agreed that more detailed monitoring would be beneficial, with most organisations choosing to use registration forms for at least some of their activity. These forms record much richer data sets than headcount alone, focusing on data relating to unique individuals - including postcode, gender and age. Upshot allows organisations flexible ways to record it's activity and some of these are explained below.

Evidence Explained

Headcount -allows organisations to measure the impact of an activity that has an overarching outcome, where detail is not required and where there is no unique beneficiary, but the impact is meaningful enough to record. For example, attending a community event where many conversations take place that could lead to a person engaging in services in the future. Using headcount ensures this data is not lost and enables projects to see how successful they were at recruiting via community engagements.

Registration - allows organisations to measure the impact of an activity that may be ongoing, with a unique individual over a few weeks or months, where impact can be measured over a period using a timeline that provides narrative and helps to build a case study. This may be a journey over several workshops, which results in a participant achieving goals related to an outcome or activity.

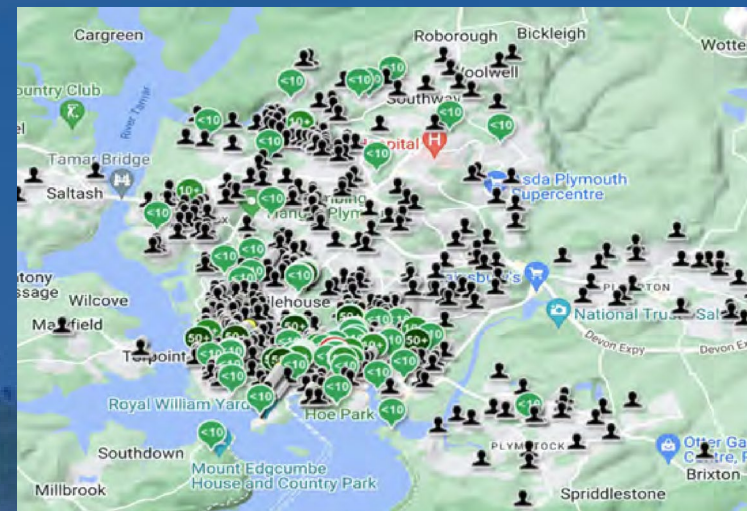
Unique participant - Upshot can recognise overall how many people attend and identify whether they are repeat or new participants.

The PGM panel used the data captured via Upshot to check the progress of the thirteen organisations using these three data sets, together with case studies and participant surveys.

Between 1st March 2022 to 31st March 2023, the Rank Foundation PGM fund enabled thirteen organisations helping people to overcome social isolation and loneliness to achieve the following:

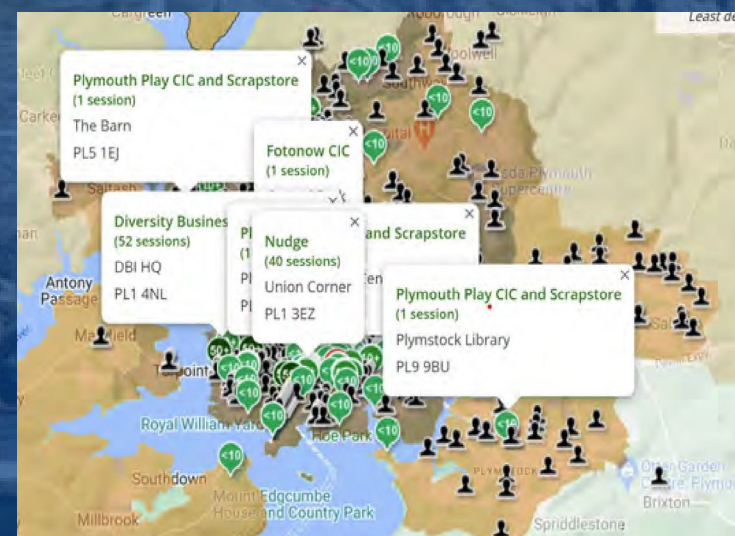
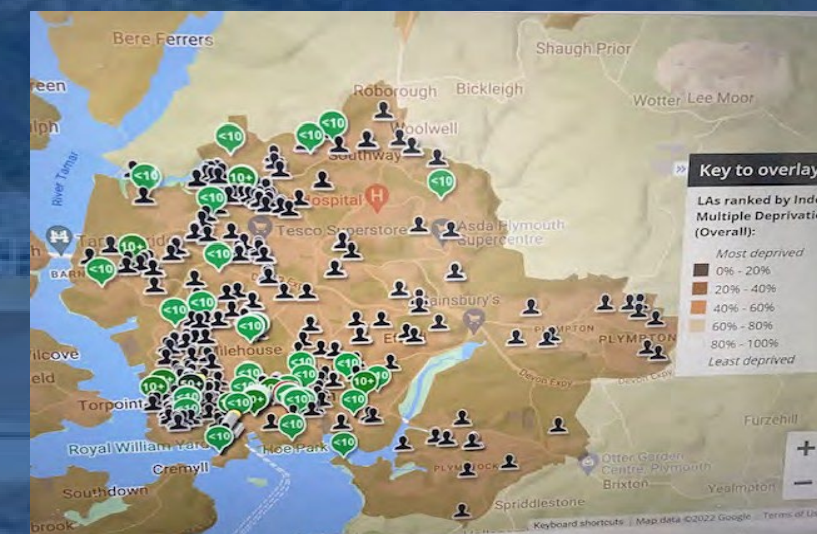
- 48 different activities
- 1,010 sessions and 3,772 session hours
- Meeting 949 unique participants, which when added to headcount equates to 18,575 participant attendances.

GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD



If a postcode is registered for both the activity and the attendee, an Upshot Map Report provides a visual representation of where attendees are coming from to take part in the sessions held plus the location of the sessions run. This can be viewed as a whole project or for an individual activity within a larger project.

Alongside displaying locations and attendees, users can apply a number of overlays to the Map Report to learn more about the context of the areas their attendees come from. Overlays display demographic statistics for the population of an area, unrelated to an organisation's attendees. An Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) overlay allow users to see the deprivation of areas they are working in based on the UK's Indices of Deprivation



In The Map Report locations are presented as places and displayed using green icons. The green icons will either show 10+ or <10, indicating whether a certain location has delivered more or less than 10 sessions. Clicking on the icon will display some basic information around that location. Viewing locations on the map alongside participants can indicate whether sessions are being delivered in the most convenient locations for your attendees.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TACKLING LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION PROJECTS, MARCH 2022- MARCH 2023

Plymouth Argyle Community Trust - is delivering 4 sessions per week of physical and social activities for people of retirement age, including support for bereavement. A football café provides activities for people with dementia, also providing a space for partners/carers to share experiences and offer support to each other. Young adults experiencing mental health difficulties receive support whilst enjoying football sessions delivered alongside a mental health nurse.

- 245 sessions.
- 3,686 participant attendances.
- 109 identified unique participants.
- 100% of attendees reported improved wellbeing and increased physical activity.

A participant said:

"It has helped me to come to terms with not having a wife; not staying in, and meeting people who have been in the same situation. It really has helped me a lot. It has been amazing as it has helped me help other people."

Plymouth Play CIC and Scrapstore - Connecting Communities Through Creativity, a Scrapstore initiative, has been partnering with other organisations building connections. Scrapstore Rummage and Recycle sessions & workshops build connections through crafting, junk modelling, sewing and sharing of resources.

- 82 community event sessions.
- 2,021 headcount connections being made informally to encourage engagement.
- 107 unique participants and a further 154 recorded via headcount exceeding their predicted 1,000 connections.
- 60% of unique participants experienced increased social connectedness.
- 52% had increased confidence.

A visitor commented:

"It's like therapy when you come here."

Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality Council - are connecting diverse, minoritised communities in the city to create a supportive and active network. They have been holding consultation meetings on a range of topics such as racism in schools and attending local events in the city to promote connectivity and integration.

- 27 sessions.
- 436 monitored by headcount and a further 46 unique beneficiaries, far exceeding the original target of 200 connections.

A participant said:

"Volunteering for PDREC has had a huge, positive, impact on my mental health and wellbeing. I no longer feel 'lost' and feel motivated to learn new skills and knowledge."

Bikespace - has delivered cycling programmes for people experiencing isolation and with little biking experience. They have delivered a mix of bike workshops and mountain biking locally. Each attendee finishes the course with a refurbished mountain bike, helmet, jacket and gloves to keep.

- 4 x 10 week cycling programme comprising 788 hours.
- 23 unique participants.
- 100% who took part finished with increased confidence and having learnt new skills.

A participant said:

"I will be looking to do more bike courses with Bikespace to gain more skills in the future and I loved doing the off-road trails and will probably start looking to do it more often."

MORE HIGHLIGHTS

Fotonow CIC- have been running informal digital media education workshops. Activities have included partnering with Memory Matters to bring photographic drop-in sessions in their cafe to older people and those with dementia, Sunflower project with women in recovery, with refugees and asylum seekers with Devon & Cornwall Refugee Support and a weekly young creative media group.

- 64 sessions.
- 306 attendances from 102 unique beneficiaries, exceeding their aim of engaging 80 people.
- 79.5% across all projects feel they have improved life chances.
- 100% of attendees at the women's group reported that their recovery was maintained.

A participant said:

"Thanks for the great explanation, I have learnt to use advanced camera to take wonderful photos of all interesting views which made me very happy."

Routeways - 'Routes to Grow' have been welcoming 156 unique participants to a friendly, informal space where they can get involved in gardening and have a safe space to socialise with others. As well as growing plants, the participants grow vegetables and fruits then use these in cooking for attendees to enjoy and to take home. During these sessions they can access 1 to 1 support.

- 281 sessions.
- When participants compared how close to other people they felt before and after attending a session, the value increased from 10% to 50%.

A participant said:

"Coming to the park gives me peace to think but also lovely people to talk to."

Four Greens Community Trust- have so far run 69 'Fun 4 All' sessions offering adults with learning disabilities a chance to meet, socialise and enjoy a hot meal.

- 18 Tea & Talk sessions and 1 Basic Digital Skills session.
- 126 unique participants have benefited from social networking, exceeding their target of reaching 120 people.
- 86% of attendees felt an improved sense of belonging along with 73% experiencing improved mental health.

A participant said:

"Great to talk with people that are facing the same issues as me and be able to get support without having to book something 6 weeks in advance".

Memory Matters CIC- run 'Engage Central' a lunch and learn activity at least monthly and additional craft and social workshops from Moments Cafe and Hub. Lunch & Learns have included Meditation, Citizens Advice drop in, Oceans for all, National Trust and Theatre Royal, as well as craft groups and mindful colouring workshops in the cafe.

- 74 sessions.
- 63 unique participants and a total of 873 participant attendances.
- 100% of participants improved wellbeing, reduced anxiety, and improved mental health.

A participant said:

"We have made some wonderful new friends."

MORE HIGHLIGHTS

Plymouth Lighthouse Project - Partnered initially with Rite to Freedom, they are offering a unique experience on Dartmoor encompassing the three pillars of nature: connection, creativity and mindfulness to 19 men in early addiction recovery.

After the initial sessions and with training the group took over planning and running the programme themselves and have organised and run three sessions. There have been 6 sessions in total. Outcomes achieved by all attendees include:

- Reduced anxiety.
- Increased self-esteem.
- Improved mental health.

A participant said:

"It was a great day - much more relaxed than the other two. We had freedom to go where we wanted and enjoy the countryside - there was a great atmosphere to the day, and everyone enjoyed the group sessions".

Diversity Business Incubator CIC - have worked with participants who often do not feel a sense of belonging to the area and have been identified as being most impacted by a lack of connection. They took part in sessions to re-imagine spaces with plants that look, smell and feel like home, and communal food growing spaces.

- 66 sessions.
- 60 unique participants and a further 323 connections monitored via headcount.
- The outcome for 100% of attendees is an improved sense of belonging and reduced anxiety.

A participant from the gardening club said:

"It is a casual, friendly, well-being place. I felt like I can come here for my peace and meet others who value me, I have found my community."

Nudge - Together at the Plot. Nudge are supporting micro-organisations in the Plot to work with people who experience loneliness and isolation. They have been caring for individuals needs with activities including a women's group, Care Nest Health Counselling both with individuals and groups and JarSquad bringing people together to preserve food and address food waste.

- 53 sessions.
- 604 participant attendances recorded via headcount.

JarSquad and Care Nest said:

"Feels like we are now in a much more stable position with a clear view to continuing as a successful and sustainable business."

Plymouth Hope - "Stand as one engagement" (SAO) has been actively bringing people together to meet, instigate connection and network. SAO aims to engage with individuals from all backgrounds and with different organisations to increase participation in activities.

- 335 community sessions.
- 200 unique participants reached, which added to headcount equates to 10,907 participant attendances.
- 13.5% of unique attendees agree they have reduced isolation and have an improved sense of belonging.

One participant said:

"Coming and meeting others from my country, makes me feel like I am home and improves my self-confidence, mental health and self-esteem."

Trevi - Sunflower Project have worked to reduce loneliness and social isolation via 7 activities, which include accredited training, group work, counselling, creative therapies, parenting support and drop-in sessions.

- 90 unique participants and 184 sessions have taken place.
- From 3,298 participant attendances 83% of beneficiaries felt that their improved mental health had a positive effect on maintaining their recovery.

A participant said:

"Sunflower women's centre is like a big family, even if you turn up alone you can guarantee you will be chatting away before you know it!"

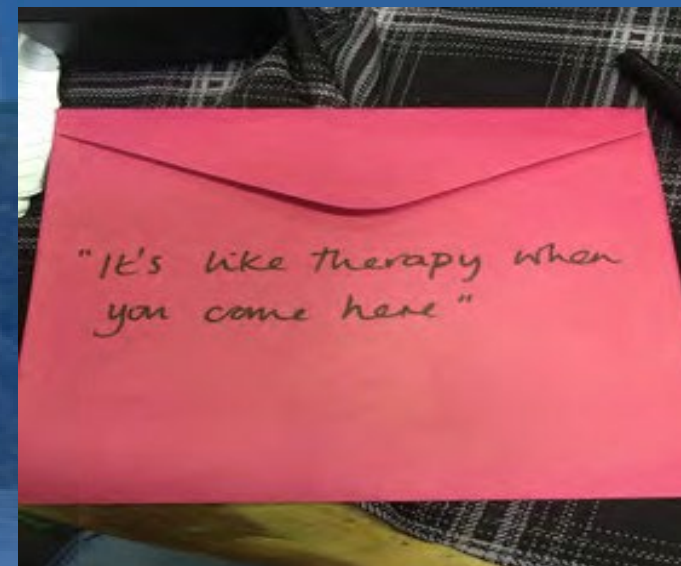
EVIDENCE: MEDIA

Uploading media onto Upshot is a great way for organisations to showcase some of the amazing work they have been doing. There are currently over 925 media files uploaded from Plymouth projects working to reduce social isolation.

MEMORY MATTERS CIC:



PLYMOUTH SCRAPSTORE:



FOUR GREENS COMMUNITY TRUST:



FOTONOW CIC:



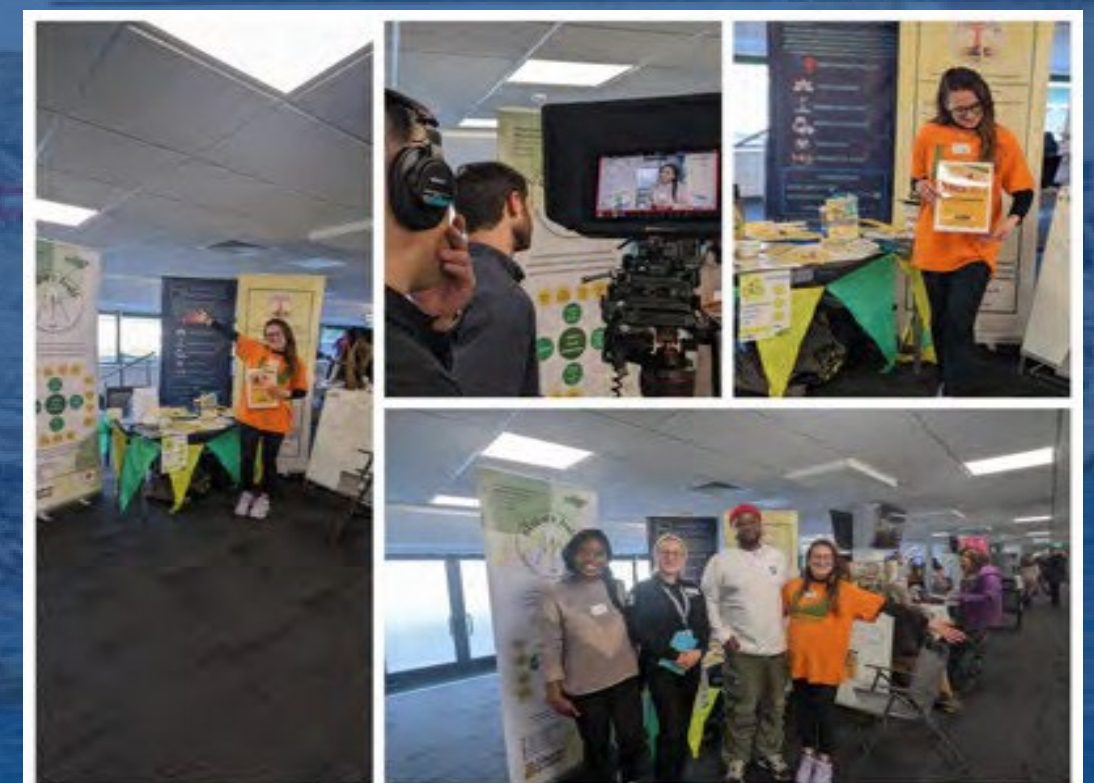
BIKESPACE:



NUDGE COMMUNITY BUILDERS:



PLYMOUTH HOPE:



CONCLUSIONS

Upshot has been used by Plymouth Rank Network partners since 2018. By helping organisations capture, monitor and evaluate their projects, it has been instrumental in demonstrating the impact that Rank has in the city. Cumulatively, across all of the projects Upshot data shows that from March 2018 to March 2023 Plymouth has recorded:

- 369,417 Attendances
- 7,156 Session hours
- 9,608,619 Contact hours

Continuity in monitoring with shared outcomes across all 13 PGM funded organisations is a key factor in demonstrating their impact on combating isolation and loneliness in the city. Upshot allows for organisations to report against the PGM outcomes for Plymouth, which are:

- Improved life chances
- Improved organisational collaboration
- Improved well-being
- Increased employability skills
- Increased self-esteem
- Increase in physical activity
- Recovery maintained
- Reduced isolation
- Improved mental health
- Improved sense of belonging
- Increased confidence
- Increased resilience
- Increased social connectedness
- Learnt new skills
- Reduced anxiety

The chart below shows the numbers of unique participants that have completed activities linked to a specific outcome.



The success of the PGM model has led to the Rank Foundation Board of Trustees restating its commitment to Plymouth by approving a further phase of place-based investment.

Rank's funding will be match-funded by Livewell Southwest CIC to support new projects with the principal aim of addressing loneliness and isolation in Plymouth. Together the Rank Foundation and Livewell Southwest have jointly committed a further £800k to support new projects up to 2025.

We look forward to reporting on these additional projects after their first year of activity at the end of March 2024.

The organisations which have been directly funded by the Rank Foundation since 2018:

Big Sis

Bikespace CIC

Borrow don't buy

Care Nest Plymouth

City of Plymouth Credit Union

Co-Cars

Community Photographic Studios CIC

Conscious Sisters

Devon and Cornwall Furniture Reuse Project Ltd

Diversity Business Incubator CIC

Elder Tree Befriending

Exim Dance Company

Flint and Steel Forest School

Fotonow CIC

Four Greens Community Trust

Gifted Women

Greenhook Fishing

Iridescent Ideas

Lynher River Range

Makers HQ CIC

Memory Matters CIC

No Whey!

Nudge Community Builders

On Course South West

Open Doors Language School

Our Plymouth

Plymouth Hope

Plymouth Argyle Community Trust

Plymouth Lighthouse Project

Plymouth Scrapstore CIC

Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council

Plymouth Social Enterprise Network

Pollenize CIC

Real Ideas Organisation

Routeways

SSE Dartington

Stiltskin Arts and Theatre CIC

Strategy Media Ltd (The Stonehouse Voice)

Street Factory

Take A Part

The Data Place

The Island Trust Ltd

ThingTanq

Transforming Plymouth Together

Trevi

Tugley Woods