

GREATER MANCHESTER VCSE DEVOLUTION REFERENCE GROUP

Inclusive Economy case study: SharpFutures



SharpFutures supports diverse young people into employment in the creative digital and tech sectors.

SharpFutures is a community interest company and social enterprise, incorporated in 2012.

By offering a range of services, including facilitation of apprenticeships, work experience and volunteering, SharpFutures nurtures transition into work while responding to the fluctuating needs of creative digital businesses. It provides bespoke educational packages that include tours, workshops, expert talks and events to schools throughout Greater Manchester. Its work experience, experience days and tours give young people the chance to find out more about the creative digital sector while learning new skills.

SharpFutures' [POD \(people on demand\)](#) programme provides a unique support service for creative digital businesses, while helping to identify and bring new talent in the sector. Made up of apprentices, graduates and job seekers with entry level skills in production running, social media, admin and marketing support, POD fulfils a valuable function in providing flexible support to fledgling and fast-growing businesses in the sector. Clients include BBC, ITV, Cisco, Pro Motion, Manchester City Council, and many independents.



SharpFutures delivers PR, marketing, graphic and digital design, social media, and event runners support services to businesses, such as The Sharp Project and Space Studios.

In its first five years, SharpFutures created: £693,000 in economic value in Manchester; £2.4 million in social value; a social return of 8:1; and £378,000 in cost-savings to the public purse. Engaging with over 5,000 young people from 119 schools, colleges, academies and youth groups across Greater Manchester, DISCOVER activity generated social value worth £1,845,883. The total social value generated through POD and apprenticeships was £587,204, with total savings to the public purse of £306,824. SharpFutures has supported 20 young people to do 30 apprenticeships, with 100% of completers moving into employment (40% female). 65% of apprentices were previously not in education, employment or training, long-term unemployed or in low-paid and unskilled employment.

In the next five years, SharpFutures aims to focus on its strengths to ensure that it is a significant player in the inclusive economy. This means growing from its Greater Manchester base and scaling to other geographical areas. The single most difficult barrier to overcome is access to finance.

SharpFutures makes things work effectively by ensuring anyone from any educational or employment/unemployment status is able to access and participate in the benefits of working on the [POD \(people on demand\)](#) programme.

Further details at <http://sharpfutures.org.uk/>