



Empower You

Social Impact Report 2020/2021



Prepared by the connectives



Ben Andrews, Founder & Managing Director

A Note From Ben Andrews, Founder & Managing Director

2020 – 2021 was a difficult period for everyone. We're all aware of the reasons so I won't go into that but I do think it's important to reflect on what we achieved in this period.

At a time many faced financial uncertainty, Empower You was the most secure it had ever been with two long-term, mainstream statutory contracts and growing interest from many others.

We were able to adapt and take our approach online, enabling disabled people to stay connected, stimulated and active at a time disabled people were being hit hardest.

And we achieved something we've been working towards for 12-years, in the transfer of Empower You as an incubated service from our friends at Unlimited Potential to a new fully fledged Community Interest Company in Beyond Empower.

This is a testament to the commitment, perseverance and belief in our cause. I thank you all for that and I'm grateful we'll be moving together with a solid foundation in Beyond Empower.

The following report captures some of what I've just touched on (thanks to The Connectives for putting this together) but I also ask you to consider, if we can do this during a pandemic, imagine what we can achieve beyond it...

Ben Andrews

Ben Andrews
Founder & Managing Director

Welcome

Welcome to Beyond Empower's first ever Social Impact Report for 2020/21. This report captures the social impact created through the interventions delivered by Empower You services in the Greater Manchester area.

Beyond Empower CIC have recently transitioned from delivering their services under the name of Empower You through Unlimited Potential. This report will look at the impact Empower You had up until the point of that transition from April 2020. This period was a difficult time for obvious reasons, the impact of the pandemic and national lockdowns proved challenging in the continuation of service delivery. The planned activities for Empower You had to be adapted from a face to face delivery to online.

The report has used a social accounting methodology to capture qualitative and quantitative data and analyse the trends coming from the responses to interviews, to show whether the activity undertaken by the teams has delivered positive social and economic impact.

These approaches were selected because we believe that in combination these methods would:

- Capture quantitative and qualitative data to provide narrative and economic measures appealing to a mixed audience
- Hear the voice of the person served and the partners in delivery
- Consider the materiality of evidence – what matters most when considering the impact of Beyond Empower's activities
- Have credibility in a crowded market place - secured from international recognition of the Social Audit Network accreditation
- Be based upon clear and transparent principles



**Beyond
Empower**





Beyond Empower

Vision

An inclusive world for disabled people

Mission

To help society #DoItDifferently to support healthy, active lives by disabled people.

How we work

Collaboration
Solution-focused
Lasting change

About us

Beyond Empower is a Community Interest Company helping society #DoItDifferently to support healthy, active lives by disabled people.

All of Beyond Empowers work centres on making mainstream opportunities to support good health and wellbeing more accessible to disabled people, while generating a demand of disabled people to access these opportunities.

Working in this way, Beyond Empower hopes to create places better incentivised by a new market in disabled people while enabling disabled people to manage their health and wellbeing independent of specialist services.

In doing so, Beyond Empower supports cohesion, understanding and integration between disabled and non-disabled people and works towards Beyond Empowers vision of a more inclusive world.



Why now?

Disabled people make up 22% of the UK's population, with the number set to increase due to improved provision at birth, an aging population and increased prevalence of long-term conditions.

Disabled people also face vast health inequalities, being more likely to develop long-term conditions and die prematurely. Not only does this impact the lives of disabled people themselves and those around them, but it also presents avoidable demand to our NHS, health and social care system.

Evidence suggests that disabled people experience these inequalities because of a lack of opportunities to maintain good health and wellbeing, rather than anything inherent. This lack of opportunities means disabled people are largely reliant on costly, specialist services to maintain good health and wellbeing.

These health inequalities and reliance on specialist services for disabled people are accepted as the institutionalisation and medicalisation of disabled people is entrenched within our culture. However, we cannot continue to work in this way.

Our NHS, health and social care systems have demand they are unable to meet, with a need to move people to more asset and community-based approaches to support good health and wellbeing; statutory budgets are also under pressure requiring better utilisation of spend on public assets such as streets, transport and community venues disabled people and disabled people are demanding greater access to mainstream opportunities.

Working in this way will require transformational change in which mainstream agencies take greater ownership of providing accessible inclusive opportunities for disabled people with an immediate demand of disabled people to access them.

Inputs



Relationships with staff, volunteers, clients & networks



Non-financial support like technical assistance, information and resources



Flexible funding

Activities



Empower You works with communities to support disabled people to lead active lifestyles



Workshops and training to provide professionals with the skills, knowledge and confidence to better support disabled people



Consultation and projects to support organisations and communities towards accessible inclusive offers for disabled people

Long-term Outcomes



Disabled people are healthier and happier



Communities better able to independently respond to the needs of disabled people



Barriers to a healthy lifestyle removed for more disabled people.

Intermediate Outcomes



Disabled people accessing new activities



Staff better equipped to support disabled people



Disabled people are more active

Impact



Reduced demand on the NHS, health and social care



Disabled people become part of the mainstream market and contribute to local economy



Society's attitude towards disabled people improves

Our Theory of Change

Our Social Impact



£2,341,099

total social value generated



Empower You

Empower You works with communities to support disabled people to lead active lifestyles.

It does so by supporting disabled people to identify the things they want to do, sourcing these opportunities locally and working with the provider to make them accessible and supporting disabled people to access them.

Empower You works with disabled people, those around them and the provider of the activity for a short period of time to support confidence, motivation and encourage a routine of engagement before taking a step back and allowing this to continue independently.

Empower You repeats this until a community has the capacity to better support disabled people to access its mainstream provision, enabling disabled people to do the things they want to do and lead healthy, active lives independent of specialist services including Empower You.

Traditionally Empower You is delivered physically in the community but during lockdown delivery transferred online.

The Connectives spoke with a number of different people through conversations and focus groups about the impact Empower You had on their lives.

Through conversations with The Pavilion Project and Trafford Choices, social care providers for people with learning and physical disabilities in Greater Manchester, and people who attend this provision, it was clear that Empower You had / had a big impact.

The provision managers stated that Empower You had been a 'lifesaver' during lockdown for some of the people they support and each person expressed some form of positive outcome including:

- increase in confidence to do activities on their own
- more relaxed at home and improved mental health
- feeling more content with life in general
- weight loss and increased physical fitness
- decreased feeling of loneliness and isolation
- helped with doing tasks at home i.e. cleaning
- a sense of pride and achievement

"I feel like part of a community"

"It stopped me feeling so isolated in lockdown"

"I like the way they make all of the sessions available for all abilities and they adapted the sessions based on that"



"I've never had the opportunity to meet good, reliable nice people. This has changed now and Empower You influenced me to get back on track and be more considerate when I choose people I want to be friends with - people that are better for me and make me a better person."

Paul's Story

Paul* has autism and palsy of his left arm and has been working with Empower You on 1-2-1 sessions. He used to feel really uncomfortable going to the gym, and more often than not the gym staff were quite uncomfortable with him being there due to their lack of knowledge and understanding of working with people who have learning disabilities.

Empower You did an initial medical assessment with Paul and got him involved in the medical assessment, explaining everything they were doing and why it matters i.e. heart rate and blood pressure. Empower You put together a basic programme for him to follow and made a visual timetable, Paul was asked what his favourite character was which was Spiderman. Empower You then used this character to form part of the visuals on his timetable.

Paul got pictures of all the equipment he would be using as part of his programme and Empower You found out which pieces of equipment that Paul enjoyed the most. This was all taken on board and made working out fun for Paul. Empower You check in regularly with Paul and continue to make sure that he fully understands everything that is going on and why.

Further to this Empower You then got the staff involved at the gym in how they can support people with disabilities. The staff now know Paul and are very friendly and welcoming when they see him. He now is confident enough to work out on his own and enjoys exercising. His confidence now shines through and he is much more comfortable. Some days he visits the gym and on others he will go for a swim. The one thing that would make life a little bit easier in the gym would be to label the equipment with numbers as this would probably be easier for Paul than trying to locate equipment by a picture.

This intervention has had such a positive impact on Paul. He is now much more health conscious and has a lot more confidence to go to the gym and knows what he can do when he is there. He now knows the steps that he needs to take to improve his health. This gives Paul much more control of his life, making his own decisions and he can adapt his own programme to suit his own needs. Empower You are doing a great job.

*name changed for anonymity

"Empower You work with you at your own pace and you're not tied into or forced into anything you don't want to do. Don't be afraid to approach them, there is no judgement. Would love to see them do more workshops to get word of their services out there."

Sport England: Case Study



Beyond Empower worked with Salford as part of their Sport England Local Delivery Pilot. Beyond Empower supported Salford to ensure access and inclusion for disabled people was embedded as part of all of their workings.

An example from one of the sessions Beyond Empower supported was to review walking and cycling infrastructure and explore whether it was fit for purpose for disabled people. This session involved a range of professionals from engineers and planners to staff from highways and public health offering a richer discussion and impacting a wide range of professional spaces.

This opened up further conversation and discussion with Salford's Parks and Greenspace Teams about how provision they managed could be made more accessible for disabled people and led to consultation with local special educational needs primary school children to inform guidance around this.

"I sat in on one of the engineering sessions and found it very revealing, it certainly enhanced my understanding of the agenda. Ben spoke to them about what a park run might consist of for people with learning disabilities. This is something that I will now take forward with me in my role."

"I now understand the impact of not building the right infrastructure or sending out the wrong message. Everything I have learnt will now be part of my toolbag when taking things forward."

Social Return on Investment

Empower You has generated **£2,341,099** of social value meaning that for every £1 invested by Empower You on the delivery of services, it generates **£25.45** of social value.

93

undertook exercise to keep fit & improve health

24

reported a relief from depression or anxiety

93

felt like they had grown in confidence

93

saw an improvement in their overall health

110

people took up new hobbies and interests

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the world and how people live their lives day-to-day. This has been a particularly challenging period for disabled people due to a higher susceptibility of contracting the virus which has in turn made people less willing and able to engage with opportunities they previously would have.

As a result, Beyond Empower has had to adapt the work it approaches its work in order to keep the people worked with and its staff safe. This has had some impact on outcomes and in turn, impact captured and reflected in this document.

What next for Beyond Empower CIC?

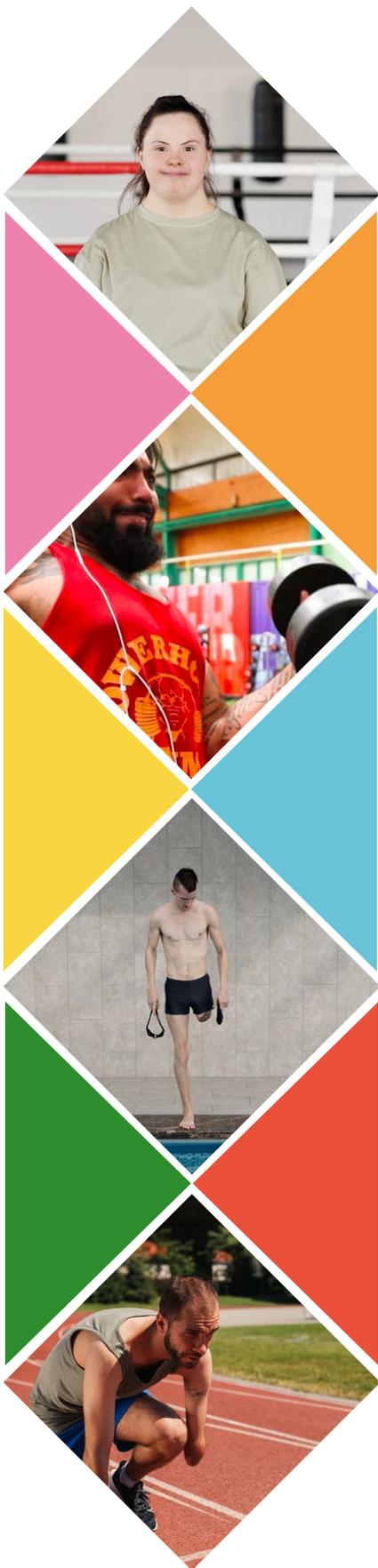
So begins our journey into creating a sustainable Beyond Empower, enabling more disabled people to access mainstream health and wellbeing activities. We recognise that many organisations are not acknowledging disabled people as part of their market, customer base or target group resulting in exclusion and inefficient use of spend.

We want to change that by presenting disabled people as a market, while generating a demand of disabled people to access these opportunities, Beyond Empower hopes mainstream organisations will take greater ownership of disabled people. This will create more accessible and inclusive opportunities for disabled people to lead healthy, active lives while exposing society to disabled people doing 'normal' things, supporting cohesion, understanding and improving perceptions and attitudes towards and of disabled people.

Our two main goals for the next 12 months are to:

- engage more disabled people in activity through spreading our Empower You approach
- help more activity enablers increase their capacity to work with disabled people through consultancy, workshops and training

We will be continuing and growing our Empower You commissioned activities as well as launching our Empower You Lifestyle Coaching. Watch this space!



What can you do?

Follow us on Social Media



<https://beyondempower.co.uk/>

Work with us

If any disabled people would like to volunteer with us or work with us in any way we would love for you to get in touch and see how you can help

Invest in us

If you share our vision to create an inclusive world for disabled people and would like to be a long term supporter. We would love to hear from you, please get in touch.