



# Rewriting the Rules

Social Enterprise in Glasgow:  
The Covid-19 Response

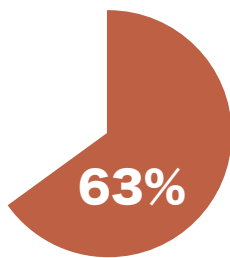
**GSEN**

Glasgow  
Social  
Enterprise  
Network

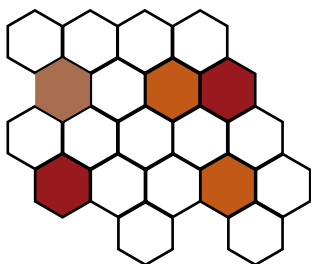




## GSEN | The Social Enterprise Response



Of Glasgow's SEs are led by women



811 SEs are currently operating in Glasgow



1 in every 8 Scottish SE is in Glasgow

When the world stopped, social enterprise (SE) recognised the need for an emergency response: cafés began a production line of meals and delivered them across the city, community groups contacted older adults and became vigilant about staying in touch, while counselling services implemented digital communication strategies to make sure everyone was supported.

Glasgow has a thriving social enterprise sector, the city is home to hundreds of socially motivated businesses. These experienced organisations provided services that were suddenly recognised as 'essential' in the wake of the Coronavirus crisis and their employees became 'key workers' over night. The nature of social enterprise is flexible and responsive to community need. These organisations were able to support people during months of chaos because they work in their local areas, responding creatively and adapting to challenges.

The country entered a state of national lockdown on the 23rd March 2020 and Glasgow was told to 'Stay at Home' to protect the lives of those most at risk from Coronavirus (Covid-19). Across the UK and large parts of the world, fear and uncertainty were mixed with the very real threat posed by the virus - to lives, and to livelihoods.

Almost immediately, it became clear that the pandemic would not affect us all equally. Technology enabled many of us to stay connected,

including to our jobs, but those without digital skills became isolated. Barriers widened between the rich and the poor, the old and the young, and a new divide was drawn: between those who could work from home, and those who could not. However, SE were aware that inequality in Glasgow was rising before the pandemic, Covid-19 reinforced the trend.

As lockdown extended into the spring, the murder of George Floyd by US police put societal inequalities into the limelight and sparked a global conversation about systemic racism. Just months later the tragic death of asylum seeker Mercy Baguma shook Glasgow and it became increasingly clear that BME communities were being disproportionately affected by coronavirus. Poverty, racism, and inequality weren't new to Glasgow, but they were brought into sharp focus by 2020's national lockdown.

Many industries and services were unable to operate, but there was one sector in the city that refused to close its doors to the most vulnerable. In fact, according to their proprietors and volunteers, they'd never been so busy. Having been established as a response to community need, social enterprises, and the social entrepreneurs that run them were well-positioned to respond to the crisis.

In March, the social enterprise sector chose not to compete but to collaborate, leading the response to Coronavirus and its impact.

They acted quickly, using the creativity, versatility and resilience that has come to characterise Glasgow's SE sector.

Glasgow's response to Covid-19 transformed how we feel about where we live, shining a spotlight on the essential role of local knowledge and devolved responsibilities. Glasgow SEs used their experience to support vulnerable people in their local communities, showing themselves to be responsive, caring, and civic-minded.

The pandemic also saw a rise in volunteering. Citizen-led groups in Glasgow responded immediately to the lockdown, and other groups were able to learn from them. March 2020 saw the creation of Glasgow Mutual Aid - a group of thousands of new volunteers. It was a gentle reminder of the power of grassroots action that has always underpinned social enterprise in the city. The nature of this emergency meant that the best way to respond to Coronavirus was simply to work together to take direct action.

This was a moment where we started to consider some of the ways we were living before Coronavirus, where disconnection in our community had become accepted. The city-wide response to Covid-19 meant that bureaucratic, formal and established protocol slowed the response, it was questioned and broken down. A combination of established organisations, government support, and citizen-led aid formed a collaborative response, blurring the boundaries between donor and recipient. For many, this created a moment of realisation: this is an opportunity to rebuild the city differently.

The word 'crisis' comes from a root meaning 'decision'. This reflects the vitally important and decisive state of things, this 'crisis' will result in change, for better or worse. The outcome will depend on whether we choose to write the new rules for ourselves, or wait for someone else to write them for us.

This project was commissioned by **Glasgow Social Enterprise Network (GSEN)** to record exactly how social enterprises adapted to the 2020 Coronavirus crisis. The crisis continues to impact all of our lives, but for many it underscored that direct action is a critical part of a city's care network. Every volunteer and staff member at each Glasgow social enterprise worked independently to achieve the same end. This work is being recognised on a wider scale and these examples should be noted by those in power.

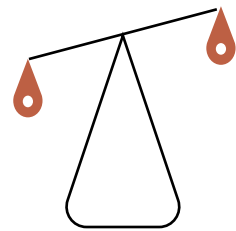
The only thing certain in our current situation is uncertainty. The pandemic has impacted the economy to an extent that we don't fully comprehend yet, and the future of the UK in the wake of Brexit is yet to become apparent. We must continue to find ways to navigate and overcome adversity in a shifting landscape, and social enterprise has proven itself to be an invaluable method that is worth investing in.

GSEN has a unique overview of the city's social enterprise sector, this puts the organisation in the position to 'zoom out' and highlight the potential of the entire SE sector and its ability to tackle some of the city's most persistent inequalities. GSEN recognises that SE ability to work in collaboration is the key to expanding the sector even further.

yas rahemtulla



The net worth of Glasgow's SE sector



85% of Glasgow SEs pay at least the Scottish Living Wage



21,632

Full-time SE employees in Glasgow

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# Feeding A CITY

The national lockdown created uncertainty around access to essential supplies, resulting in a state of panic. Issues surrounding the access to food were starkly highlighted by the pandemic. The costs and challenges in relation to the accessibility of food rose as certain goods ran out, such as pasta and rice, meaning only the premium ranges were available to buy. Social enterprises working locally with groups of people vulnerable to food poverty and insecurity were already aware of those most in need of support. These organisations shared their local knowledge and resources

## Emergency Distributions

SE staff and volunteers stepped forward when they saw their communities struggling with little or no emergency support. Many food banks had to close because they didn't have the funds or facilities to deliver food. Others closed because their volunteers were all older adults, who were most at risk of harm if exposed to the virus. But food delivery continued, in a different form.

In Castlemilk, providing food for everyone who needed it was a collaborative effort. **Castlemilk Together** was established pre-COVID to tackle food insecurity in the area, with social enterprises at its core: **Indigo Childcare, Cassiltoun Housing Association, The Senior Centre, Jeely Piece Club** are just a few of its members. The staff from these organisations were local to Castlemilk, and the people they worked with were also their friends and neighbours. They put their professions on pause and focussed on providing food for the entire community. Castlemilk Together has been more active than ever and are now considering

**there's been such a surge in people being interested in local food**

Sally  
Locavore

investing in an online resource and considering how to continue to develop the group.

Social enterprises observed a shift during the pandemic: being unable to afford food was no longer perceived with stigma. Asking for help became socially acceptable. The divide between those helping and those being helped became blurred as communities delivered an emergency response. An example of this change is embodied by **Glasgow Mutual Aid (GMA)**, a group that was developed in March 2020. GMA is a centralised, non-hierarchical naturally-forming group. Amongst GMA's members were young people who had lost their jobs or been placed on furlough, and who wanted to help in any way they could. In just a few weeks, this citizen-led response successfully mobilised 2000 volunteers across Glasgow.

**Urban Roots'** Free Food Map, a virtual resource that was available pre-Covid, became a lifeline for struggling organisations and individuals across Glasgow.

## Kinning Park Complex (KPC)

launched their A-OK response to the pandemic in April. In May, KPC accessed the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund in partnership with other local organisations including the **GalGael, MORE (Migrants Organising for Rights and Empowerment), Sunny Govan**, and others. Kinning Park Complex were sensitive to the difficulties faced by residents who didn't speak English and they were aware of which languages were spoken in the local area. Along with food parcels, they delivered information, both about the ever-changing advice on the pandemic and the other resources that they could access as residents of the local area. - For example, **Music Broth's** instrument library.

## Providing For Everyone

Elsewhere, **African Challenge Scotland** instantly took responsibility for providing nourishing and healthy food for anyone in need as the crisis unfolded. Their network includes refugees and asylum seekers, so they could communicate with some of the hardest-to-reach groups in the city.

## Closed Kitchens

Food establishments such as cafés, restaurants and community cooking spaces closed to the public but their staff and volunteers worked throughout lockdown to cook meals for local people. The organisations running these premises were determined to keep working to provide emergency food, despite losing their own source of income. They, too, were able to distribute through an existing food network of SEs, charities and public services.

## The Social Kitchen

The Social Kitchen, run by **Unity Enterprise**, started in early 2020 as a place for people to cook together and spend time learning about food. The Social Kitchen had to stop operating but the small team who ran it knew that their centrally located kitchen would be an essential resource for **Glasgow Night Shelter**, a service for destitute asylum seekers. The months of lockdown saw Unity staff providing thousands of meals from the social kitchen space. The Social Kitchen will be re-opening in 2021, in the new Parkhead Pantry.

## Well-Fed Scotland CIC: Coronavirus response

Well Fed has been providing solutions to the barriers faced in relation to accessing food in Glasgow since 2017.

996,000

Meals delivered  
(between March and January 2020)

7

Days a week

170

Children's lunches delivered every day



Food redistributed from supermarkets each week

### The Team

23 full time staff

6 volunteers

8 young people

### Well-Fed's Pantry

Open 5 Days a week

feeding

80

families a day



### Local Produce

From Brexit to Bake-Off, an interest in where our food comes from has been growing in recent years. Covid only served to increase this interest, as well as highlighting the source of our food when access was suddenly impacted.

**Locavore**, a social enterprise that provides the city with local and organic food, is at the heart of Glasgow's sustainable produce movement. Locavore had been running a popular veg box delivery service before lockdown, but in March the demand for veg boxes exploded - and Locavore staff suddenly became key workers. To maintain social distancing in the veg shed, and to cope with demand in Bellahouston, shifts were split. Locavore used the profits they made to invest in a fleet of electric vans and delivered their produce Glasgow-wide with minimal environmental impact. Locavore expanded during the pandemic and opened a second shop, in Partick in the city's West End. They hope that their presence in the city will reduce our reliance on supermarkets.

### Community Gardening

Early in the crisis, it was reported that coronavirus spreads more easily indoors. This meant that outdoor activities gained a lot more interest during the summer months, so long as social distancing could be maintained. Many Glaswegians had still not returned to work and, with an increased interest in local and sustainable food, they decided to volunteer in community gardens across the city. **Urban Roots** provided opportunities for people to get involved with gardening (and grow their own food) in Castlemilk, Pollockshields, Carwadric, Govan, Priesthill and Toryglen.



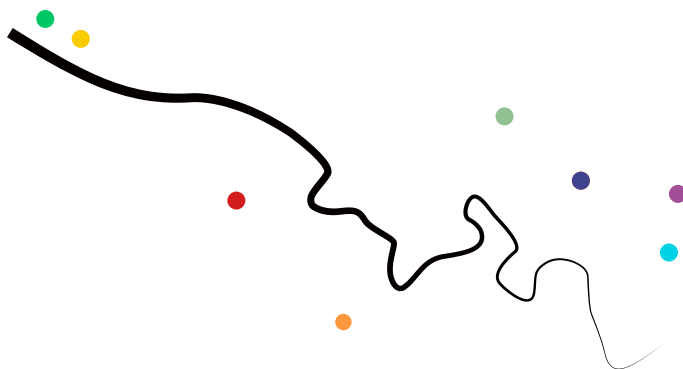
**HOME**GROWN



AUGUST / SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER / DECEMBER

## OPENING PANTRIES

COVID-19 distorted the speed at which enterprises developed - some services were paused, while others accelerated. **Unity Enterprise** opened three pantries in the city's East End: Shettleston, Parkhead and Tollcross, after the country-wide lockdown had ended. A food pantry runs on a membership basis and allows people to access varied, healthy food at a subsidised price. Pantries have been created as a more dignified alternative to food banks. They have also been useful in encouraging vulnerable people to start leaving their homes again, after months of isolation.



- North West Pantry DRC Youth Project
- Well-Fed Pantry
- Govan Help Pantry
- Ruchazie Pantry
- People's Pantry Govanhill Baths
- The Pantry: Parkhead Unity Enterprise
- The Pantry: Shettleston Unity Enterprise
- The Pantry: Tolcross Unity Enterprise

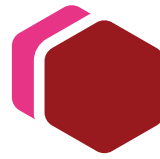
The majority of pantries in Glasgow have a subscription to **Fare Share**, the city's main surplus food distributor. Utilising surplus food allows pantries, and other SE food distributors and charities, to provide food at affordable prices. There is no strict rule about how a pantry operates: each is unique, and responds to the needs of local people. Govanhill Baths' **People's Pantry**, for instance, asked the residents of G42 what they would like in their local area and developed their pantry accordingly. They are aiming to operate as a social enterprise by working with a variety of companies across the city such as **Thompsons**, the popular Glaswegian coffee roasters. While pantries are helpful, it is important to remember that they are not a permanent solution but a temporary way to support people through upheaval and extreme economic difficulties.







JEELY PIECE CLUB



## PROMOTING *well-being*

Social enterprises have emotional connections and relationships with the communities they work in. Many SE are intentionally small, which means that when people are struggling, these SEs know specific local needs and they can provide the support efficiently.

GSEN members were well-positioned to provide support to those who were self-isolating or shielding from Covid-19.

Many SE workers were familiar with signs of declining mental and physical health and were able to provide a creative response to some of the health issues which were created or exacerbated by the pandemic.



### A Lonely City

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In 2018, the Scottish government invested in social enterprise suppliers to help combat issues of loneliness and isolation in Glasgow. The project, called Pockets and Prospects, involved 13 SEs, including 9 GSEN members. SEs offered ways for people to develop their skills, connect with others, and learn new techniques to cope with stress. **Jangling Space, MsMissMrs, and Weekday Wow Factor** have been combating loneliness in Glasgow through arts and activities for years, and were positioned at the forefront of the well-being response during the Coronavirus crisis.

Many GSEN members knew how important their continued service provision would be for mental health during the pandemic. **Weekday Wow Factor** works specifically with older adults, using group activities to help people stay healthy and social. These initiatives continued after March's lockdown thanks to Zoom. **Weekday Wowfactor** was also able to provide daytime discos and virtual nature walks through digital platforms. Meanwhile, **MsMiss and Mrs** offered the *Get S.E.T* (Self Esteem Techniques), a programme that supports women and girls in improving their confidence.

# Cultivating Creative Communities

## Thinking outside the box

The **Govanhill Baths Trust** provided hundreds of well-being packs to isolated people in their area, which focused on staying creative. This social enterprise adapts to changing community demand and they enthusiastically supplied people in Govanhill with a variety of well-being activities. The organisation developed a popular range of well-being postcards (pictured below), designed by local artist Jem Milton. They are being dispersed for free so that people can connect by post.

In summer 2020, Govanhill Baths began their popular #GrowingGovanhill project in partnership with **Urban Roots**, which saw residents of Govanhill provided with seed packs and everything they would need to start a garden on their windowsill. These packs were provided with the knowledge that many of their participants did not have access to a garden. Following the success of this project, Growing Govanhill was replicated for members of Govanhill's LGBTQ+ community in partnership with **Category is Books** - an independent queer book shop located in the city's Southside. The LGBTQ+ gardening group has been extremely successful and now operates independently.



In the sphere of sound, **Music Broth** provided an instrument delivery service during the pandemic. Membership of their musical instrument library soared as people finally had time to learn a skill they usually felt too busy to pursue. Music Broth was also involved in organising virtual performances, performances in parks, support for out-of-work musicians, and even windowsill performances to those in isolation.

## Maintaining support & Relationships

In Govan, the **GalGael** uses traditional Scottish cultural skills to support people and create a sense of belonging through community. The organisation provides a space for people to be accepted regardless of their background - and sharing a meal together in the week was an important factor in that atmosphere. The GalGael has worked in partnership with many public bodies, such as the Violence Reduction Unit, while also working with people who have survived addiction. The GalGael had to close their doors in March, but their team continued to provide food, which was picked up from **Locavore** before being delivered to participants. They continued to support their volunteers and participants with regular phone calls and delivering craft packs, including lino-cutting to replace the wood-cutting in their facility.

The GalGael is currently converting the yard next door to their premises on Fairley Street into a large oak croft. The outdoor shelter is an innovative solution to physically distancing that takes inspiration from a traditional Scottish construction method. Building the structure provides experience for the team members and volunteers involved. In the longer term, it will be transformed into a timber store, generating revenue for GalGael Enterprises, the social enterprise component of the GalGael.

## Engaging older adults

**Impact Arts** have been running the *Craft Café* in Govan for over ten years. It's a community of older adults, many of whom are ordinarily socially isolated. The lockdown required them to stay in their homes, many without internet access. In a triumph over adversity, Impact Arts has developed a variety of ways to stay in touch with members of the *Craft Café*. They organised personalised craft packs, phone calls, and a monthly posted newsletter. Members also decorated a *Craft Cafe* mandala to display in their windows. The digital divide remains a problem in Glasgow, but SE have come up with creative methods to help bridge that divide.

**they give a lot, so  
you want to give, too.  
To leave them high  
and dry like that?  
You just couldn't.  
You couldn't and you  
wouldn't**

Charlotte  
Craft Cafe

## Reopening with restrictions

**Jangling Space** is a cooperative facilitated by Brian, an artist and former community development worker, which offers people the opportunity to learn how to make stained glass pieces. When the studio in Shawlands closed, the stained glass courses could not be taken online. Brian reorganised the space over lockdown: he divided the tables, colour coded the tools, and limited the numbers coming in. Jangling Space worked in partnership with **Govanhill Housing Association** to provide a small class for their tenants and, thanks to Brian's ability to adapt, this course continued with social distancing guidelines in place.

**CLYDE**  
*built*  
**PRIDE**



## Digital health

Attitudes to what people were willing to do online changed in 2020, this was a consequence of many services heading online during the lockdown. **Giraffe Healthcare** has always been a digital health service, having started two years ago as a virtual physiotherapy platform. During the pandemic they expanded their services to include online podiatry. Giraffe Healthcare noticed a surge in people keen to try these treatments during lockdown.

Meanwhile, **Lifelink** has been offering free face-to-face counselling sessions in Glasgow for over 27 years. They had invested in Surface Pros (laptops with webcams) a year before COVID struck, so the transition to home working and providing services online in March was smooth. Lifelink counsellors provided support through video chat and on the phone, and found they could reach more people than before. As a result, they are considering expanding to offer services outside Glasgow.

Before March, Lifelink would promote their counselling services in GP surgeries and schools. This SE altered their technique and invested in new digital marketing strategies and engaged in social media research.

**one thing I did  
was use social  
media to ask  
people questions.  
People were  
saying that it  
actually suited  
them better than  
face to face  
might have done**

Ryan  
Lifelink





# Adventures

## ~~INSIDE~~ OUTSIDE

There's little doubt that mental and physical health are linked and that access to exercise facilities such as local gyms is often prohibitively expensive. Many social enterprises in Glasgow focus on providing outdoor, exercise-based activities to those they work with. 2020 lockdown meant that getting outside and getting exercise became even more important for both our physical and mental health.



### Outdoor activities

Many groups made the most of outdoor space for exercise and relaxation in the months of lockdown. SE knew the value of encouraging people to go outside and engage in exercise to ease symptoms of anxiety, depression, fatigue, and physical aches and pains. **Jeely Piece Club** was unable to offer indoor play sessions or birthday parties this year but instead provided outdoor play sessions which gave kids across the city the opportunity to leave their homes at a time when parents' nerves were frayed and children risked becoming deprived of contact with their peers, which is essential for social development.

The **Hidden Gardens** offered an oasis in the city's Southside for people who didn't have their own garden and wanted to take pleasure in nature. **Glasgow Women's Library** encouraged people to see Glasgow with 'Explore Your Own City', suggesting that those exploring the city share their experiences online. Their instructions were simple: to go to places you haven't been before, and to discover green spaces you never knew existed. **Cassiltoun Housing Association** encouraged 'Woodland Walks' where people recorded and shared their daily walk in Castlemilk Woods.



## GLASGOW: A Cycling City

When public transport was significantly reduced, cycling became one of the only options for getting around the city. Key workers still needed to travel across Glasgow, and they needed to do so as safely as possible. There was a steep demand for new bikes and cycle maintenance work from March, with fewer bikes being donated and prices rising due to demand. Social enterprises have recognised that the barriers to cycling are more complicated than cheap bikes or offering free repairs. They recognise the need for a cultural shift, where the benefits of cycling are celebrated: recognising the positive impact bikes can have on upskilling and confidence, in addition to being a fun and eco-friendly alternative to public transport.

### Cargo bikes

The only way to buy many goods during a pandemic was through online retail services. The majority of retailers use vans to deliver products quickly and directly to individual addresses. However, pollution caused by vans and lorries has soared since March, in line with the surge of online deliveries. Social enterprise bike shops offered the service of their cargo bikes to other organisations that needed to deliver food and other essentials across the city, doing their part to reduce the impact on the environment created by vans. With the roads emptier, cycle couriers reported an improved experience when delivering with cargo bikes.

### Bikes For All

**Bikes For All** is the product of a partnership between **Bike for Good**, **Como UK**, and the **Glasgow Centre for Population Health**. The project recognised the importance of cycling during the pandemic and aimed to make it more accessible for anyone without an income. **Bikes for All** offers an annual **NextBike** membership for £3 - instead of £60 - to people who are unemployed, homeless, or in temporary accommodation. This scheme has been hugely popular, allowing people to access bikes without the initial investment, the added costs of maintenance, or concerns about a safe place to lock it.





## Bike shop services

Bike repair shops became 'essential' retailers during the lockdown and were allowed to reopen, but social distancing requirements resulted in bike workshops reducing their staff numbers. Cycle workshops are often located within small, enclosed spaces with many tools that could be contaminated. SE bike shops recognised the importance of remaining open but had to find ways to deal with customer numbers - for the safety of customers and employees alike.

Bike repair at **De'ls on Wheels** in Knightswood, run by **Glasgow Eco Trust**, continued throughout the summer. There was only one bike mechanic and the organisation was aware that if he became unwell or had to self-isolate, the whole operation would grind to a halt. De'ls on Wheels minimised the risk by implementing an online check-in and taking payments through iZettle. This was successful and digitising services minimised contact and enabled the workload to be spread more evenly.

## Fix Your Own Bike

SE bike shops often run 'Fix Your Own Bike' courses. These courses teach people skills that could lead to employment while improving their mental health and reducing the cost of bike ownership. **Bike For Good**, **Common Wheel**, and **Soul Riders** provide a Fix Your Own Bike scheme to help get people across the city back in the saddle without it hitting them in the wallet. These schemes illustrate the social principles that guide SE bike shops.

# Aye Cycle Glasgow



**it's not just a mode of transport, It's a cultural movement**

Kimberly  
Bike for Good

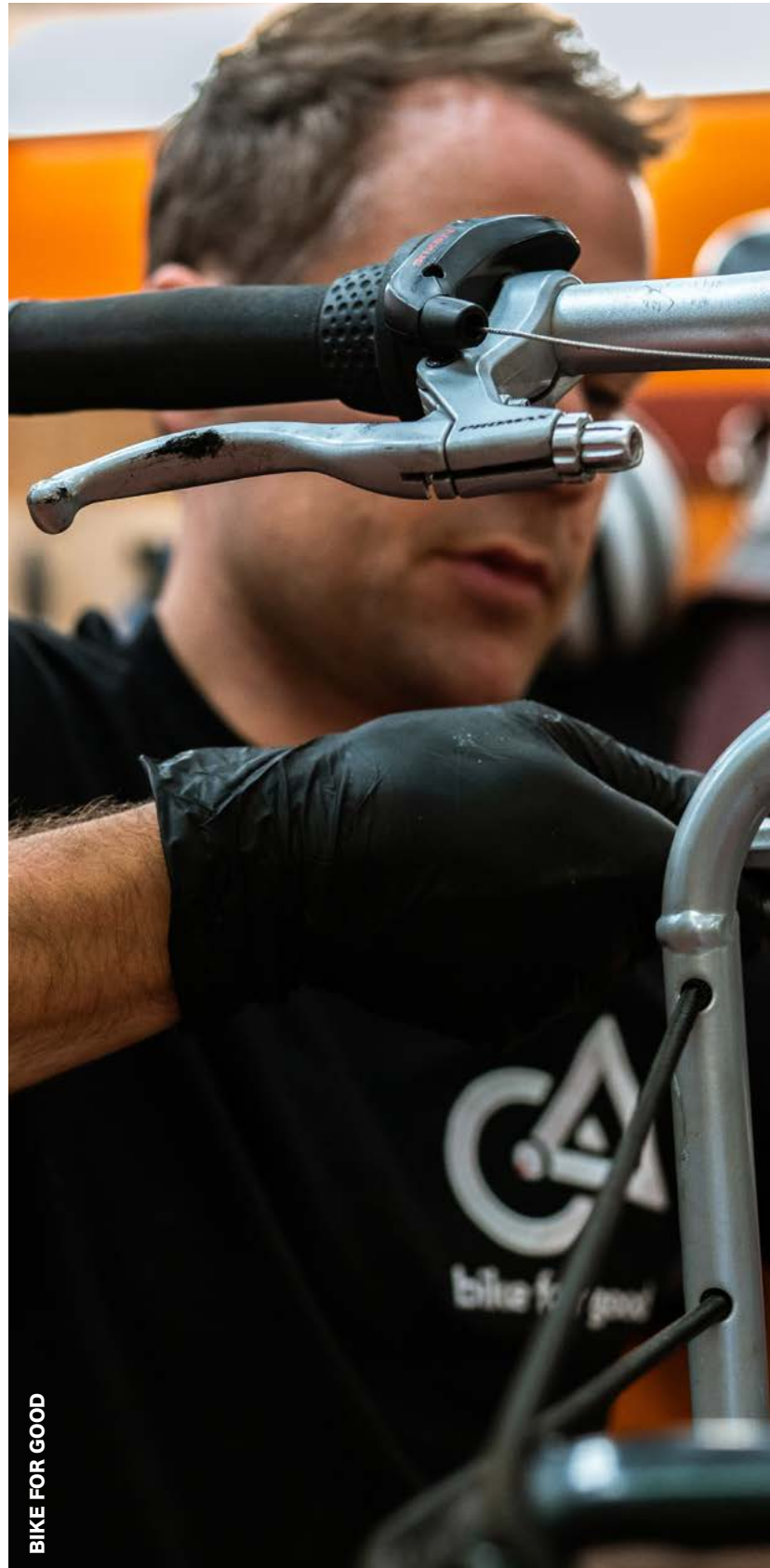
*Aye Cycle is an online resource which was created to help city residents find out more about the various social enterprises and charity groups that organise events and group bike rides in the city. They're a go-to resource on cycling and social enterprises in Glasgow.*

## Confidence

At the beginning of lockdown, **Bike For Good** lent their fleet of bikes to key workers. Many of these workers hadn't cycled in years and were offered a free 'Bike Buddy' service: where a member of the Bike for Good team would pick up new cyclists at their home and join them on the commute until they felt comfortable doing it alone. The majority of the key workers involved went on to purchase the bikes they had borrowed from the shop.



Guided bike rides are also effective ways of building confidence in new cyclists and connecting people. Glasgow Eco Trust have been running guided bike rides in the city for the past 2 years, helping people to familiarise themselves with the roads in Glasgow and to feel comfortable on their bike.



BIKE FOR GOOD



# Breaking down borders

**REFUGEES IN GLASGOW**

The treatment of asylum seekers refugees has been another tragedy of 2020, and has made national headlines in Glasgow multiple times during the pandemic. Social enterprises have been among the most consistent support systems for refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow, and many organisations across the city made it their responsibility to continue this support despite the extra pressures created by the lockdown.



AFRICAN CHALLENGE SCOTLAND

Providing food and emergency supplies  
**African Challenge Scotland** have been at the forefront of social enterprises' direct support for refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow. They offer cheques and nutritional food packages to the people who find it most difficult to access services in the city. Once again, this enterprise highlights the uniquely functional

position of social enterprises within local communities. When they leapt into action to support refugees during the coronavirus crisis, they knew who to help, where they were, and what language they spoke. Another example of support extended to refugees came from Glaswegian charity **Refuweegee**, who worked with **Locavore** to provide refugees and asylum seekers with fresh, local produce from March onwards in 2020.



## **SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SUPPORTS REFUGEES**

A source for local information

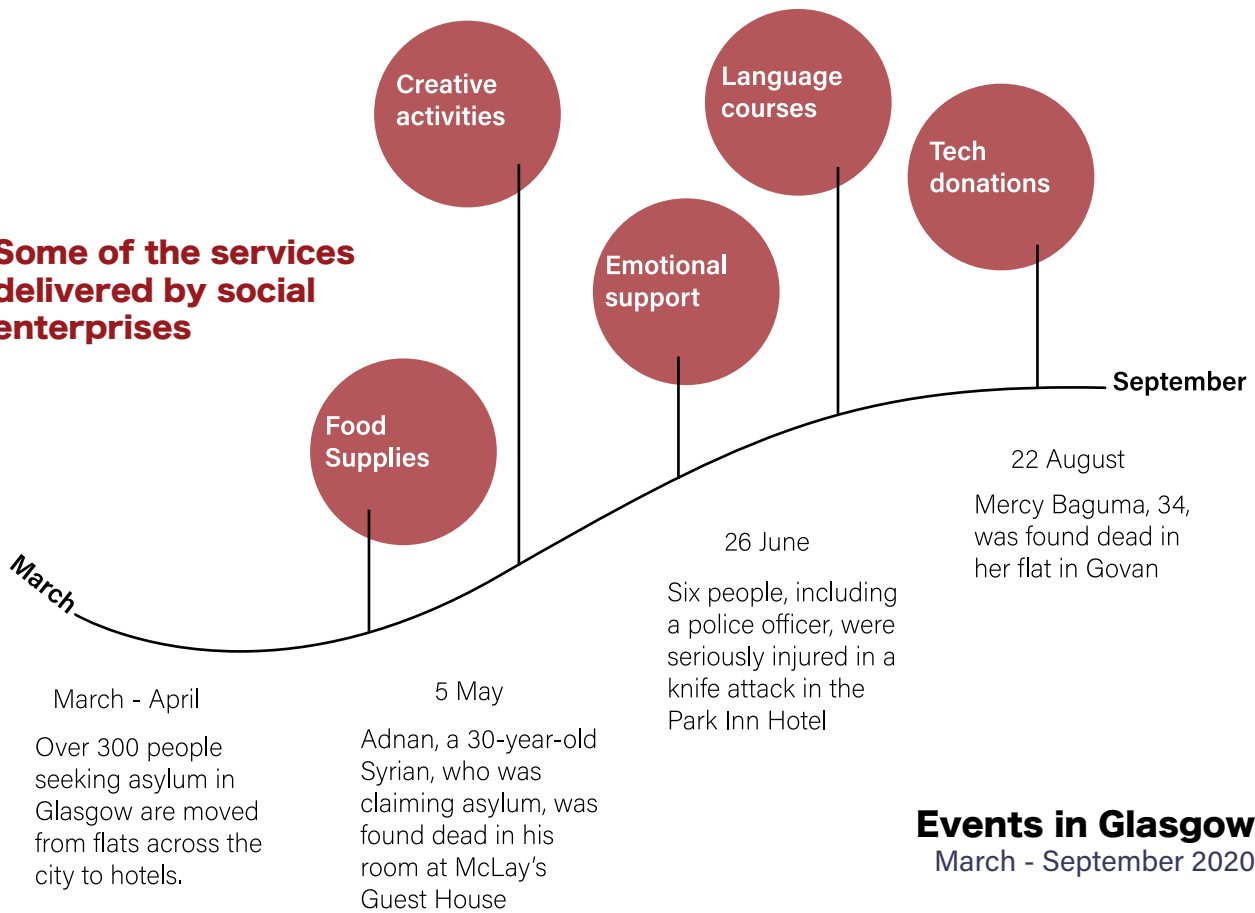
The uncertainty and mixed messages around lockdown were confusing for everybody, but far more so for people in the city whose first language wasn't English. Luckily, social enterprises such as **Kinning Park Complex** provided emergency food provision with a difference. They had been working with residents in Kinning Park, Govan, and they were familiar with the languages spoken in the area. They provided accurate and comforting information in a range of languages as they delivered food packs in the area - a thoughtful touch that will have meant the world for families facing a language barrier.

Re-purposing kitchen spaces

Many social enterprise cafes and community kitchens, such as **Soul Food Sisters**, **Unity Enterprise**, and **MILK**, used their premises to cook food and deliver it to people in hotel accommodation and shelters across the city during the lockdown.

**Soul Food Sisters** is a collective of immigrant women in Glasgow who aim to strengthen cultural links in Scotland with food. During the lockdown, the team spent the time during their cafe's closure delivering meals in the East End and George Square. This is where they met one of their newest volunteers: a young man from Syria who impresses the cafe's clientele with his exceptional Middle Eastern cooking. Soul Food Sisters provides work experience to help vulnerable people looking for employment, and to give them a sense of community and purpose when they have been left behind by other systems and organisations.

## Some of the services delivered by social enterprises



## Events in Glasgow March - September 2020

### Wellbeing

For people who have experienced traumatic experiences, being trapped inside can trigger strong emotions. **Make Do & Grow** were concerned that many of the children who attended their play sessions didn't have their own toys at home, and made efforts to deliver some of their stock to those who might be missing the joy of play.

The **Print Clan** developed a 'Print from Home' screen printing workshop that is subsidised through corporate workshops, some refugees were able to access that through Refuweegee.

**Music Broth** has been delivering musical instruments to people across the city. They offered their service free of charge and promoted the instrument library through SEs who work with forcibly displaced communities.

**MORE (Migrants Organising for Rights and Empowerment)** also offered guided bike rides in partnership with **Bikes For All**. These were a valuable resource for refugees and asylum seekers who were confined to city centre hotels with no money and little guidance or support.

### Staying Connected

**Remade Network's** partnership with Govanhill Baths saw the former delivering 250 refurbished personal computers to the local community - and a further 250 to wider Glasgow residents. Access to the internet, to digital services, and to digital communications became crucial during the early months of the pandemic - to wellbeing, and to mental health. Meanwhile, **MORE** partnered with social enterprises and charities across the city to provide phones and devices to hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers.

### Refuweegee

**Refuweegee** is a charity that was started by Selina Hales in 2015 to provide a warm welcome to forcibly displaced people arriving in Glasgow. Refuweegee's mission is to offer comfort in addition to practical items that New Scots might need. Refuweegee grew during 2020 and is enthusiastic about working with social enterprise partners. They started a partnership with **Locavore** to deliver fresh, local produce to refugees and asylum seekers across the city.

## Working with Kinning Park Complex and Refuweegee means that more people from refugee backgrounds can see what they can access

Felix  
Music Broth



## MOMENTS to reflect

Social entrepreneurs are constantly looking for new opportunities to create sustainable change in Glasgow, but sometimes you need to stop to gain perspective and develop new strategies. When Glasgow came to a standstill in March 2020, social entrepreneurs were able to take a step back from their work and observe their business on a broader scale, often for the first time.

### Restructuring

Many Glasgow-based SEs organised community events that brought groups of people together, like gigs, performances, and hands-on events. SEs in this sector had to restructure urgently to operate in the 'New Normal'.

**Piano City** used to organise performances across the city in addition to selling pianos. The time to reflect inspired Tom, Piano City's founder, to rethink how the enterprise runs. His team spent longer on each piano, fixing it to a higher standard so that they could sell fewer pianos for more money. In this way, he could provide a more sustainable service.

**Rise:Glasgow** empowers female refugees and asylum seekers by providing catering and hospitality opportunities, equipping women with the skills and confidence they need to apply for jobs in the city (and beyond). When community cooking spaces became unsafe, their pop-up food service stopped operating. Rise:Glasgow, once a thriving community hub of flavour and passion, had to take a hiatus. The organisation was dedicated to finding a new space that would be safe enough to continue offering opportunities to refugee women. Rise:Glasgow have now been able to invest in a food trailer, so that the social enterprise can start running

again, just in a different way. The break also enabled the SE to re-brand, focussing on their digital marketing strategy.

This unusual pause was a moment for social enterprise leaders to evaluate their organisation. For many social enterprise leaders, it was necessary to strip the operation back to the social mission at the core of their work. As SEs respond to the limitations and restrictions the pandemic brought, they continue to serve the same communities but their method of delivery has changed. This time has allowed SEs to consider what's important to their community, and work to provide it.

## Focus on enterprise

For some GSEN members, their entrepreneurial component expanded while, for practical reasons, their outreach work contracted. These SE were unable to continue their outreach work because it involved activities that were conducted physically, with high-risk participants, or using a lot of equipment that could be contaminated. These SE used this time to focus on building their enterprise for the future.

**Animalia Apparel LTD** works to fund **Animalia CIC**, supporting young people by helping them get involved with sports. They have used this time to reconsider their business strategy and are focussing on the sale of their clothing.

## Offering a space for calm

**The Wee Retreat** has been the go-to space for mindfulness, meditation and yoga in the city's Southside since 2018. The restrictions of lockdown meant that The Wee Retreat's doors closed in March. That didn't stop the team from providing new services for people online. The challenges of lockdown emphasised The Wee Retreat's versatility, they produced a full online course during the pandemic: their new 'Wellbeing @ Work' programme has become a solution for employers who are looking to proactively invest in their staff's well-being.

Part of The Wee Retreat's ethos is that meditation and mindfulness practices are essential and they should not be viewed as a luxury that only some people can afford. The Wee Retreat have partnered with other social enterprises and third sector organisations to make sure that everyone has access to mindfulness practices, they have recently launched a fully-funded mindfulness course for carers and those in caring professions.

## National Recognition

The pandemic brought a sharp focus on the prominent issue of housing insecurity. Barriers to accessing safe and comfortable living spaces aren't new to Glasgow and **Homes for Good (HFG)** recognises the difficulties that people on benefits and low incomes face when trying to rent a property in the city. HFG, established in Glasgow in 2013, is the UK's first social enterprise letting agency and an industry leader that promotes an ethical approach to renting properties.

2020 was a year of national recognition for HFG as they were awarded £2.4 million by the National Lottery Community Fund. This fund will enable the letting agent to expand their services across the UK, providing homes without discrimination while continuing to lead the way for letting agencies in Britain.





# If it's broke, fix it.

The Coronavirus crisis prompted many of us to consider the sustainability of our lifestyles. The closure of non-essential shops shifted our mindset from a habit of consumption, to questioning the necessity of our purchases. Residents took the opportunity to start DIY projects and re-learn the practical skills that the urgency and stress of modern living had taken from us. Social enterprises often have an environmental focus, facilitating the repair and refurbishment of used items to reduce needless waste. These social enterprises focus on ways in which we can give our possessions a new life instead of throwing them away.

The **Remade Network** became members of GSEN in 2020. The Remade Network uses its partnerships with other organisations to provide a fast and efficient repair and refurbishment service. Their **Repair Stop** opened in July and is located in the Deep End, a space owned by **Govanhill Baths**. The Repair Stop's service hatch was a creative response to repairing goods while Covid-19 restrictions remained in place. This SE hired three members of staff to help facilitate these repairs, some of whom had lost their job as a result of the pandemic.

**Glasgow Wood Recycling (GWR)** is a naturally eco-friendly venture, and one that benefits the environment and the local economy. This established organisation maintains an environmental focus through giving unwanted timber a new life. GWR recommenced work once lockdown restrictions eased at the end of summer and staff were able to return from furlough.

Part of GWR's mission is introduce the benefits that carpentry and woodworking can have on mental health to people in the city who have lived through adverse life experiences. These popular maker-led woodworking courses were held at their South Street workshop. These courses have been paused, in line with physical distancing regulations.

Although GWR's capacity was reduced to ensure distancing - volunteers were not able to return for safety reasons - the SE took on new commissions from other organisations. One example being their work for Glasgow City Council: building raised wooden beds in the city centre, which are intended to help maintain social distancing in potentially busy places.





*“Repair creates 10 times as many jobs as recycling”*

Institute for Local Self-Reliance

## LIBRARY... OF THINGS

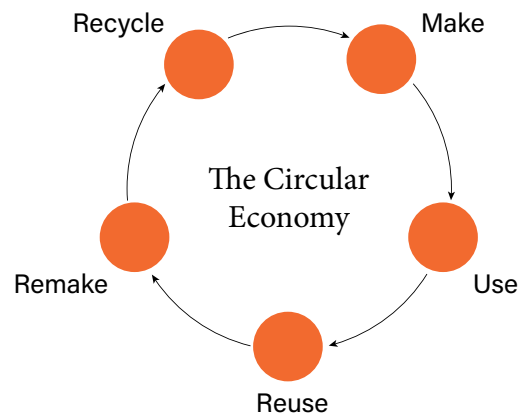
The **Glasgow Tool Library**, which works alongside the Remade Network, was closed for safety reasons for the duration of lockdown. Once they reopened in August, they were able to hire their first member of staff: their tool librarian, Kat. As many Glasgow residents have learned, the Glasgow Tool Library is exactly what it claims to be: a loan-out system for essential tools that would often be too expensive for individuals to purchase.

The environmental organisation, **South Seeds**, launched a tool library on Victoria Road during the pandemic, both organisations are careful to keep all their equipment sanitised and quarantine the tools to prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

At the beginning of the lockdown, **Make Do & Grow** provided NSPCC with their stock of toys to create an innovative toy library for local children.

Music Broth provides aspiring musicians living in the central belt the opportunity to learn any instrument without having to make a costly investment. The musical instrument library expanded during 2020 and Music Broth are hoping to offer this service to more people, on an even wider scale.

Keeping libraries functioning throughout the pandemic has been the result of dedication, creative thinking, and a recognition of the importance they bring to people's lives. Staff have been working tirelessly to quarantine and deliver these objects safely to the people who need them.



## Second Hand Bikes

The circular economy is central to SEs who aim to reduce the negative impact that we have on society. The circular economy is a way of operating that reduces waste - this is beneficial for businesses and the environment. SE bike shops refurbish unwanted bikes and sell them at an affordable price. This tackles two common problems: excess waste and the prohibitive cost of cycling.

The surge of interest in bikes meant that fewer people were donating unwanted bikes, choosing instead to get them repaired for personal use. Selling bikes also requires a lot of physical contact, which brought further challenges for SE bike shops.



## HIGHLIGHTING Inequalities

The official government advice during summer 2020 was undeniably vague, prioritising the economy and saving as many jobs as possible. When the official message from Westminster became 'work from home if you can', a new divide emerged between those who could remain employed and working remotely, and those for whom remote work was not an option. Those with the lowest incomes, often in customer-facing industries, lost their source of income. Businesses sought to cut wages in an effort to survive and junior staff were often the first to suffer.

SEs provide opportunities for people who need support into employment, recognising who is most vulnerable to the risk of being excluded or marginalised from mainstream society and its services. Often, SEs pay a wage to people who otherwise may not have been able to access employment. When COVID interrupted normal life, social enterprises put the emphasis on supporting their staff - not on saving money. The **GalGael** rotated furlough between workers, while **Unity Enterprise** gave staff other jobs in the organisation so they could limit redundancies and provide wages for as many staff as possible. Social entrepreneurs often prioritised the livelihood of their staff above sustaining their own incomes.

Under 25's are twice as likely to lose their job as a result of Covid-19 than older workers.

The SE sector recognises the importance of job opportunities for younger people. The SE sector in Glasgow offer unique opportunities for young people to start their careers and be involved in shaping the future of the city. As the sector grows, more opportunities are becoming available for young people.

**Street and Arrow** supports young people with an offending background into employment. This SE was developed by the **Scottish Violence Reduction Unit**. Before the pandemic, Street and Arrow provided catering training opportunities. The SE continues to support their two trainees with daily phone calls to provide them with the motivation to avoid returning to addiction. They are currently looking to continue supporting young people into employment, but they are looking to expanding their programme in a new direction.

### **They say hard to reach, I'd say easy to ignore**

Alastair  
Street and Arrow

JEELY PIECE CLUB





## Racial inequality

Coronavirus put the reality of racism in Scotland under the spotlight. Racial inequality in the UK made national headlines when data found that BME people were much more likely to die from COVID-19 than their white counterparts. People from minority backgrounds face more barriers to employment, meaning they miss out on better jobs. GSEN member **Radiant and Brighter** published a report in March 2020 covering 'Ethnicity & Diversity in the Scottish Workforce'. The report found that BME workers are more likely than their white peers to be working a role below their skill-set level. Therefore, they are paid less, have less opportunity in society, leading to fewer opportunities to live healthier lives.

This problem spreads through every sector, including social enterprise. The 2018-2028 Social Enterprise Strategy for Glasgow, created in partnership with Glasgow City Council, reported that while Black and Ethnicity Communities make up 12% of the population of Glasgow, just 6% of directors and trustees of social enterprises are from the BME community. With Black Lives Matter protests taking place across the world during the summer, including in Glasgow, it became clear that a societal shift is necessary to tackle racism directly.



“The tragedy is immediate, real, epic and unfolding before our eyes. But it isn’t new”

**Arundhati Roy**

*The Pandemic is a Portal*

## Learning Disabilities & Lockdown

The rigid requirements of lockdown have been extremely difficult for people with learning disabilities and their families. Once the lockdown was eased, many people had lost the social skills they had been developing over years of attending SE-run groups and clubs. For parents of young people and children with disabilities, school and group closures meant their respite from caring for their child was diminished. It was difficult or impossible for parents to balance work with their caring responsibilities.

**The Saturday Cafe**, a social enterprise that provides a safe environment for young people with learning disabilities, usually opened 3 days a week. During the summer months they opened every day so that young people could maintain social contact - and their parents could continue to work.

Geeza Break, a respite service based in the East End supported 91 families and 194 children from March to July 2020. They provided children with educational stage appropriate activity packs age and sourced sensory toys ensuring all the children got the opportunity to have some positive play during a stressful period.

**The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD)** conducted a survey and found that 5% of adults with learning disabilities lived with a partner, compared to 56% of the general population. This means that the isolation involved in living alone would have a more intense impact on adult with a learning disability. Digital inequalities also had a greater impact on people with learning disabilities, SCLD found that someone with a learning disability was four times more likely to have never accessed the internet than someone who does not have a learning disability.

## Older Adults

Older adults were most at risk of isolation before the pandemic; now, they entered the 'at-risk' group and become even more isolated in 2020.

**The Senior Centre** in Castlemilk provided a space for older adults to meet and have a nourishing meal together. Due to the virus, this had to close - but The Senior Centre remains a lifeline for older adults as the enterprise delivered food and coordinated activities in the local area.



PEOPLE'S PANTRY

# GOVANHILL

## CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

Govanhill is the most diverse neighbourhood in Scotland. The area has historically been a popular area in which people arriving in Glasgow for the first time would settle. The demographic of the population has always been in flux: migration started with people from the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland. Then those from England, Ireland, and Italy arrived. Jewish people fleeing persecution added to the neighbourhood's diversity, and more recent arrivals have included people from Pakistan and South Asia. It is now also home to a vibrant Roma population and refugees and asylum seekers from across the world.

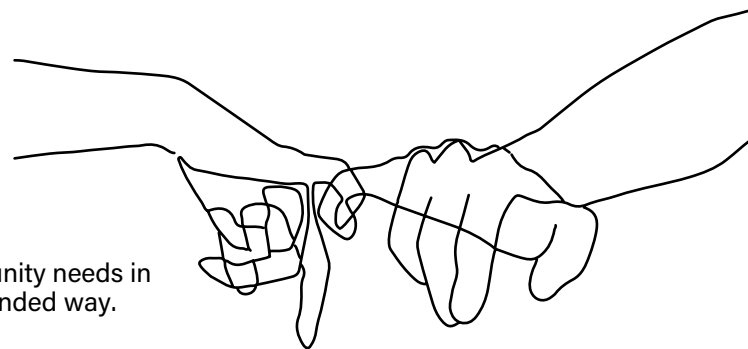
As a result of hardship faced in the forms of racism, poverty and a lack of inclusion, there is a strong sense of community solidarity in Govanhill. From this, social movements have grown. The Govanhill Baths was central to 2001 protests where residents occupied the historic swimming baths. A prominent Social Enterprise, The **Govanhill Bath**, grew from this movement and over the past two decades it has flourished, adapting and responding

dynamically to community needs in a flexible and open-minded way.

Each week during the pandemic the Govanhill Baths delivered food parcels, children's activities, and other essentials to families who would be unable to access instruments of state support. This SE mentors smaller organisations in the neighbourhood, each of them run independently to fulfil the needs of the people they serve. These smaller organisations include the **Somali Association, Romano Lav**, and the **Irish Heritage Foundation**.

These SEs helped in translating up-to-date coronavirus information into the most widely spoken languages in the areas, and explaining where the residents of Govanhill could go for support. The **Hidden Gardens**, located behind the Tramway, has been a sanctuary since 2003. It's an invaluable space where Govanhill residents enjoyed nature in peace and tranquility during the pandemic.

Working towards a fairer city takes more than just social enterprise, a cross-sector approach can build a proactively inclusive neighbourhood.



**A strong ethos that is reflected in the delivery that 'we are community' and if other organisations are strong in the community, that's good for us**

Alexandra  
Govanhill Baths





## The World Moves Online: Technology & Social Enterprise

In 2020, huge swathes of the country had no choice but to move online. For millions, the only method of communication beyond their home was through the internet. Social enterprises made this shift, and offered helping hand to others in their communities to manage the shift online during lockdown.

### Digital services

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SEs provide essential services to some of the most deprived families in Glasgow. They recognise the importance of their services and many began providing them online, or they used digital resources to deliver them safely. Young staff members were central to this transformation. There was no roadmap for SE to follow and the decision to provide services online - or delay them until meeting physically was possible - required consultation with people who engaged with these services

Many SE were unable to replicate their services online, either because it was logistically impossible, or because the groups they work with wouldn't be able to access them.

The 'digital divide' became more stark than ever and SE took it upon themselves to source, repair and purchase devices for people who did not have access to them. However, SE recognises that there is more work required to encourage digital engagement than the provision of hardware.





## Connecting through social channels

Social media quickly became one of the only ways that SE could maintain contact with their customers and groups who engage with their services. Traditional marketing methods such as posters, flyers and promoting themselves through word of mouth became obsolete, so SE rose to the challenge of digitising their marketing and communication strategies.

SE utilised social media to keep their communities informed about the latest changes to their organisation. They also focussed on Facebook groups to maintain contact with people who were using their services. Some SE used Instagram and Twitter to ask their followers how their services could be improved and what they enjoyed about what the organisation was offering virtually.

Facebook videos were made by SE staff who were required to stay at home. The topics included creative tutorials, safer cycling tips and useful wellbeing practices. Social media became a hub of educational resources produced by Glasgow-based SE and enabled organisations to stay in contact with their community.

## Babies, children, and play

Before COVID, **Make Do & Grow** provided play opportunities for children from their shop in Govan. As soon as Glasgow was moved into full lockdown, Make Do and Grow provided their play sessions on Zoom, and shared craft tutorials on Facebook. The Zoom play sessions provided respite for parents and a chance to catch up with a cup of tea, while their children were able to participate from the comfort of their own living room. Organisers adapted not the medium, noting that it is difficult to maintain concentration for a long period on Zoom, and offering shorter sessions accordingly.

## Developing e-commerce

Established to support female empowerment, **Ms Miss Mrs** were determined to continue supporting women in spite of the obstacles presented by 2020. They developed a range of products that they were able to sell online to fund their work in the community, including cards.

Online sales were also a helpful resource for **Recycle Mobility**. The social enterprise in Clydebank has been providing affordable electric wheelchairs to people in Scotland since 2014. Their shop had to close but the organisation was approached online by the Lebanese Government and asked if they could buy their stock of vehicles, to assist those injured in the Beirut Blast back in August.

## Providing a safe community for women

**Glasgow Women's Library** is a haven in the East End of Glasgow, providing an accessible space where anyone can access cultural events and providing support groups for people who identify as women. During the pandemic staff continued to work from home and services moved online. The library found that many of their writing and reading workshops had a wider reach after being moved online.

The library will reopen as a space to meet new people and create connections in the future, but the organisation has made the decision to continue some of their sessions online thanks to the success of the format..



## Enhancing workflow

### Cash and paper

Many smaller SEs had operated with cash-only systems pre-Covid, and a lot of their administration was paper-based. The risk of Coronavirus contamination pushed organisations towards digital methods of payment, data recording and bookkeeping. GSEN members reported that this saved time and improved accuracy in addition to enabling their staff to work from home with ease.

### Speeding up internal processes

The emergency response required by 2020's crisis highlighted that certain internal processes and protocols delayed immediate action. When tested for speed and efficiency by a global pandemic and a national lockdown, SEs were able to identify unnecessary elements within their internal procedure and to strip them away, improving their efficiency and effectiveness.

### Staying in touch

Social media has been an important marketing method for businesses for the past two decades; however, many SEs had limited staff capacity, and felt unable to focus on their online presence. When all other methods of sharing information became obsolete, GSEN members did make the shift towards communicating with the people of Glasgow (and beyond) through social media. **The Govan Community Project**, for example, hired a social media practitioner, which enabled them to use their accounts to signpost people to updated refugee resources.



# DIGITAL EXCLUSION

When the world moved online, many people were left behind in the 'Digital Divide.' The **Remade Network** used their connections and partners throughout the city to make sure that their refurbished computers went to the people who needed them the most. This enabled families to stay in touch, children to continue their education, and people to stay entertained and connected throughout a period of intense loneliness.

**Cassiltoun Housing Association** were aware that they worked with a large number of older people in Castlemilk who did not have access to the internet. They developed an extremely popular Digital Lending Library - with 150 devices and 150 WiFi packages. 'Banging Food n Bingo' was an event created by **Cassiltoun Youth Advisory Panel** to encourage older adults to start using devices. The young members of the group were keen to reach out to isolated older people through a Glaswegian favourite: the game of bingo. Devices were provided to those who didn't have one, and bingo cards were delivered alongside a hot dinner from **The Senior Centre**. The Cassiltoun Youth Advisory Panel led the sessions, developing their confidence and skills during a difficult period that was characterised by uncertainty surrounding their future.

## The limitations of Zoom

It's important to note that some organisations made the decision not to replicate their services on Zoom. The uncertainty surrounding the 'unprecedented' situation meant that a lot of organisations wanted to wait and see whether technological investments - and potentially employing new staff to implement these new services - would be worth the costs. For social enterprises who work with older adults, they believed that it would be unfair for some participants to continue their courses online, while others would miss out because they didn't have the digital resources. For others, there were practical reasons - some activities were too dangerous or required too much equipment to be done at home.





# COLLABORATION COOPERATION & NETWORKS

One of the elements that distinguish SEs from traditional businesses is their ability and willingness to collaborate and work towards collective well-being. Rather than competing, they recognise each others' specialism and work towards common goals. Each SE provides a unique service and by working together within an area, organisations can be sure to cover all bases without duplicating services. During COVID, networks that had been built and maintained over previous years came into their own.

Working together was the only way that many SEs were able to continue operating through the coronavirus pandemic. Glasgow Community Planning Partnership's *Thriving Places* initiative recognises the importance of working collaboratively towards an inclusive society - it enables SEs to work together in area groups with public services and local charities. There is a *Thriving Places* group in every neighbourhood.

## Area Networks

Pre-COVID, many areas of Glasgow had established networks consisting of social enterprises, charities, and public service providers. The **Castlemilk Together** group was operating before COVID, but it evolved when the crisis impacted Castlemilk. The group includes a variety of GSEN members, including **Indigo Childcare**, **Jeely Piece Club**, **The Senior Centre**, and **Cassiltoun HA**.

SEs in Govan are familiar with cross-sector partnerships to provide a variety of services for local people. One example of this is was during the Easter holiday: **Make Do & Grow's** Easter holiday activity sessions for children were unable to run, so the Govan-based SE delivered craft packs with lunch packs (**Southside HA**) to families in the local area.





**it's definitely inspired a lot of organisations to think collaboratively, as well. We've been able to access community grants during the pandemic through support and communities funds**

Felix  
Music Broth

### Area Funds

Before 2020, grant funding was sometimes structured in a way that created competition between social enterprises and charities. As a result of the upheaval that coronavirus brought to the city, groups of all sizes had the opportunity to work together. Grant funding enabled SE to work in groups to provide emergency food distribution, educational resources, and packs to improve well-being in a whole area. Working collaboratively, not competitively, enabled SEs to quickly reach more people and expand their services further afield.

### Integration Networks

Integration Networks are a network of community groups and organisations that provide services and activities to promote diversity and support community integration in Glasgow. Their vision is to foster a community free from discrimination and racism, and a place where people from all backgrounds and cultures are valued equally. The **Maryhill Integration Network** is one example. They were forced to close their office due to COVID, but continued to provide a range of services online and on the phone. This included online English classes, peer-to-peer support for those going through the immigration process, a weekly well-being check-in, and their online choir and creative online groups.

# *Beyond* COLLABORATION

## Sharing Resources

Under pressure from the pandemic SE had to act fast, some organisations had funding and premises but were prevented from onboarding new volunteers quickly enough to cope with demand. Others had a mobilised group of people wanting to help but were held back by limited resources. In a myriad of ways, SEs successfully balanced and distributed resources to provide rapid aid for as many people as possible.

## Mentoring

The **Govanhill Baths** use their nineteen years of experience in the sector to help smaller social enterprises from Govanhill grow and develop. They facilitate meetings and offer peer support so that people in Govanhill can improve the lives of their friends and neighbours. The Baths hope to operate as a citizen-focussed space for Govanhill residents when they reopen.

## Partnership & support

Make Do & Grow is not-for-profit toy shop rooted in environmental principles. They with over nine partners to provide children in Glasgow with craft packs, toys and lunches during the crisis that Coronavirus brought to families throughout the city.

**Building relationships and partnerships within the govan area has been really crucial for us, in terms of rooting ourselves in the community and ensuring we can meet their needs in the best way possible. So, because of that we were able to pick up the phone to organisations we knew in the local area.**

Kaytie  
Make Do & Grow



MAKE DO & GROW © ORAN MACLEOD







## VOLUNTEERING IN THE PANDEMIC: Giving our Time

COVID created a unique climate for volunteering and the city of Glasgow saw a surge of citizen action in every neighbourhood. Citizen-led support networks were extremely successful in providing for their communities, often powered by young people who were placed on furlough or had been made redundant as a result of the pandemic. SE was stripped back to its roots and community action groups became a support system for volunteers through the isolating months of lockdown.

**We need a revolution in economic thinking that stimulates and values co-operative sharing of risks and reward, to re-think what value is**

Maureen Porch  
CEIS Group

Many of the most influential social enterprises in the city of Glasgow are the products of citizen action. **Bike For Good** started from a stall in the Barras. **Locavore** is a sustainability movement which blossomed from a small shop in the Southside. And one of the most established organisations, the **GalGael**, grew from a grassroots campaign in Pollock Park.

Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016 - 2026 recognises the importance of the influence of young people: "A younger generation will bring progressive values and new expectations about society, business and life. These can help drive growth of the SE sector, but only if the sector can inspire and

accommodate these young people." The COVID climate mobilised young people, and they found GSEN members willing to accommodate them. In many cases, a positive cycle was established, whereby young people with digital skills found SEs, helped them digitise, and thus found more young volunteers.

Crowdfunders were set up and shared online by digital-savvy SE workers. Far from breaking lockdown rules, thousands of young Glaswegians put their careers on hold to help the communities they lived in.

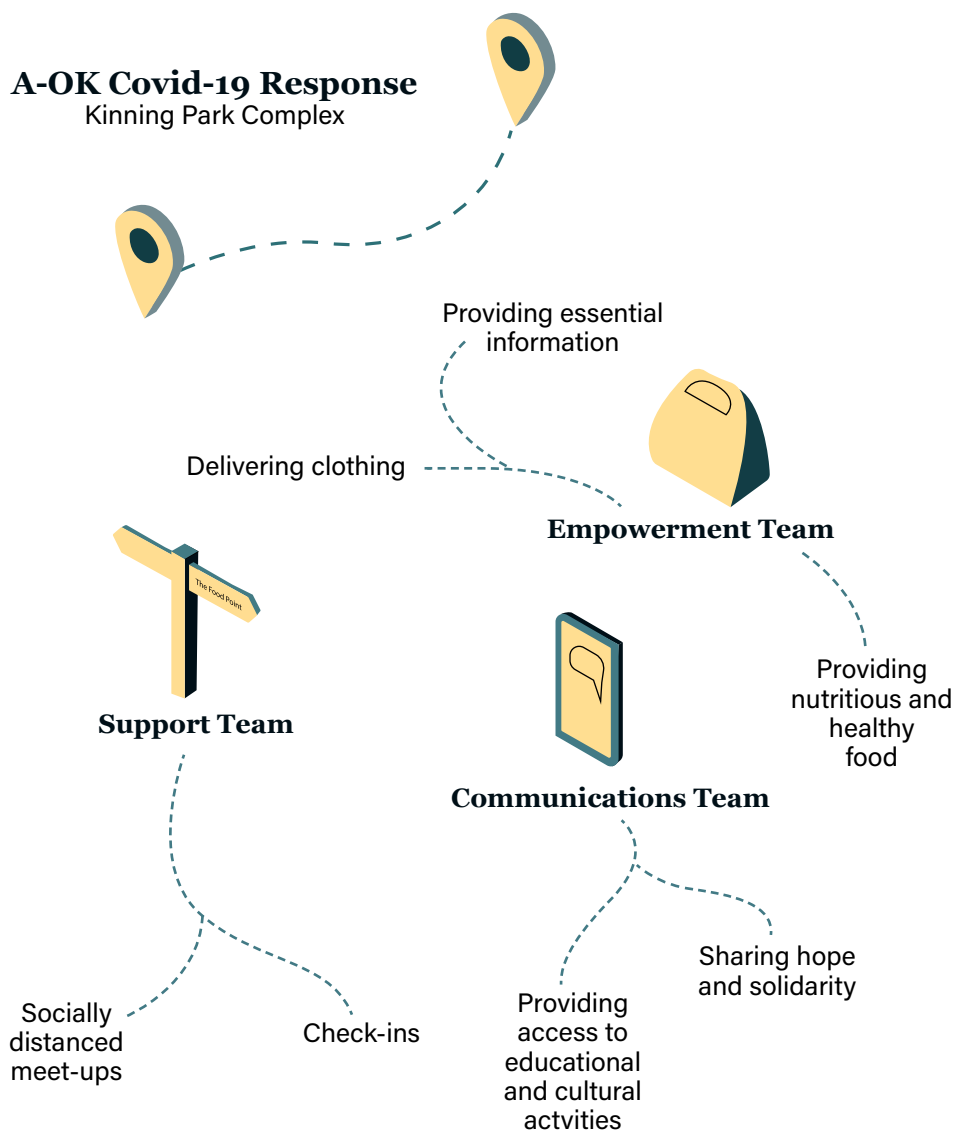
**Kinning Park Complex** worked throughout the pandemic with the support of volunteers. Their A-OK (Acts of Organised Kindness) project supported hundreds of local people through COVID through collaboration and their established community-first approach.

The Pollokshields Branch of **Glasgow Mutual Aid (GMA)** operates a food point from 623 Shields Road, a building owned by **Southside Housing Association (SHA)**. A natural relationship between SHA and GMA developed because many of SHA's volunteers were vulnerable and were shielding during COVID. As such they were able to seek support from active GMA volunteers. GMA has been recognised as an official service by the Trussell Trust, while attaining recognition as an important source of information and volunteers by SES such as **Urban Roots** and **Kinning Park Complex**.

Online directories for volunteering and places to go for help were also prioritised during this time, including 'Glasgow Helps' which was created by **Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS)**.

## A-OK Covid-19 Response

Kinning Park Complex



URBAN ROOTS



## CHALLENGES

SE response to Coronavirus in Glasgow has received wide-spread recognition for helping thousands of people. It's important to remember that the past ten months have been exhausting for social entrepreneurs, their staff and volunteers. Whether SEs have grown or struggled to continue operating, the constant changes and physical barriers have presented new challenges for nearly every organisation. Many SEs invested in reopening their premises at the end of the summer, only to suspend their work months later.

### Reduced revenue streams

SEs, by nature, aspire to be financially independent. The nature of the pandemic meant that many traditional income streams were unavailable and organisations had to apply for emergency grants. Although many SE provided a proactive response to COVID-19, it has often resulted in financial losses. Grants are not a long-term solution for many organisations in the sector.

**the fate of the organisation rests entirely on my shoulders**

GSEN Member

### High risk workers

A lot of jobs can't be moved online so many SE saw their ability to provide services depleted because their staff members and volunteers were in a high-risk category. Although SE utilised the furlough scheme and prioritised moving high-risk staff to jobs that enabled them to work from home, this was not always possible.

## Inadequate digital resources

Organisations did not always have the resources to take their services online at the pace that the lockdown required. Although SE had access to computers, some didn't have the software or hardware required to establish virtual interaction. There was also uncertainty surrounding how long this situation would last, so some SE were unsure how necessary these changes to their work would be and made the decision to take a break.

## Screens can't replace contact

Moving employees and services online has been a challenging task for every sector. The internet has been an invaluable resource during the pandemic, but virtual communication is not the same as interacting face to face. SE have also noted that concentration is more challenging during online sessions, especially for children and people with learning disabilities. For existing employees, the move online is manageable, but integrating new staff members is more difficult.

## Rise in demand for services

There was an increased demand for many services provided by SE during the pandemic. Access to food and other essential supplies was the most urgent need during the summer, but as the months passed, physical well-being and staying connected became prominent needs. Many shops and delivery services tried to provide for a growing demand but physical distancing requirements and the risk of spreading the virus meant that fewer people could work in warehouses together.

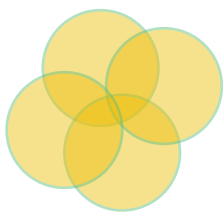
**A lot of staff were feeling at sea, that's what we wanted to avoid - people feeling at sea without the anchor of the team in our workplace - so we wanted to put into place other frameworks as well**

GSEN Member





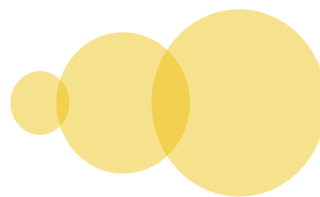
# Glasgow's Social Enterprise Network



## Support

Offering bespoke services, provide information and signposting to specialist services

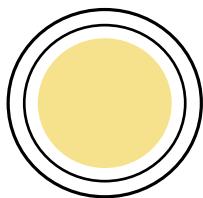
Offering a platform for members to form partnerships and collaborations



## Develop

Providing and enabling access to events and training

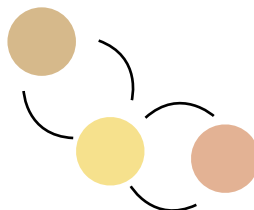
Undertaking research to influence policy and strategy development



## Promote

Providing an outlet for awareness raising of social enterprises

Engaging and consulting with social enterprises to ensure their views are represented



## Connect

Facilitating a safe space for members to come together to share resources, ideas and experiences

Enabling opportunities for trading between members, the community, public sector and private sector

## GSEN's role

**Facilitating a safe space for members to come together to share resources, ideas and experiences**

**Offering a platform for members to form partnerships and collaborations.**

**Providing information and signposting to specialist services**

**Providing an outlet for awareness raising of social enterprises**

**Engaging with social enterprises to ensure their views are represented at the appropriate levels, locally, nationally and internationally**

**Local and national strategy and policy development and delivery**

**Enabling opportunities for trading between members, the community, public sector and private sector**

**Providing and enabling access to events and training**

**Undertaking research to influence strategic and policy development**



## About GSEN

### Social Enterprise

A social enterprise is a trading business, selling goods and services, but whose primary objective is to achieve social and / or environmental benefit. SEs aim to be financially self-sustaining and to invest all of their profits into their social and /or environmental purpose.

Glasgow Social Enterprise Network is point of connection and support for social enterprise in Glasgow. This gives GSEN the opportunity to observe trends within the sector, recognising opportunities - and threats - to SE in Glasgow.

GSEN provides a range of services, these include information-sharing and offering a platform for communication.

GSEN is a part of Glasgow's Third Sector Interface (TSI) Partnership working alongside Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS) and Volunteer Glasgow. The Glasgow TSI Partnership is also home to Glasgow Third Sector Interface Network (GTSIN).

In early 2017, GSEN registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee and received charitable status.

## Supporting SEs during a crisis

### Emergency Grants

GSEN awarded 30 Covid capacity grants to its members during 2020. These grants were for direct emergency response support. GSEN used its portion of emergency Covid 19 funding awarded to the TSI by Scottish Government at the onset of the pandemic and knew that its members would to use the money in the best possible way. GSEN's relationships with members meant that the organisation could provide the appropriate level of support for each social enterprise in a fast-paced situation. These grants enabled GSEN members to continue trading and supporting their communities. The grants were spent primarily on improving digital resources, such as purchasing hardware, and on PPE and safety equipment.

These grants were a lifeline for members because they could reopen their premises safely.

Grants could be awarded by GSEN quickly in an emergency situation because the TSI has built a relationship with members over previous years. This meant that there was not an extensive application process, fierce competition, or a delay in receiving these unrestricted funds.

### Raising the profile of Glasgow's SEs

GSEN recognised the central role that SE played in Glasgow's response to Coronavirus in 2020 and prioritised recording this work. Over 50 members were interviewed, ten were photographed and details of their work were recorded. This will be used to highlight the importance of the sector in Glasgow.

The organisation recognises that a lot of the work that its members do happens without any public recognition - most people don't know about the work that SE have been doing during the pandemic, it is happening under the surface of public life. This report contains only a fraction of the work that GSEN members are doing across Glasgow.

SE calculate grant budgets carefully to ensure that every portion goes towards improving the lives of others, this means that only a small portion of time can be designated to promoting themselves, allocating resources to marketing only when it is essential. This is where GSEN can help. This report is just one of the ways that the TSI can promote SE.

GSEN is looking for more ways to celebrate and publicise its members.

# BEHIND THE PAGE



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**Adrian** Well-Fed  
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**Charlotte** Impact Arts  
**Brian** Jangling Space  
**Ryan** Lifelink  
**Urte** Lifelink  
**Jaqui** Lifelink  
**Heather** Lifelink  
**MILK** cafe  
**Sumayya** Kaleyard CIC  
**Emma** Unity Enterprise  
**Kirsteen** Unity Enterprise  
**Lorna** Giraffe Healthcare CIC  
**Tony** Animalia Apparel  
**Martin** Kinning Park Complex  
**Maria** Accessible Tennis  
**Doreen** Geeza Break  
**Sue** Glasgow Women's Library  
**Sylvia** MsMrsMiss (check name)  
**Kimberly** Bike for Good  
**Pasna** Weekday Wowfactor  
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