



WORCESTERSHIRE

VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE ASSEMBLY 2023

CONNECTING & STRENGTHENING
THE VCSE SECTOR

≡ 25TH OCTOBER ≡



Connecting and
Strengthening
Worcestershire's
VCSE Sector



Challenges and solutions

Ed Mayo

October 2023

pilotlight



Pilotlight

Do more for your world

Pilotlight is a charity that helps people and charities to do more for their world. We do this by bringing charities together with business and business experts who can tackle the pressing issues charities are facing.

So far, we have worked with around 1,000 charities. And since 1996 we've developed partnerships with over 180 of the UK's top businesses including Barclays, Ipsos Mori, Lendlease, Morgan Stanley, Sodexo and KPMG.

Our impact results show that two years on from support through the Pilotlight 360 programme, charities, on average, increase their income by 44% and their reach (the number of beneficiaries) by 30%.



For our pro bono volunteers, we call them Pilotlighters, supporting charities is a way to give back, but also a unique learning experience.

The learning outcomes we track, for Pilotlighters and for charity leaders, include:

- coaching and listening skills
- understanding of different leadership styles
- understanding of society and different sectors.

Who decides what is good?

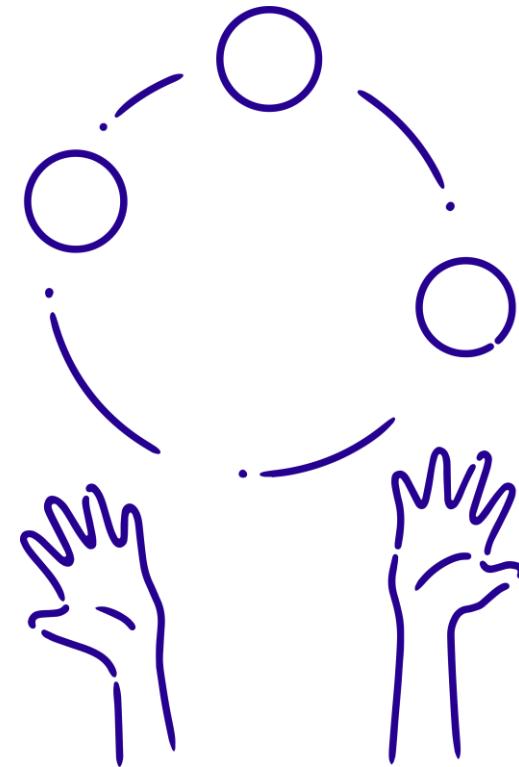




Challenges and solutions

Learning from our work with inspiring charities

1. Sometimes you have to focus in order to move forward
2. Take the right risks
3. Learn as you go
4. Find your financial balance
5. Cultivate empathy



1. Sometimes you have to focus in order to move forward

Prospex is a youth charity based on the Holloway Road, North London.

In 2011 they were “up shit creek”, with a financial crisis and core funding ending -one worker felt on the edge of a heart attack.

In the local pub, the team decided to work with Pilotlight and to face up to the crisis.



2. Take the right risks

it is what you are there for

Rowan Alba supports vulnerable people affected by homelessness in Edinburgh, many with complex, long term issues such as poor mental health, and drug and alcohol abuse. The most significant challenge that CEO Helen Carlin identified is securing appropriate accommodation in Edinburgh. With spiralling property prices, the charity finds it difficult to compete with commercial landlords.

Informed by work with Pilotlight, using experts from Barclays Bank, Rowan Alba created a co-operative investment vehicle to raise capital to enable the charity to buy its own residential home.



Charities and risk

“If Kids Company was a risky venture, which no one seems to dispute, one reason was that it was trying to tackle a rising toll of risks to children and to society.

Many charities do this, and we should celebrate what they do as loud and proudly as we do risk takers in enterprise and investment. Good governance is critical, yes, but we should also accept failure, accept that in a world of risk, charities will try things and some will fail.

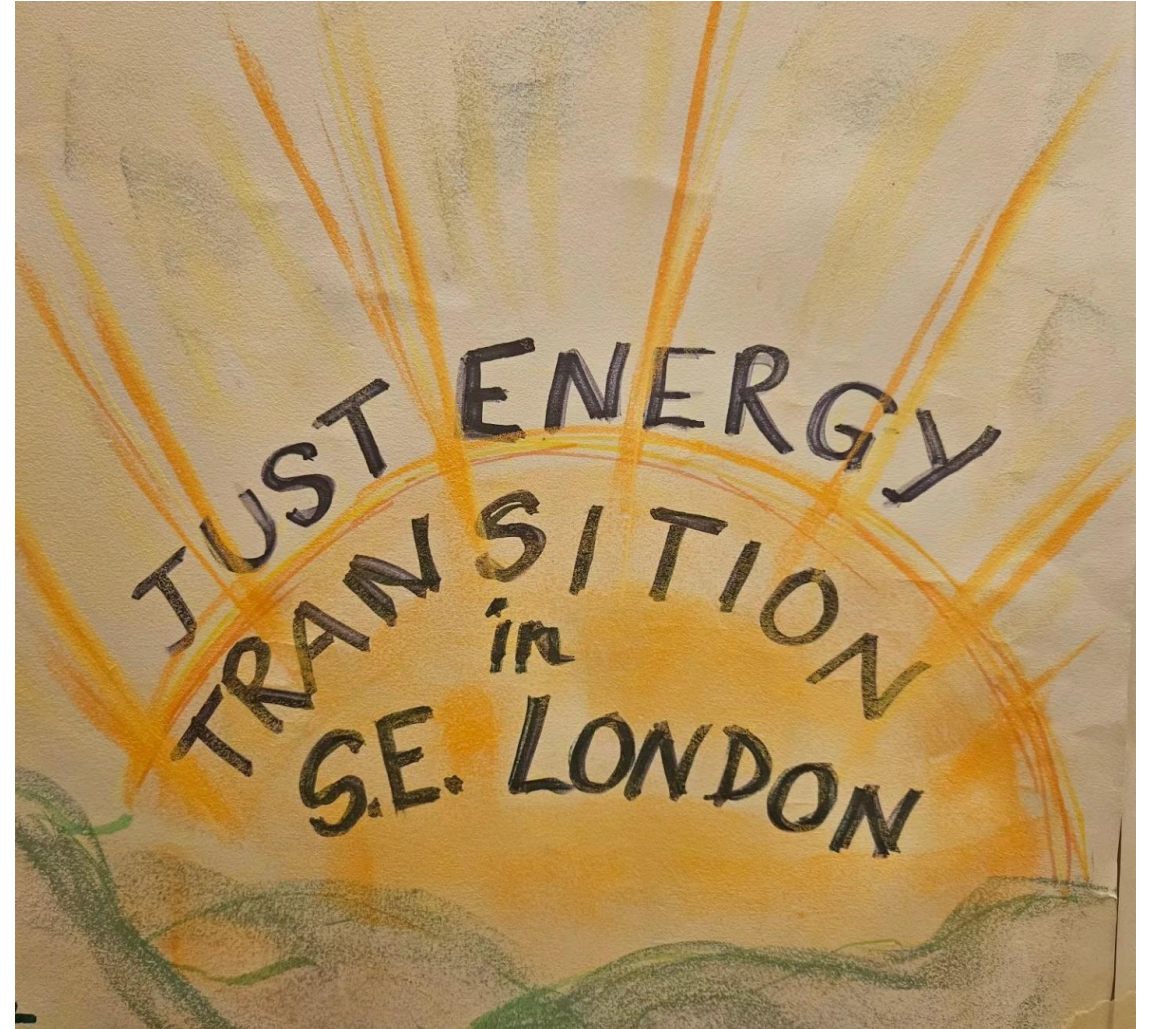
The charity sector should be valued overall for how it reduces risks to society and judged by how effectively overall it does this.”

3. Learn as you go

Steps to sustainability

South East London Community Energy is a co-operative that installs solar panels on the roofs of schools, installs LED lights in community buildings and runs an award-winning programme, the Heat Doctor, to support households in fuel poverty to stay warm.

What happened when they ran a competition to identify a street to do up each house with energy saving measures?



4. Find your financial balance

We are seeing more charities come to us for support on income diversification. Funding pots are down, as investment income is down for Foundations and funders go back to their old ways and aren't as flexible as seen during the pandemic.

Income diversification is a complex one and can be in tension with my first piece of advice, to focus on your primary purpose.

Over the pandemic, we saw those charities who had diversified successfully through social enterprise models typically hit harder than those relying on grants.

Emergency funding pots led to a lot of innovation, such as local service charities going national with digital services, women's charities finding housing for homeless men, food banks working with local authorities in joined up ways.



But some of this innovation also represented mission drift, which comes with its own challenges in a resource constrained world.

For this reason, I talk about financial balance. How can you sustain income over time?

Example brief

How could Advice Mid Wales meet increased need by moving from a local to a regional approach?

Sub questions:

- What factors should the charity consider when trying to expand or not?
- What approaches could be explored, to enable the organisation to move outside of its comfort zone and make sustainable decisions around expansion?



5. Cultivate empathy

Safety in an unsafe world

Safeguarding emerged as a recognition that harm to children commonly comes from people they know. Recent approaches extend this, creating a more powerful tool for certain settings.

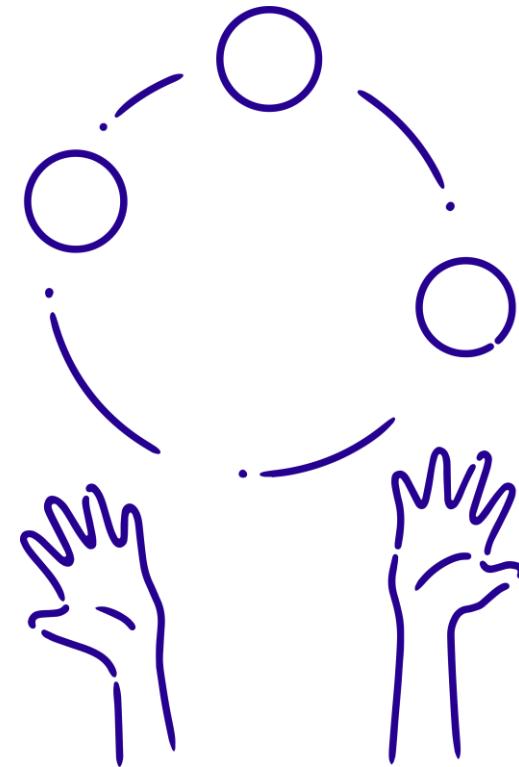
- Trauma informed approaches recognise the value of lived experience and the scope for participatory action
- Contextualised safeguarding identifies who can become the responsible adult, from staff at the chicken take-away outside school to taxi drivers asked to give young people lifts to and from train stations, in the context of County Lines.
- The Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (CRASAC) is developing forms of assurance for tackling rape culture in a university setting.



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Ways to find out more

1. Find out more, search for our Impact report – <https://www.pilotlight.org.uk/impact-data>
2. Point charities you know to the free support that we can offer - <https://www.pilotlight.org.uk/join/charity>
3. Drop us a line to explore how to open up pro bono learning options for professionals you know - <https://www.pilotlight.org.uk/register-interest>



“These provide much-needed skills for worthy causes while giving participating employees a chance to contribute to society, bolster their CVs and feel good about themselves.”

The Times, on Pilotlight, December 2022

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Ed Mayo

@edmayo1

emayo@Pilotlight.org.uk

www.pilotlight.org.uk

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