



Mapping and Measuring Social Value Blackburne House Education

Empowering women, Enriching communities,
Transforming futures

Sept 2023 – November 2024

the connectives
www.theconnectives.com

Context

- Blackburne House Education (BHE) is a vibrant organisation championing women's empowerment through education. Based in a Grade II listed building, it connects heritage with progress while creating a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment.
- BHE is dedicated to delivering high-quality education and training services. It has a rich historical legacy as the country's first non-fee-paying girls' school.
- In 1992, it was transformed into a Technical Training College for Women. The connection to the organisation's heritage is reflected in the visits from former students of both the girls' school and the college, who are now working as 'The Old Girls Alumni' to support the ongoing work of this multi enterprise institution.

Context

- Located in Liverpool's Georgian Quarter, the organisation is close to the city centre while remaining deeply rooted in one of the city's most diverse and culturally rich communities.
- The organisation has intentionally cultivated a culturally sensitive, safe, and nurturing learning environment that seeks to foster resilience and confidence in its learners.

BHE Mission and Values

Mission

to provide high-quality education and training opportunities that empower disadvantaged women, enabling them to unlock their full potential.

BHE takes a holistic approach to education, working to remove barriers to learning and provide comprehensive support that facilitates personal and professional growth.

Values

Independence
Transformation
Inspiration
Equality

BHG Education offer

A diverse curriculum caters to a wide range of career aspirations.

Programmes include:

- Teacher Training
- Holistic Therapies
- Healthcare
- Access to Higher Education
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- GCSE and Functional Skills in English and Maths
- Counselling
- Community Interpreting
- Supporting Teaching and Learning
- BH provides short courses designed to support the community's mental well-being, covering topics such as stress management and healthy living.
- The curriculum aligns to Liverpool City Region's priorities, addressing identified skills gaps, such as the current demand for Supporting Teaching and Learning, where employment opportunities have expanded across primary, higher, and further education sectors.

Evaluation Activity

BHE commissioned The Connectives to provide an independent assessment and enumeration of the social value generated by the work undertaken with learners .

The Connectives Team:

- Gained a thorough understanding of the social purpose that drives the programmes of activity i.e. to improve the lives of women in Merseyside by providing access to education and wrap around support.
- Created a Theory of Change (TOC) that underpins all the work in this area.
- Consulted with a range of stakeholders including Learners, Tutors, Managers, and Funders.
- Analysed consultation responses to establish the delivery of social value and the fulfilment of the proposed Theory of Change.
- Tested findings against the BHE Self Assessment report 23-24
- Calculated the social return on investment

Social Accounting and Audit Methodology



A combination of Social Accounting and Audit (SAA), and social return on investment (SROI) methodologies have been used to identify, measure and report on the social value generated by BHE.

SAA is a framework used to assess and report the social, environmental, and economic impacts of an organisation's activities. It aims to enhance accountability and transparency by evaluating how an organisation contributes to societal goals.

The methodology involves several key steps:

1. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Identifying and involving stakeholders to understand their concerns and expectations.
2. **Setting Objectives:** Defining the social, environmental, and economic objectives that align with the organisation's mission, vision, and values as well as stakeholder interests.
3. **Data Collection:** Gathering quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, interviews, and other tools to measure performance against established objectives.

Social Accounting and Audit Methodology contd.

4. **Analysis:** Assessing the collected data to identify trends, outliers, impacts, and areas for improvement.
5. **Reporting:** Preparing a social audit report that communicates findings, highlighting both achievements and challenges.
6. **Continuous Improvement:** Using the insights gained to refine practices, set new targets, and enhance overall performance. When effectively applied, the process of social accounting can act as an effective strategic management tool, informing each part of the business, where and how, it is generating the most positive social impact.

This methodology helps organisations not only demonstrate accountability but also engage stakeholders, fostering trust and collaboration while driving social change.

Social Return on Investment Methodology



- SROI is a principles-based approach but focused upon the financial/numerical assessment of performance
- It uses financial proxies to evaluate social benefit (agreed or created proxies)
- It ensures allowance is made for
 - Attribution - the individual outcomes that have been secured because of the support from the BHE Team
 - Deadweight - the achievements that would have happened without intervention from BHE
- It allows us to create a £:£ ratio showing the social benefit achieved for every £ spent on services across BHE.



INPUTS

- Learners
- Funders
- Tutors
- Managers
- Classrooms and Equipment
- Learning resources

1

OUTPUTS

- No. of women attending courses
- No. of completing courses
- No. of accreditations or certificates awarded
- No. of women progressing to a positive destination

3

IMPACT SECURED TO DATE

- Increased social and economic independence
- Improved secure and sustainable mental health
- Increased disposable income
- Reduced social isolation

5

ACTIVITIES

- Education courses
- Pastoral support to learners
- Partnerships with organisations
- Referrals to and from other organisations
- Financial support to learners

2

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

- Increased education and employment opportunities to the women of Liverpool
- Women are better qualified to continue their learner journey
- Women have improved employability
- Women will feel acknowledged and valued
- Women will have increased self-confidence

4



BLACKBURN
HOUSE

BH EDUCATION
THEORY OF CHANGE



BLACKBURNE
HOUSE

What did we learn from stakeholders?

CONSULTATION

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder organisation/Individual	Role	Method of engagement	No. Engaged
Learners	Students attending classes at BH	Focus groups x 3	44
Tutors	Tutors leading the classes, providing pastoral support, and business support colleagues	Focus group	20
Programme Director/Managers	Individuals involved in setting up the service and managing the programmes	Semi-structured interview	2
Funders	The organisations that have funded the programme	1-2-1 calls	2

Key Findings - Learners

- The learning experience at Blackburne House is **more than a curriculum, students are introduced to the city and its culture**, and they report feeling safe with an opportunity to thrive.
- Blackburne House is providing an education option to women who would not access mainstream education provision in the city
- **BHE ensures learners**
 - **feel comfortable in a women only learning environment**
 - **have flexible learning hours to manage the family and cultural expectations upon them**
 - **they can access wrap around support provided on site including childcare and wellbeing support**

Key Findings - Learners

- Students report
 - a **growing sense of independence** over the duration of their attendance at BHE,
 - the chance to meet and **make new friends and connections**
 - the chance to build **a new network of support** for many women and their families who have felt socially or culturally isolated.
 - **Pride in their achievements** and **excitement at the opportunities** their learning and qualifications offer

Learner comments about BHE values



“...the organisation gives me confidence to become independent, it gives me hope and encouragement, I feel inspired, and I feel welcomed into the organisation”



“I have felt bullied before and was at home with nothing to do, now I make up my own mind about my own time”



“I have been developing myself, this is transformation, and I am confident”

Further Learner Comments

Learners were eager to share their experiences of BHE which were overwhelmingly positive – the few concerns that were raised are included for transparency and addressed in the recommendations section.

- Vulnerable learners can find any level of disorganisation stressful
- Some learners struggle with digital engagement and access to learning workbooks and assessments
- Receiving an ID card on the first day makes students feel more welcomed
- Learners welcome consistent messaging around access to other subjects including maths and IT
- Learners value a friendly welcome and additional support to navigate a new world

What else would learners like?



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

- Study spaces or a library
- A common room and a separate prayer room
- More student offers in the bistro
- Other social activities for students to build more connections and reduce isolation
- A paper prospectus and notice board to avoid having to access all information online
- A Level 4 qualification

Key Findings - Tutors

- BHE tutors have a **shared sense of pride** in their work, providing education to such a diverse group of learners.
- This is a busy organisation with pressure to deliver high quality teaching and learner outcomes; this is balanced by the desire to support one another and **create an environment where learners thrive.**
- Tutors evidenced a strong sense of teamwork, acknowledging the **support from administrative and leadership colleagues.**
- Tutors have **mixed working arrangements** - some enjoy the sessional nature of the work whilst others prefer full-time opportunities.
- Tutors may be paid more in other organisations but believe they would not have the same emotional connection to the learners and to the **purpose and values of the organisation.**

Key Findings - Tutors

- Tutors are **empathetic, adaptable, and committed**, building **strong pastoral relationships** with students.
- The team provides **hands-on, practical support**, helping learners overcome personal and logistical barriers such as childcare, financial hardship, or mental health challenges.
- Staff are skilled in identifying issues such as **neglect** and ensuring families access the right services.
- Tutors value the weekly tutor meetings and welcome a **clear, structured approach** to enhance communication and consistency.

Key Challenges

- **Resources and space** are stretched; and occasionally tension exists between room bookings for events and classroom availability.
- **Student employability** the team would like to be able to do more in this area and are seeking funding to support this development.
- **Student destination data** is under constant review to ensure effective post-course support.
- The “**Stepping Stones**” **pre-functional course** may benefit from a review to deliver the anticipated outcomes.
- **Staff manage a wide range of safeguarding, welfare, and partnership activities** (e.g., with food banks, counselling, wellness services) — though these are well recorded, they are resource-intensive.

Key Findings - Funders

Funders were asked to comment on the effectiveness of the BHE provision and their satisfaction with their partnerships

- Funders praised BHE's **renewed energy, personalised support, and leadership, describing it as a trusted, impactful partner.**
- The way the team at Blackburne House works together has led to:
 - **More personalised support to learners**
 - **Increased achievements**
- Learners are given a sense of ambition to strive for the next step or level, **progressions are good with learners increasing attainment** and moving on to further learning or employment
- BHE **provides different kinds of support for learners** including nutrition, clothes and childcare, this assists their learner retention levels

Key Findings - Funders

Funders were asked to comment on the effectiveness of the BHE provision and their satisfaction with their partnerships

- Delivery of **learning in other community venues** is raising awareness and increasing registrations, it is also attracting people into BH for additional courses
- The **learners feel safe in the surroundings of a women only space**; women who would not access learning through other institutions feel comfortable and welcomed at BH.
- Funders feel their **partnerships have strengthened in recent years** and feel **confidence in the leadership of the organisation**.



What are you doing and how do you know

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

Learner Numbers and Demographics

Course	Learners	Achieved	%	LLDD	BAME	Progression	
Level 2 Counselling	24	21	87.50%	8.50%	23.80%	87.5% to Level 3 Counselling	
Level 4 Complimentary Therapies	7	6	85.70%	28.60%	71.40%	N/A	
Level 3 Access	10	9	90%	10%	20%	90% to university	
Level 3 Award in Education and Training	12	11	91.60%	63.60%	27%	N/A	
Maths Pilot	41	37	90.20%	0.00%	100%	100% to ESOL E1	
ESOL Pilot	39	33	84.60%	0.00%	100%	100% to ESOL E1	
GCSE English	16	11	68.80%	37.50%	62.50%	30% to Access	
GCSE Maths	18	9	50%	44.40%	44.50%	30% to Access	
Level 2 Healthcare	19	15	79%	59.80%	43.80%	79% Progressed to L3 Healthcare or Access	
Level 2 Complimentary Therapies	11	11	100%	45.40%	18.20%	100% Progressed to Level 3 Comp Therapies	
Level 3 Complimentary Therapies	10	10	100%	30%	30%	N/A	
Level 1 Health and Beauty	8	6	75%	50.00%	37.50%	N/A	
Young Person's Mental Health	7	4	57%	57.10%	14.30%	Option to progress onto Counselling	
Entry 1 Stepping Stones	21	9	43%	0.00%	100%	43% Progressed to ESOL E1	
ESOL	127	111	87.40%	3.90%	100%	All lower levels progress onto E2, E3, or L1	
Functional Skills	226	171	76%	29%	91%	Mostly ESOL FS who progress onto next level of ESOL	

Learner Destinations

<u>Destinations</u>	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	var.
EDU 1 - 6	32.4%	20.2%	47%	63.3%	+16.3%
EMP 1 - 5	23.3%	11.8%	10.6%	8.9%	-1.7%
NPE 1 & 2	42.7%	62.9%	41.3%	27.4%	-13.9%
OTH 1 & 2	1.6%	4.9%	0.8%	0%	-0.8%
VOL.	0	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	+0.2%
Positive destination:	57.3%	37.2%	58.7%	72.7%	+14%

EDU 1 - HE	EMP 4 - employed voluntary work
EDU 2 - other FE Full time	NPE 1 - not in paid employ, looking for work
EDU 3 - other FE Part time	NPE 2 - not in paid employ, not looking for work
EMP 1 - paid employment, 16 hrs or more	OTH 1 - not known
EMP 2 - paid employment, less than 16 hrs	OTH 2 - unable to contact the learner
EMP 3 - self-employed, less than 16 hrs	VOL1- Undertaking voluntary work

Positive destinations are 72.7% for 2023/24
an increase of 14% compared to 2022/23.

Blackburne House Education in Numbers

Over 15 months Sept 2023-Nov 2024
Blackburne House Education has supported:

- **522 Learners**
- **20 progressed into employment**
- **329 progressed to FE/HE**
- **261 experienced reduced social isolation**
- **522 have improved self confidence**
- **40 experienced reduced indebtedness**
- **34 people have had job security through Women's Tech**

- Blackburne House Education generates a SROI of
 - **£1:£24.45 of additional social value and**
 - **£2,103,138 of savings to the public purse**
- The social value is made up of:
 - Progression to employment
 - Reduced social isolation
 - Reduced indebtedness
 - Improved confidence
 - Sustained employment
 - Local advice

Conclusions

Blackburne House Education:

- Enables social change through education and the social mobility it affords - **improving life chances and choices**
- **Improves emotional and physical circumstances** for its learners
- Contributes to a **growing, local, skilled and diverse workforce**
- Is a **net contributor to growing a strong local and social economy**
- Can act as a **gateway to higher education**, opening university access to those who might not have otherwise considered it.
- Promotes **economic equality and independence**, supporting confidence, travel, and personal growth.

Creates equity, equality and transformation

Recommendations

- Review the onboarding process of students with tutors to ensure consistency in approach and preparedness including preparation and distribution of ID cards
- Ensure all tutors include 'How to...' sections in their initial lessons to ensure all learners have access to and are confident using digital systems
- Provide a central resource for learners about additional course availability and the related eligibility criteria
- Ensure all staff who work in and around reception can help learners to navigate their new world.
- Continue fostering inclusion, clarity, and warmth — ensuring every learner feels supported and inspired to achieve more.