



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2025-2026



Firstport's annual impact report 2025/2026 demonstrates a year of significant progress towards our strategic ambitions, growing reach, and measurable outcomes for individuals, communities, and the broader social enterprise ecosystem. As a long-standing and trusted enabler of social entrepreneurs, we continue to play a critical role in the early stages of enterprise creation, while supporting organisations to grow into resilient, impactful social enterprises.

At its core, Firstport's impact is about people and relationships. By equipping individuals with the confidence, knowledge and networks they need, we enable them to create meaningful change in their communities. This client-centred approach – tailored to diverse backgrounds, lived experiences and learning styles – ensures that support is both accessible and effective, helping entrepreneurs navigate an often-complex ecosystem.

With six clear strategic ambitions guiding our direction and approach (Ambitious, Impactful, Influential, Innovative, Progressive and Sustainable), this impact report gives a clear sense of both the change we aim to create and the organisation we strive to be.



A year of reach, growth and investment

Last year, Firstport supported more than 500 ideas. Both our early-stage grants and business advice services saw an increase in demand compared to the previous year. We awarded £1.69 million in grants alongside £1.28 million in social investment, reinforcing our position as a key part of the social enterprise infrastructure.

Alongside funding, we delivered 2,700 hours of start-up support and 471 hours of investment-readiness support, equipping entrepreneurs with essential skills in planning, financial management and scaling. Interest in social investment is growing, applications to our investment programmes increased by over 270%, signalling a shift towards a more diverse and sustainable funding mix that includes repayable finance.

Start-up support

2,700 hours

Total grant funding

£1.69 million

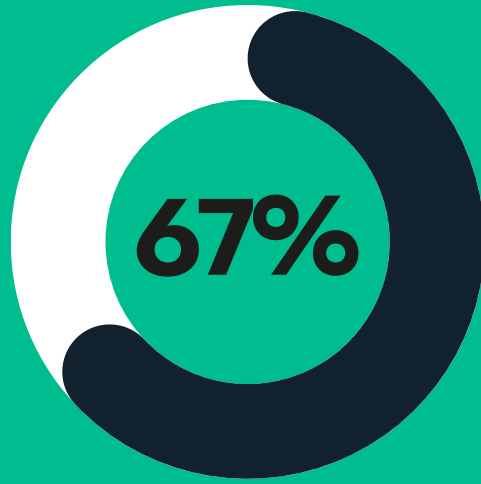
Investment-readiness support

471 hours

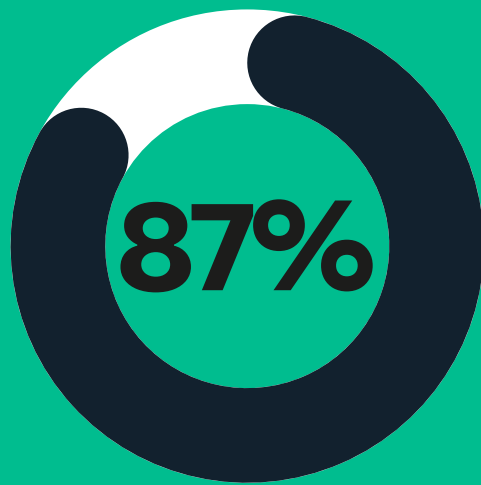
Total social investment

£1.28 million

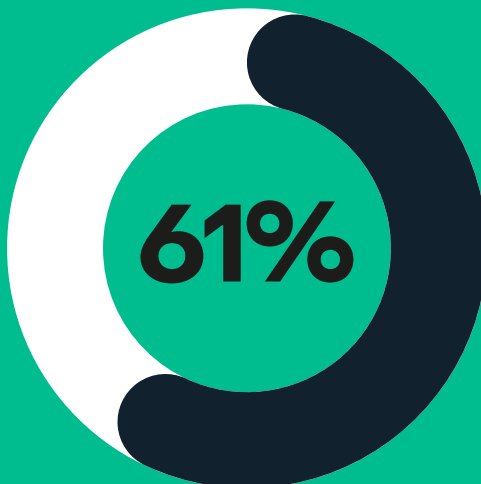
Firstport-supported enterprises outperform mainstream business benchmarks.



**Active after
5 years**



**Increased their
turnover**



**Increased their
trading income**

Strong foundations, lasting impact

67% of supported enterprises remain active after five years, compared to a UK average of 38%, demonstrating resilience and sustainability. Early-stage enterprises are also growing: 87% of clients increased turnover, while 61% increased trading income, highlighting the transition from grant dependency to earned income.

Firstport's investment-readiness programmes are proving effective, with supported enterprises leveraging almost £1.5 million in additional funding. This is complemented by strong returns on investment across key programmes: £4.63 generated for every £1 invested through LaunchMe, £3.06 through the Social Entrepreneurs Fund (SEF), and £2.93 through the Catalyst Fund.



Empowering diverse leadership

Our reach reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. Amongst our awards and support clients, 67% are female, 18% identify as disabled, 14% belong to ethnic minority groups, and 10% identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. This inclusive pipeline of entrepreneurs ensures that solutions are shaped by those with lived experience of the issues they seek to address.

This diversity is matched by geographic reach. Rural communities benefit significantly, with the Highlands and Dumfries & Galloway receiving the highest investment per capita, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring equitable access to support across all regions of Scotland.

67%

female clients
(Scotland)

18%

identify as disabled
(Scotland)

14%

from ethnically
diverse backgrounds
(Scotland)

10%

belong to the
LGBTQ+ community
(Scotland)

Tangible social and economic outcomes

Firstport-supported enterprises are delivering impact where it matters most. They are operating in vital sectors, such as health & social care, education, training and employment, and the creative industries, addressing critical challenges including improving health and wellbeing, reducing inequalities, and expanding access to quality education.



Kwetu Coffee CIC

The individuals behind these enterprises report transformative personal outcomes. Highlighting our role as a catalyst for both organisational and personal success.

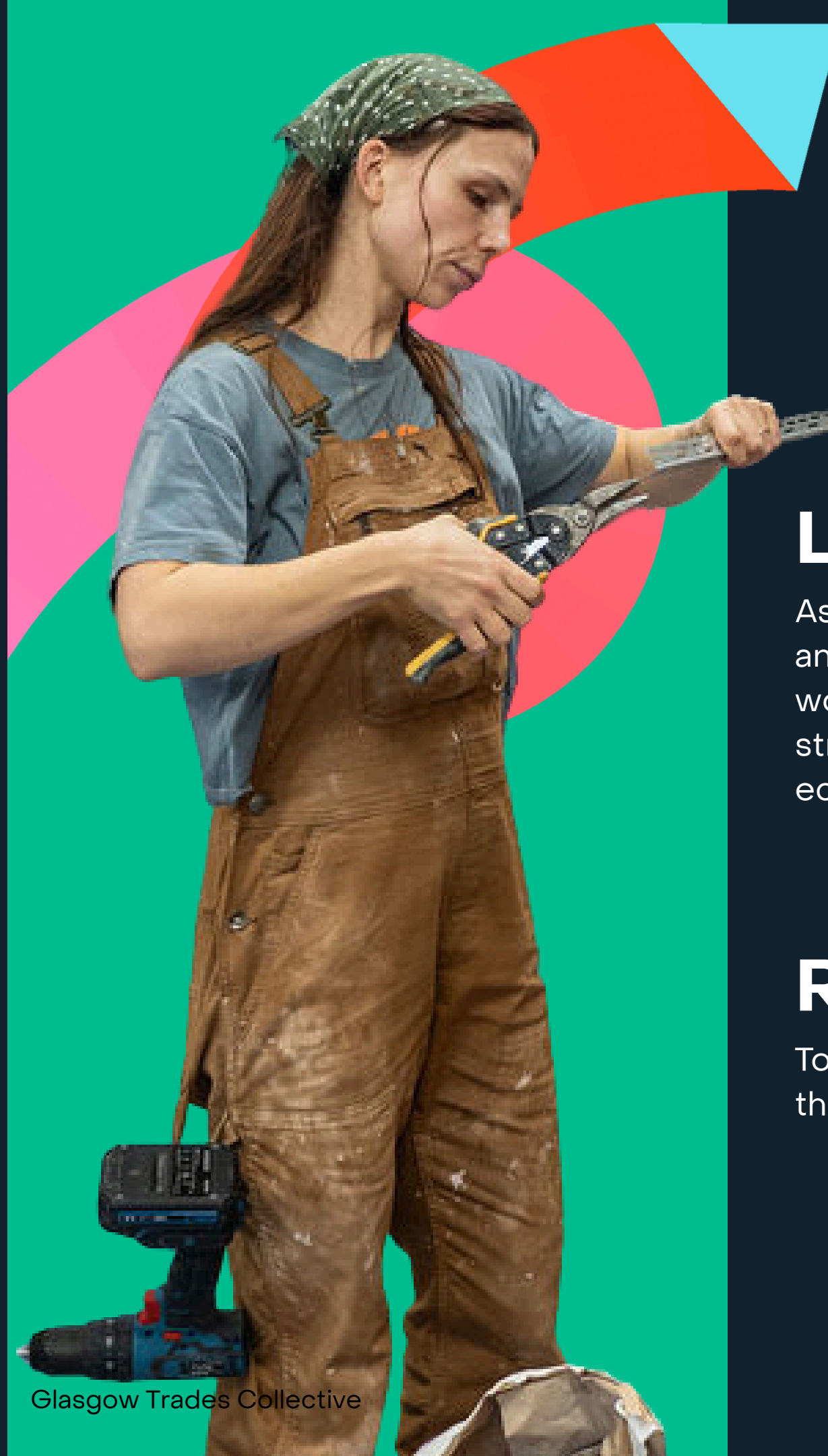
- 89%** say Firstport increased their confidence
- 84%** attribute at least some achievements to support from Firstport
- 54%** state they would not have achieved the same results without Firstport.

Building partnerships for future growth

Working with partners is central to our approach and ethos. We continue to strengthen our role within the ecosystem through high-performing, collaborative partnerships. This is particularly evident in the North East of England, where our Boost Invest programme is establishing a strong regional presence and expanding access to social investment.

A values-driven organisation

Underpinning all of this is our commitment to operating as a responsible and values-led organisation. By fostering a progressive internal culture and prioritising sustainability, we strive to practice what we preach, operating as a responsible and resilient business.



Glasgow Trades Collective

Looking to the future

As we look to the year ahead and our 20th anniversary, we will continue to build on what works, addressing gaps in our support, and strengthening our contribution to an inclusive economy that benefits everyone.

Read the full report

To read about our impact in full, please scan the QR code.

