

SkillsBridge Annual Review 2014



Chairman's Letter



Richard Bottomley OBE
Chairman

Welcome to our Annual Review for 2014. At a time when charities find themselves having to do more with less, we anticipated a year in which we would have to pull out all the stops to deliver the support that charities need. What we couldn't anticipate is how much we would learn and how much our work would develop as a result.

When we first launched the charity fifteen years ago, it was with the aim of giving businesses a way of getting more involved with initiatives that could really help people and help communities. That drive to support the community has never left us; it's the impetus behind everything we do. So it seemed only right that in taking our work forward we should be clear about the needs of the community in each of the areas in which we work.

That has led us to developing closer partnerships with frontline charities and with local authorities, making use of their knowledge and experience to help shape how our support can be delivered.

We work with so many businesses that genuinely want to make a difference in the community. Taking on board what we know and what we've learned about life in some of our region's most challenged areas, we can't help but feel we've really only scratched the surface of what we could achieve.

There's a role businesses can play in sharing skills, providing other types of support, getting involved in governance, using their expertise in an advisory capacity and sometimes even very simply providing meeting space or hosting events. We know virtually all of this goes on but it's not always as well coordinated as it might be.

This is where SkillsBridge can fit in as the broker who sits in the middle making the connections, joining the dots and where possible making things happen. It's all about partnerships. We've created hundreds of them over the years and we want to create hundreds more. We want to keep bringing businesses and charities together so they can both learn from each other. But we want to bring businesses together with businesses too, to share best practice and look at where their common aims can be aligned. We want to get officers and leaders from the public sector involved to help remove barriers and to make sure resources are used in the most effective way.

In short we want to make sure that if your aim is to help the community, you know who else is working alongside you, and if you want to link up with them, we'll do our best to make that happen. My feeling is we can only get through these very challenging times if we all work together. The good will is there, the talent is there, now we need to be as creative as I know we can be in ensuring we take a joined up approach. It's too small a region for any of us to think we can just plough our own furrow, and there's so much more to be gained when we all put our shoulder to the plough.

So that's been our main lesson this year, if we want to maximise the benefit of what we do, we need to explore how we do that in partnership to really help those most at need. We look forward to continuing our work with partners old and new, and to the connections and friendships made along the way.

There's a role businesses can play in sharing skills, providing other types of support, getting involved in governance, using their expertise in an advisory capacity and sometimes even very simply providing meeting space or hosting events.

Chief Executive's Letter



Andrew White
Chief Executive

When we carried out our first Impact Assessment last year we were surprised and inspired at just how much value our work has had for local frontline community organisations. Rather than make us want to sit back and rest on our laurels, we felt encouraged to look at how we could build on that and develop our service further. We decided it was time to look more closely at the communities that were benefitting from our support in each area and really get to know their needs more fully.

This led to some initial conversations with Newcastle City Council and Newcastle CVS. What emerged from those meetings was a plan to pilot an area based approach focused on one of the city's priority wards, Benwell & Scotswood. The aim was to see if we could target the good will and support of the businesses backing SkillsBridge to help tackle some of the most prevalent needs of local residents.

We managed to secure funding for this pilot project and I have to say, it took off in a way we really didn't expect. Thanks to the support of the local charities and the council we were able to bring together a partnership to develop a ground-up approach to support those most at need. This development has only been possible through partnership working, and it in turn has led to further partnership work. Taking a partnership approach can bring challenges with it, no-one is saying it's easy. Then again, so much of what we find worthwhile is never easy, but it's still worth doing.

There may be much in the press and media about our recovering economy but none of that has as yet 'trickled down' to help our most challenged communities. Here we find those most in need facing multiple challenges to their health, through debt, benefit changes, and sometimes with language barriers to contend with.

In reality we're all part of one community and if we're going to make the best use of our limited resources then it makes sense to work together in partnership to address these issues. We've learned a lot over the last year through taking this approach that has made an impact on our work. In turn the support we can offer through SkillsBridge has made a huge impact on the groups we've worked with, as you'll see in these pages.

Thanks to the support of the local charities and the council we were able to bring together a partnership to develop a ground-up approach to support those most at need.

SkillsBridge Board

As an organisation SkillsBridge has always had the advantage of being versatile and fleet of foot. We are able to be responsive to change and given the many challenges faced by the charities we help, we need to be.

But to do this well requires skilled leadership from a Board that has a clear vision and understands the role and purpose of our work. We have been fortunate over the fifteen years we've been around to have attracted and retained highly skilled and experienced trustees.

With many changes afoot over the last year including expanding our work into West Yorkshire, developing a new funding model, and revising and updating our charitable objects, our Board has led the organisation to ensure our mission remains true to the vision for which we were created. That vision is to relieve poverty and unemployment and support communities. We achieve this through providing a means to link businesses with community initiatives. SkillsBridge is the vehicle for doing that and it is thanks to the leadership of our Board that we have been nationally recognised as a model of best practice for doing so.



Richard Bottomley
OBE Chair

Richard has been Chairman of SkillsBridge since 2009. A former KPMG Senior Partner, he has advised

on strategic planning and corporate transactions, including multi-national groups as well as owner managed businesses. Richard is currently Chairman of Greggs Plc Pension Scheme, a director at Durham CCC and a Consultant with UBS Wealth Management.



John Litherland
Board Member

John supported the development of SkillsBridge in 2011 as a Consultant. Since 2012 he has been on

the Board of Trustees. He has become heavily involved in community enterprise in Newcastle after having over 20 years experience of North East local authorities at Director level. John is Chair of Recycle Y'Bike, a charity which has trading bases in Newcastle and Durham.



Jan Worters MBE
Board Member

Jan is Chair of Durham Community Action. Before retiring she was Chief Officer of North Tyneside

VODA. She has promoted the value of the third sector in a range of forums, including North Tyneside Strategic Partnership, VONNE and the Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland.



Tim Pain
Board Member

Tim is Assistant Director at the University of Sunderland responsible for knowledge transfer projects and external

funding. Tim previously worked as a consultant on a variety of assignments including economic strategies and business engagement projects, and was formerly Head of Business Enterprise & Skills at One North East. Tim's previous Board memberships include the Chairmanship of Taste North East.



Adrian Stanley
Board Member

Adrian is a former partner at DWF which is a national law firm. He specialises in public and private sector

urban regeneration schemes and commercial development. In addition he is on the Board of Northern Architecture and a Governor at Dame Allen schools.



Tim Jones
Board Member

Tim has been CEO of Allia since 2002. He has worked in North America, the Gulf and Europe – posts included

Head of Marketing at Royal Life and Managing Director, Europe, at Direct Marketing Corporation of America. He had founded, and sold, two enterprise start-ups – Fraser-Milne and STD Belgrade – before taking on Allia.



Graham Randell
Board Member

Graham is the former Director of Social Responsibility and Managing Director for Greggs Plc in the

North East and Cumbria. He is a Trustee of Music North Ltd at Sage Gateshead and of the Tyneside Cinema.

Expanding Horizons – SkillsBridge Launches in West Yorkshire

By the end of 2013 we had already seen SkillsBridge working successfully in the North East for two years, during which time over 200 charities and social enterprises had benefitted from our support. Throughout this period we had worked hard to develop the SkillsBridge model to make it as effective as we felt it could be. But a question we kept returning to was, 'Is it possible to replicate SkillsBridge in another area?'

Having weighed the opportunities and risks, the Board took the decision to explore this further and West Yorkshire was chosen as best starting point due to connections we have with a number of organisations in the area. Following a number of meetings with individuals from all sectors, the feedback on our plans was universally positive. Two of the organisations consulted, Incommunities and TL Dallas agreed to fund the project for an initial year to see how well it could work.

And just three months after its launch in the autumn, SkillsBridge has already secured the support of 10 private sector experts who are now actively providing free help and expertise to charities, such as Keighley and Ilkley Community and Voluntary Association (KIVCA).

KIVCA, a resource for a variety of community-based projects in the area, approached SkillsBridge after identifying a need to maximise the income generation of its base at Central Hall, Alice Street, Keighley.



Candy Squire-Watt, SkillsBridge with Russell Sandbach, KIVCA

"The hall is a really fantastic community venue as it offers considerable flexibility in terms of use," said KIVCA chief executive Russell Sandbach. "However, we felt it was under performing and wanted advice from an expert on how we could make it more commercially viable."

SkillsBridge put Russell in touch with marketing expert Mark Pittaway, CEO of Waterhill Research Ltd, Sowerby Bridge, Halifax, who now spends one day a week passing on some of his 20 years' of experience free of charge.

"I'm thoroughly enjoying my involvement with KIVCA," said Mark. "Sometimes, when you're busy working within an organisation you can't see the wood for the trees and an outside opinion – a fresh pair of eyes – can be a great help."

"If my input can help, then I'm more than happy to provide it."

Like Mark, Chartered Accountant Roland Clark, a Director at Bradford-based Clough and Co, has signed up to offer his services to SkillsBridge.

"I think it's an excellent concept," he said, "as there is an urgent need for greater links between the third sector and private and public sector businesses."

"The service we provide sounds like common sense but there was no-one providing it," said SkillsBridge Project Officer Candy Squire-Watt, "and the support we've had from businesses in the area has been immediate and incredibly positive."

"We knew that if we could get the right people on board this initiative could have real and lasting benefit across the region."

With half a dozen support projects launched since the autumn SkillsBridge is off to a flying start. We've already made some strong local connections with organisations who work to support charities such as Participate Projects.

We see our work in Bradford and West Yorkshire as a long term commitment and our aim now is to develop and expand our work in the area, securing the funding we need to make it sustainable.

Sometimes, when you're busy working within an organisation you can't see the wood for the trees and an outside opinion – a fresh pair of eyes – can be a great help.

Mark Pittaway, CEO of Waterhill Research Ltd,

SkillsBridge Team



Andrew White
Chief Executive



Chris Orrick
Operations Manager



Candy Squire-Watt
Project Officer
West Yorkshire



Sanjee Ratnatunga
Project Lead
Our Place

Creating Partnerships



Some of the research that led to the setting up of SkillsBridge highlighted the impact that public sector funding cuts were having on the voluntary and community sector (VCS). Four years on and that situation has got worse rather than better as year on year the cuts deepen and local authority budgets are further reduced.

The impact of SkillsBridge in helping medium sized charities and social enterprises to make savings and bring in more income has had an important effect on our local VCS. But looking forward we knew we had to do more to support local charities as they come under increasing pressure.

Conversations with Newcastle City Council and Newcastle CVS led to a pilot project being developed which would focus on Benwell & Scotswood ward in the city. With funding from the city council and through a national programme called Our Place we set out to see if we could not only support local charities in the area through SkillsBridge, but also to see if we could support them to develop a partnership for the area aimed at addressing some of the most pressing needs of residents.

Background

The population of Benwell & Scotswood ward is just over 12,600 residents but the area has experienced significant industrial decline over many years resulting in increases in health related issues, high unemployment and reliance on the State to provide the most basic needs for the community. Newcastle West End food bank, operating in the area and wider is the largest food bank in the country and this year alone it has given out 40,000 food parcels to local residents. Demand on services has risen by 62% over the past five years and charities have seen a 59% decrease in funding with Newcastle Council envisaging further significant cuts taking place in the near future.

Organisations currently working in the area recognised that there is a greater demand for flexible services such as responsive welfare advice, community support, mental health provision, and youth and family services to be delivered from within neighbourhoods. The community has also seen a rapid rise in the number of people from Romania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia moving into the area which has created additional more specialised demand.

Before involvement in the SkillsBridge Our Place project Newcastle City Council were aware of some of the needs of the community from data obtained from surveys and consultation exercises. A number of voluntary and community organisations working in the area had come together previously as a 'Buzz' partnership and many had been meeting informally or where areas of activity overlap to share information and support each other. This provided a good foundation to build upon and groups were invited along to discuss the potential for an Our Place project.

What is Happening as a Result of the Project?

SkillsBridge has supported the organisations involved in Our Place: Benwell & Scotswood in establishing the Benwell & Scotswood Partnership which was formed to ensure a joined-up approach to service delivery, thereby maximising resources. The short-term aim of the Partnership is to ensure partners align their plans and their budgets to make efficiency savings and enable a more cohesive approach to the delivery of services. The longer-term aim is to work with the Council towards the devolution of budgets and support the development of a community led, multi-agency Community Action Plan which leads to improved outcomes and quality of life for local people.

Newcastle City Council has identified the potential to use part of the ward budget and other resources, and community consultation events have taken place to capture an accurate snapshot of community needs which has resulted in the development of two main priority themes: 1) Stabilising Families, and 2) Moving Forward. The first of these is aimed at removing the barriers faced by residents undergoing 'chaotic lives'; the second is about providing pathways and access to opportunities for training, education and employment.

Ward Councillor Hazel Stephenson said: "Engaging in the partnership with SkillsBridge and other groups across the ward and the wider area is proving to be very successful. Working together is proving invaluable in making better use of our limited resources and planning for the future. We now work with groups collectively who previously would not engage with one another. We have also assisted other wards to consider processes such as get-togethers in a different way, and participatory budgeting."

It is envisaged that some of the ward funding available will be allocated in line with findings and initiatives developed through the programme and by identifying the two key priority themes local VCS organisations will be able to focus their resources on this need.



The Benwell & Scotswood Partnership consists of 12 VCS partners including a local residents association. The Partnership work closely with teams within the local authority, the police and local businesses. Having worked together on this project the Partnership has been formalised and have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding. SkillsBridge have been able to support the Partnership in the development of the MoU and a Funding Strategy to enable the plans that have been developed to be put into practice.

Sarah Miller, CEO of the Millin Centre said: "The value of the Our Place work has been in enabling organisations who work most closely with the local community to come together and develop a shared vision for the area based on local consultation. This has led to an Operational Plan that focuses on a joined up approach to developing and delivering local services."

Newcastle City Council Director of Communities, Mick Murphy added: "The Our Place Partnership in Benwell & Scotswood has demonstrated that communities and community organisations can come together and work jointly with each other and with us. The Operational Plan that has been developed gives us a clear starting point for discussing and developing our work as a cooperative council, linking up with this Partnership."

There is a growing appetite amongst the Partnership to deliver services differently in order to maximise current resources. The Our Place programme has been fundamental in enabling the development of the Partnership and ensuring it remains focused on working collaboratively to improve the quality of life for local people.

Key Milestones

Throughout this programme SkillsBridge have acted as a facilitator in bringing groups together and capturing their views to create a shared vision and aims. The four key milestones throughout the project are:

- Creating a shared Plan for the area to be delivered locally by community organisations
- Supporting that plan with a strong business case and Cost Benefit Analysis
- Developing a Partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding
- Drafting a Funding Strategy for the Partnership

Longer-term Benefits

- The Partnership have developed a joint funding strategy which will be implemented
- Planned and targeted services (proactive and not reactive)
- Skills sharing of local businesses with partners
- Engagement of minority groups in the area
- Involvement of private businesses for placements and training opportunities
- Collaboration of organisations to support sustainability
- Community-led delivery of services
- Links with local businesses to build capacity and support delivery

Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended 31 March 2014

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2014 £	Total Funds 2013 £
Incoming Resources				
Investment income	595	–	595	913
Incoming resources from charitable activities	23,000	13,389	36,389	41,779
Other incoming resources	181	–	181	330
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	23,776	13,389	37,165	43,022
Resources Expended				
Charitable activities	114,708	13,239	127,947	129,433
Governance costs	2,524	150	2,674	2,005
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	117,233	13,389	130,622	131,438
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	(93,457)	–	(93,457)	(88,416)
Total funds brought forward	148,687	–	148,687	237,103
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	55,231	–	55,231	148,687

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses for the year. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

Balance Sheet

As at 31 March 2014

	Total Funds 2014 £	Total Fund 2013 £
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	389	777
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	389	777
Current Assets		
Debtors and prepayments	–	320
Cash at bank and in hand	72,540	156,595
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	72,540	156,915
Less:		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(17,698)	(9,005)
Net current assets	54,842	147,910
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	55,231	148,687
Funds of the Charity		
Restricted funds	–	–
Unrestricted funds	55,231	148,687
TOTAL FUNDS	55,231	148,687

The trustees are satisfied that the charitable company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477, and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act. The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the charitable company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 380 of the Act; and
- (ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its surplus or deficit for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The notes on pages 13 to 18 form an integral part of these accounts. These financial statements were approved by the Board on:

13 October 2014

and are signed on their behalf by:

R J Bottomley
Chair

Sharing Skills to Help Communities

This year we worked with 58 medium sized charities and social enterprises to support them with the fantastic work they do. We could easily fill a book with inspirational case studies, and perhaps one day we will. But in the meantime, here is just a small sample covering a few of the projects we've worked on.

The real thanks for this success goes to the 120 individuals from over 70 companies that have generously offered their time for free to support our region's charities and social enterprises. They provided the expertise, the charities did the work, and the results speak for themselves!

Youth Focus North East

Based in Gateshead, Youth Focus North East is a regional youth organisation that acts as a hub bringing together young people and the professionals who support them. Their mission is to improve the lives of young people in the North East.



With a number of new ideas in the offing and a growing staff team, Chief Executive, Leon Mexter, realised it was time to look for new premises. Following a productive search, Youth Focus North East approached SkillsBridge for support around understanding their new lease agreement to ensure they were getting the best value for money.

SkillsBridge introduced Leon to Judith Summers, Lease Consultancy Director at GVA to discuss the technical aspects of the lease which Youth Focus North East had been given by the new landlord.

Leon said, "Working with GVA was a joy. They helped us understand an area of the world about which we knew very little. All the staff were patient and considerate, knowledgeable and responsive. Without their help we would have been embarking on our move to new premises without the information, knowledge or insight to make informed decisions. Their support was invaluable."

Following the support from GVA, Youth Focus North East were able to negotiate a much better lease contract with benefits including 3 months rent free, and a saving of between £10,000 and £15,000 over the lease contract period.

Washington Mind

Washington Mind offers independent, non-stigmatising support to the local community with the goal of trying to help people experiencing emotional or mental distress to regain their full potential in life and work.



Recognising the current business plan was out of date and little used, Jacqui Reeves, Services Manager, approached SkillsBridge for support to develop a three year business plan that the staff and stakeholders could engage with and own. To achieve this SkillsBridge linked Steve Derrick, an experienced business coach from Action Coach Business Coaching.

Jacqui told us, "Steve has been an absolute pleasure to work with. He has given us the focus and vision to prepare and deliver an outstanding piece of work to the trustees which takes us into very exciting delivery areas for the future.

"With Steve's support we looked at our planning processes and worked together as a team to make them more effective. We hold quarterly business planning meetings and staff and trustees are involved in setting 90 day goals which work towards our three year plans.

Part of this planning process included the development of a visual plan which is displayed in the building. We did this because we recognised our previous plan had sat on a shelf and we wanted the whole team and service users to feel involved and there create a culture of 'ownership.'

As a result of the support from Steve, Jacqui has been able to secure new funding of £430K for 2015/16. Additionally 3 new staff posts were created as a direct part of the planning process.

With Steve's support we looked at our planning processes and worked together as a team to make them more effective.

Recyke Y'Bike



Recyke Y'Bike is a community social enterprise, based in the East End of Newcastle, which accepts donated bikes from members of the public.

The bicycles are restored and repaired for general sale back to the public with some also going to support schools and community health programmes in parts of Africa. The organisation offers affordable training to the public on cycle safety and maintenance as well as offering training to their volunteers to help them get into employment.

Pete Rickard, Project Manager approached SkillsBridge in search of professional property advice that could help them decide whether or not they should move to new premises or develop the existing site. SkillsBridge introduced Pete to Neil Mandle and Judith Summers from international commercial property firm GVA. Neil and Judith worked closely with Pete to identify possible new premises nearer the city centre while Judith supported them with their current lease agreement.

The resulting appraisal gave Recyke Y'Bike confidence that they had a good property with a secure lease at the right rental level. Factoring this appraisal into their business plan, Recyke Y'Bike was able to recruit a new member of staff onto the team for 28 hours per week.

Pete told us: "Without the advice from GVA we would not have felt confident that we were taking the right decision to employ additional staff; but now that we feel certain we are in the right location, we can start investing in the site.

"As a result of the new staff member we are confident that we will increase our bike sales turnover by as much as £20K a year with an additional increase in turnover on the servicing side too."

Additionally Recyke Y'Bike has benefitted from some further free support from GVA as they have expanded their operation into Durham, a city identified as being high in student numbers yet low in bicycle provision.

Without the advice from GVA we would not have felt confident that we were taking the right decision to employ additional staff; but now that we feel certain we are in the right location, we can start investing in the site.

Blyth Valley CAB

Blyth Valley Citizens Advice Bureau is part of a national network of organisations that help people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice. As a registered charity Blyth Valley CAB is reliant on trained volunteers and funds to provide these vital services for the local community.



In approaching SkillsBridge, the project manager of Blyth Valley CAB was looking for an advisor with experience and knowledge who could support the Board of Directors with the development of the trustee roles and responsibilities. The organisation had identified the need to explore new and innovative ways of moving forward through a period of change, including a potential merger.

SkillsBridge introduced Blyth Valley CAB to David Slater, former director at Newcastle City Council, experienced in charitable sector governance. David introduced the idea of working groups and supported the trustees to take greater ownership of the organisation's strategy and planning. As a result there has been a reported increase in efficiency during trustee meetings and improved strategic planning through greater knowledge and awareness of the organisation's policies.

David has been instrumental in setting up meetings with another CAB with the result that a merger is now more likely, and is currently in the due diligence stage.

As well as helping recruit four new trustees to the Board David helped the board focus on the longer term vision and direction of the operation.

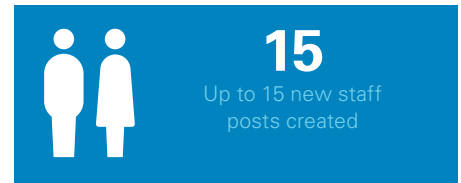
Manager, Bernard said: "David is a fantastic bloke in general, and an excellent listener. He grasped our complex issues really quickly and that gave the Board and myself an enormous amount of trust and confidence in his abilities and expertise."

With communications and morale revitalised the organisation is looking forward to having an ever increasing presence within the county, increasing its sustainability and service delivery for the benefit of the community.

He grasped our complex issues really quickly and that gave the board and myself an enormous amount of trust and confidence in his abilities and expertise.

Our Impact...

Headline Figures for 2014



...On Charities

Last year, with the help of Ideas for Change and supported by Durham University, we developed our Impact Measurement Framework. Unique to SkillsBridge, this carefully structured tool enables us to assess the full impact and benefit of our support on the charities we help. It's designed to capture the valuable information we need to help us improve our service further, but also to demonstrate what difference SkillsBridge has made in the region.

Based on a 40% sample of the support projects launched in 2014 we can see that SkillsBridge support made a significant impact on the charities that came to us for help, most notably in terms of their income. The starting point for each of these success stories is sound business planning with expert help and advice.

Turning that into practice, it means more people getting the help they need. Amongst our sample 6 new staff posts were created, and that could mean up to 15 new charity jobs across the full range of organisations we worked with. That's a significant impact in itself, not just in terms of the economic benefit, but in terms of the number of new beneficiaries helped by these organisations.

Our impact measurement does more than just track headline figures, it enables us to take a snapshot of each organisation before and after support in four key areas: foresight, enterprise, capability and impact. After each project we can look at that learning journey and reflect with them on what areas may need further development in future. That's a great tool to have at your disposal when you're facing an uncertain road ahead, as many charities are.

SkillsBridge isn't a magic wand but it can make a huge difference to get the professional advice and support you need, when you need it most. With independent advice from a fresh perspective charity leaders and managers have a chance to step back and create the space to explore the best direction to take things forward.

As a small scale project we have valued the partnership with SkillsBridge and would recommend their services to any other organisation.

Julie Fernyhough, CEO, Jet North

...On Businesses

SkillsBridge is first and foremost a brokerage. We work with charity leaders to understand the challenges they face, but the help comes in the form of one of the 120 highly skilled and experienced professionals who support our work, by giving freely of their time and sharing their expertise.

Over 70 businesses of all sizes have pledged to back SkillsBridge and help local charities through valuable skills sharing. We talk to each and every one of them before, during and after each project to get their feedback. This is what they told us.

100%

Said it gave them a real sense of achievement, a 'feel good' factor

100%

Felt SkillsBridge made the best use of their skills in the project selected

100%

Rated their experience of being a SkillsBridge Advisor as Good or Excellent

60%

Said it improved the way they work in their current role

90%

Told us the level of contact we kept was just about right

100%

Would recommend SkillsBridge to a friend or colleague

Working with SkillsBridge in different environments allows me to gain a good understanding of how other organisations operate but more importantly, this allows me to test my methods of executive mentoring and coaching in a safe environment for me and the person I'm mentoring.

Mark Henderson, CEO, Home Group,

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