

# GEM

## Interim Monitoring and Evaluation Report

Interim Evaluation Report, February 2022



Prepared by:

University of Gloucestershire GEM Monitoring and Evaluation Team -

Paul Courtney, Leonie Burton, Colin Baker, Fahimeh Malekinezhad and Abigail Gardner

University of Gloucestershire



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## Foreword

*‘GEM is perceived by Council as being very successful, GEM is an example of that successful working between the Council and the Voluntary sector.’*

In August 2016 a unique and unprecedented partnership was formed, a partnership that over the next four years would influence a county’s vision and realise the employment and learning ambitions of hundreds of vulnerable people across Gloucestershire. With the needs of vulnerable people its beating heart, the programme has continued to flex and adapt - providing those who are furthest from the labour market the opportunity to improve their skills and participate fully in their communities.

And with the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to impact on the economy and society of Gloucestershire over the course of 2021 - and on the lives and wellbeing of its citizens - the programme has continued to have many positive impacts on participants. There are now a number of examples where the person-centred approach that lies at the heart of GEM has helped to build the resilience and adaptability of individuals, organisations and communities alike.

Building on previous evaluation reports, it is encouraging to see solid evidence of the impact of GEM on the mental wellbeing of participants and to view the generation of social value and cost savings to state arising from GEM through the lens of individual participant case studies. We are also delighted that the social outcomes survey that has enabled distance travelled in participant outcomes to be measured since the programme began has been statistically validated, and will serve as a tool to help evaluate other employment inclusivity programmes in the future.

Indeed, with GEM now entering its final year we begin to scan the horizon for how the spirit of this person-centred approach can continue to benefit the lives of people in Gloucestershire, and beyond. The success of GEM is testament to the need for a shift from the ‘one size’ fits all approach that has characterised unemployment support policies for too long towards an inclusive model that recognises diversity and opportunity in a real and meaningful way.

As an employment inclusivity programme, GEM has always sought to be socially and economically inclusive, and to recognise that positive outcomes for individuals are borne out where a more nuanced tailored approach to support can be provided. The on-going monitoring evaluation of GEM has provided solid evidence of this. And as we move towards a post GEM world - at least in terms of the current funding model - we look forward to consolidating this evidence, and making the case for person-centred, inclusive approaches to be rolled out more widely.

In the meantime, the GEM continues to thrive. And in addition to the plethora of benefits for individuals, partnerships and communities of a model such as GEM, the culture of inclusive employment that the programme is facilitating at an organisational level through its Inclusivity Works initiative looks set to form an important part of the lasting legacy of GEM.

Vikki Walters,  
Strategic Lead for Disability Employment,  
Gloucestershire County Council

Mark Gale,  
Chief Executive,  
Gloucestershire Gateway Trust

## Executive Summary

GEM is a social inclusion programme aimed at moving a range of disadvantaged groups closer to the labour market, training and education. Since October 2016 the programme has engaged 1745 participants, of which 629 have moved into paid employment and 281 into education and training. The on-going monitoring and evaluation has revealed a range of positive and often life changing outcomes for the vast majority of participants, most notably in improving their personal and motivational attributes and through removing barriers to the provision of advice and support.

The Monitoring and Evaluation framework for GEM encompasses both an outcomes (summative) and process (formative) evaluation. The summative evaluation examines the outcomes and impact of the project with the aim of determining overall effectiveness. The formative evaluation focuses on learning around processes linked to planning, management and delivery of the project, and the extent to which planned activities are carried out. These are incorporated in a cyclical approach through which data are continuously gathered, analysed and disseminated.

As the programme enters its final year, GEM continues to generate profound outcomes for its participants and in the most recent cycle the evaluation has examined these outcomes for six main perspectives:

- The relationships between the **psychosocial outcomes** that have been evidenced since the programme, and what the relationships tell us about the nature GEMs ability to change the lives of individuals
- The impact of GEM on the **mental wellbeing** of participants, based on an interim quantitative analysis of a formal scale
- The **economic benefits** of GEM in terms of cost savings to the state and social value generated on a participant-by-participant basis
- Outcome arising from the nature and effectiveness of the **GEM partnership**
- The **green impacts** of GEM on partner organisations and the difference that GEM is making to environmental as well as economic and social sustainability
- The **formative learning** around the GEM programme from a delivery, implementation and management perspectives, and some lessons to feed into the legacy of GEM

### Relationships between GEM psychosocial outcomes

The 12 item social outcomes scale that has been part of the GEM induction and exit paperwork since the programme began was subjected to a factor Analysis to explore the underlying relationships (or dimensions) between the items. This produced a six-item psychosocial construct across two underlying dimensions, labelled *Optimistic Future* and *Empowerment* respectively.

<b>Factor 1- <i>Optimistic future</i></b>
Item 9 - I feel ready to take up a new opportunity - for example, training / work / volunteering
Item 11 - I will try something even if there is chance it might not work

Item 12 - I can do pretty much anything that I set my mind to
<b>Factor 2- Empowerment</b>
Item 1- I find it easy to obtain help and advice about employment or training
Item 2 - I often get a chance to learn new things
Item 3 - I feel that I am making a difference to my life

Results of the factor analysis indicate that feeling ready to take up new opportunities is correlated with trying something even if there is a chance it might not work (confidence) and participants feeling they can do pretty much anything that they set their mind to (positive functioning). And this dimension is distinct from the second, whereby finding it easy to obtain help advice correlates strongly with often getting a chance to learn new things (Competence and engagement) and participants feeling as though they are making a difference to their life (purpose). In other words, those participants who feel ready to take up new opportunities also feel willing to try something even if there is a chance it might not work, and that they can do pretty much anything that they set their mind to. Similarly, those participants that find it easy to obtain help and advice about employment and training are also feeling that they often get a chance to learn new things, and are making a difference to their life.

In short, participation on the GEM programme generates two distinct (and statistically defensible) areas of impact for its participants: it provides them with a sense of *optimism* about their future generated by employability relating to improved confidence and positive functioning; and it generates feelings of *empowerment* through access to advice relating to improved competence, engagement and purpose. The factor analyses also produces a statistically valid six item construct - or scale - by which to assess the psychosocial outcomes of employment inclusivity programmes which are comparable to GEM in terms of aims and scope. Thus, the derived scale represents an important legacy of the GEM programme, and is one way that it can legitimately inform the design and evaluation of socially inclusive employment programmes in the future.

### Impact of GEM on the mental wellbeing of participants

In late 2019 the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was incorporated into the social outcomes survey to formally measure the impact of GEM on the mental well-being of its participants.

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)	
1) I've been feeling optimistic about the future.	8) I've been feeling good about myself.
2) I've been feeling useful.	9) I've been feeling close to other people.
3) I've been feeling relaxed.	10) I've been feeling confident.
4) I've been feeling interested in other people.	11) I've been able to make up my own mind about things.
5) I've had energy to spare.	12) I've been feeling loved.
6) I've been dealing with problems well.	13) I've been interested in new things.
7) I've been thinking clearly.	14) I've been feeling cheerful.

To provide a meaningful assessment at this interim stage, three study groups were set up within the sample of 203 respondents involved in the WEMWBS analysis that distinguished between the completion of Entry and Exit surveys by participants at various points in time.

Comparing the three groups enabled us to understand if there is a change in the mental well-being of participants as a result of their involvement in GEM, and to formally assess whether average scores from the whole sample are statistically consistent with those of a smaller sample of participants who completed both entry and exit WEMWBS in the timeframe.

Supporting qualitative information indicated that while some marginal negative changes recorded in WEMWBS items (i.e. where lower scores were recorded for some items on Exit compared to Entry) these were likely to have been due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, combined in some cases with more severe mental health issues. Applying statistical tests to compare average Entry and Exit responses for the entire sample, for the sample containing exit and entry scores from the same participants, and for the sample containing independent Entry and Exit entries confirmed a statistically significant difference between mean Entry and Exit scores, in turn confirming the positive impact that involvement in GEM is having on the mental wellbeing of its participants.

### Economic benefits of GEM

Applying the Economic Benefits methodology to the 10 participant peer researcher case studies provides a further illustration of magnitude of social value and cost savings to the state that are being generated by GEM. Viewed through the lens of individual case studies provides a finer grain of detail of how such value is generated, and in turn the power of the GEM model to generate value for society and the state that goes considerably further than the core remit of the programme - to move disadvantaged and social excluded people closer to education, training and employment. The economic impact analysis illustrates the associated - and wider - cost savings and social value that is generated as participants continue along their unique journey of change afforded to them through participation on GEM. The analysis implies that GEM could represent total economic benefits in the region of around £3,545 - £8,125 per participant. Taking the mean of each of these ranges illustrates that on a participant-by-participant basis GEM is worth around £1,881 through cost savings to the state; and £3,317 through wider social benefits generated for the individual. This represents an indicative mean benefit-cost ratio of £2.00 for every £1.00 invested in the GEM programme.

### Outcomes arising from the GEM partnership

The GEM partnership model provides the basis for developing an online survey tool which is being used to investigate more deeply the partners' perceptions and experiences concerning the processes and outcomes of the GEM partnership. The model incorporates a number of aspects concerning partnership structure and processes which reflect the perceptions of multiple cross-sector organisations who work together under the umbrella of the GEM project. Specifically, the principal outcomes include:

**Trust:** concerns the expectations that stakeholders will act with the interests of others. It is an aspect of individual and organisational behaviour that arises within groups who share norms of cooperative behaviour and provides a 'glue' which provides the foundations for successful partnerships.

**Synergy:** the breakthroughs in thinking and action that are produced when collaborative processes successfully combine the complementary knowledge, skills, and resources of a group of diverse participants

**Satisfaction:** how people feel about the work or processes of the partnership. Satisfaction is related to effective leadership, good communication, effective management and planning, and influence in decision making.

**Impact:** the perceived quality of partnership outputs and outcomes i.e. the difference that the GEM project is actually making (whether 'real', perceived or both).

Results of the partnership survey will be reported on later in 2022.

### Green Impacts of GEM

The core aims of the sustainable development implementation plan were to ensure that each partner involved in delivery of GEM would undertake specific action to minimise waste; minimise energy consumption; and to minimise use of travel and promote use of public or green transport where travel is unavoidable. The framework used to facilitate and assess this aspect of GEM is known as Green Impact.

The Green Impact scheme works using an online toolkit, divided into Bronze, Silver and Gold level modules, with 10 modules within each level, including travel, procurement, biodiversity, energy, recycling and community. As part of their Service Agreement, the 24 GEM partner organisations were required to achieve Silver level accreditation.

This is the third year that the GEM project has included activity towards attainment of Green Impact gradings. The work has achieved significant improvements in year 2 as lessons learned from year 1 have been implemented. In addition the offer of training for auditing was also made to GEM participants, many of whom reported in the process evaluation about how much they had gained from the experience.

As of July 2021, 1 GEM partner had achieved Platinum, 9 had achieved Gold, 9 had achieved Silver and 3 had achieved Bronze, clearly establishing the positive impact of GEM on the environmental sustainability of its partner organisations.

### Learning from the delivery and implementation of GEM

The previous four interim reports (June 2017, Sept 2018, Sept 2019, Dec 2020) identified a number of assumptions regarding what makes the GEM programme unique and more likely to succeed where others have failed. These were again confirmed and strengthened in the current evaluation cycle, cohering around four main themes - the effectiveness of the GEM project structure; effectiveness of the GEM partnership; impacts on organisation structure and culture and the effectiveness of GEM in meeting the needs of participants.

As part of the continuing cyclical evaluation interviews were conducted with eight participants, twenty Navigator Developers and four Managers and results discussed with the GEM management team to identify points of learning for the final year of GEM. Such learning necessarily focussed on things that might have gone better, with feedback structured around the four main themes and picked up in the action points listed below.

However, there were several key positives. The way the project ran during a turbulent year was commended, for example recognition was given to the ease with which the project moved swiftly online. As noted in previous evaluation reports, GEM adapted itself well to the external environment, providing continued support throughout the lockdowns and creating additional services such as the extensive online timetable. Further, a shift towards the necessary focus on participant wellbeing was acknowledged.

Changes in how the Navigator Developer team operated were also noted as representing good practice, such as encouraging home working where possible, and creating social contact points. This support and connection were not always available from the individual

partner organisations, which meant the support GEM gave, was vital to the Nav Devs. Examples of this include things such as coffee with “opportunity hunters” and the 10@10 catch-ups.

It appears that GEM has become embedded in many organisations, so much so that several organisations suggested that they had developed a reliance on GEM to extend the reach of their work to a wider group, to link in with their other offers and to fill a skills gap around education and training knowledge. Likewise, GEM has created aspirations for some organisations to get more outdoor volunteering in place and others plan to extend their activities and the work of GEM to a wider geographical area.

As in previous years, participants were overwhelmingly supportive of the opportunity to work with a Nav Dev and offered their gratitude for the invaluable personalised support they received. 1:1 Meetings not only supported them in working towards goals but also provided a wide range of additional benefits, including focusing on wellbeing and confidence building. Nav Devs provide regular phone calls, support and encouragement to attend GEM online courses, which is viewed as beneficial.

Participants mentioned several beneficial experiences which contributed to their overall opinion of their experience, including being supported to move house; accessing volunteering opportunities; attending innovative events due to the pandemic; making connections and friends through online socialising and quizzes; and undertaking wellbeing courses. This year there was also recognition of the wider GEM team and the role they have played in supporting individuals. This support has been provided through joining in things such as Green Impact, job club online- gaining interview skills and job searching. There was also noticeable recognition of the importance of having a supportive employer, reinforcing the value of the Inclusivity Works activity initiative launched in 2021.

### Actions and next steps

Further to a meeting with the OMC in December 2021 where the learning points from the evaluation cycle were fed back and discussed, the GEM management team would seek to explore the following actions:

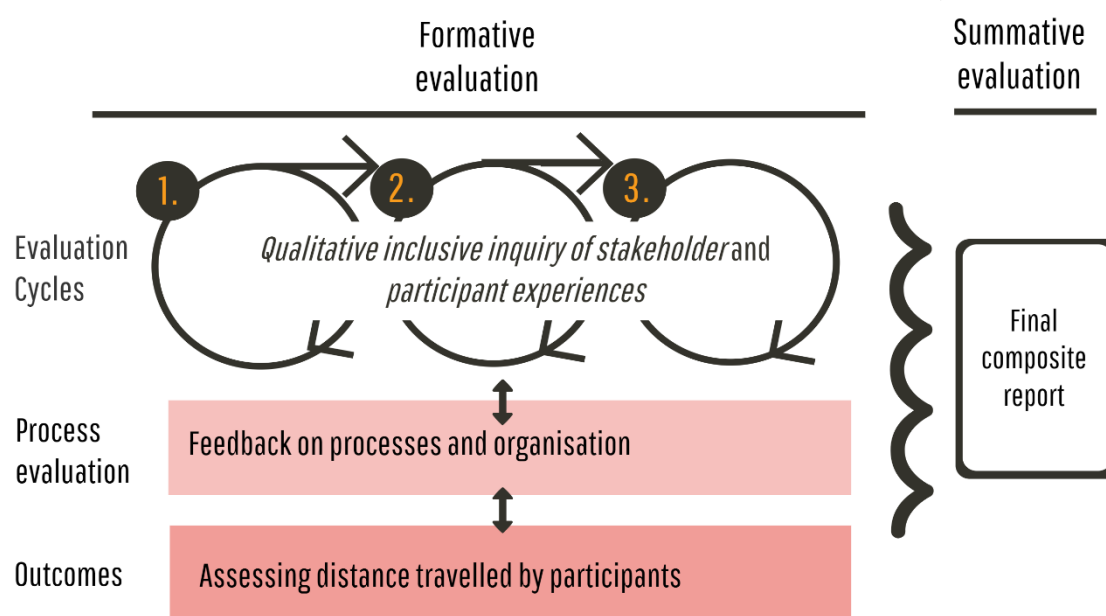
- GEM providing a space to Nav Devs for a hot desk at the employment and skills Hub and if possible through libraries in the county.
- CASE to be contacted regarding joint work regarding a therapist to facilitate the peer group. Buddying is also deemed important between Navigator Developers, especially where work continues after the GEM programme ends as there will be less capacity.
- Navigator Developers to gain greater awareness of the representation of softer outcomes in the evaluation through a presentation of this year’s evaluation findings and links to / value of future funding.
- Low paid jobs are an issue to be addressed through highlighting career progression and publicising a case study from Inclusivity Works of someone who has progressed to create aspirations and inclusion in their skills strategy.
- Continued partnership of the VCS as forum to share expertise to be developed with a possible link to the Anchor Institutions agenda. This could be linked to health and wellbeing targets to influence social value policies wider than just apprenticeships and that include the Inclusivity Works agenda.



## 1.0 Introduction

This summary report builds on the previous interim evaluation reports of June 2017, October 2018, October 2019 and December 2020. The overall Monitoring and Evaluation<sup>1</sup> framework for GEM encompasses both an outcomes (summative) and process (formative) evaluation. The summative evaluation examines the outcomes and impact of the project with the aim of determining overall effectiveness. The formative evaluation focuses on processes linked to planning, management and delivery of the project, and extent to which planned activities are carried out. These are incorporated in a cyclical approach through which data are continuously gathered, analysed and disseminated (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: GEM evaluation model**



### 1.1 Outcomes (Summative) Evaluation

The Outcomes evaluation is underpinned by The Theory of Change (ToC) developed during the early stages of the project in which elements of the original GEM outcomes map prepared at the bidding stage has been modified slightly to reflect the wider stakeholder input and detailed consideration by the research team.

The ToC (Figure 2) highlights four distinct but overlapping conceptual pathways along which the short to medium term and longer term outcomes are located, including:

1. wellbeing, health and participation
2. employability and material improvement
3. business support and networks
4. joined up delivery and cohesion

These four pathways provide a means of operationalising the evaluation in providing a clear set of themes which are materially important.

<sup>1</sup> See the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework Report of May 2017 for full details of the approach.

As part of the ongoing evaluation process in respect of the summative evaluation, participant data is routinely captured via monitoring statistics and an outcomes survey. The outcomes survey is designed to assess changes over time as perceived by participants in the GEM programme. This is achieved by employing a number of indicators that are designed to measure change in the identified GEM outcomes.

The survey has necessarily evolved and improved over the course of the programme. Between April 2017 and October 2018 a retrospective version of the survey was used to capture self-reported changes in outcome change before and since participants had joined the programme. Following the integration of the survey into the GEM admission and exit paperwork in October 2018, the survey was redesigned to capture distance travelled data, whereby change could be recorded by participants on their entry and exit to the programme (and in some cases at a mid-point in their GEM journey) alongside other information. This had the dual purposes of increasing the robustness of the data whilst making its collection more routine and therefore increasing response rates, and in turn allowing the routine input of data into the central data base.

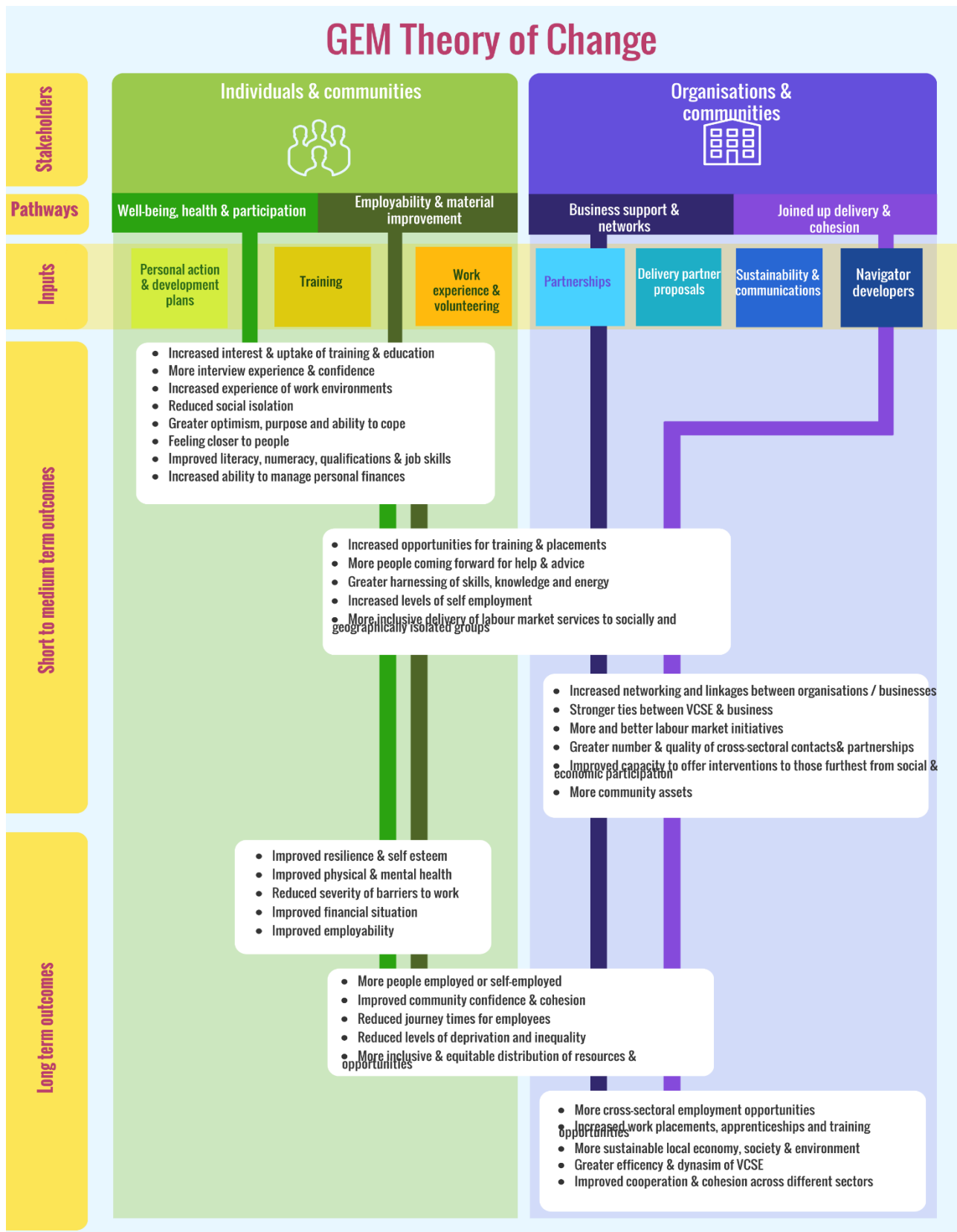
In November 2019 an all new version of this survey was launched to include formal capture of mental health impacts using the validated Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale (WEMWEBS). Following consultation with Navigator Developers, the existing survey was also reformatted to make it more user friendly. All data collected to that point was subject to a correlation and factor analysis to examine the internal reliability of each question, as well as the interrelationships between them. This led to one question being dropped from the original 13 question scale and some re-wording of other questions to help improve their reliability, and ultimately validity.

In July 2020 the outcomes data was merged with the GEM management and monitoring data which is held centrally and collected via the core paperwork. This allowed differences in psycho-social outcome change to be examined across various characteristics of participants - such as gender, ethnicity and length of time participants have been registered on the programme. The outcomes data itself was comprehensively cleaned and the various formats combined into one consistent data set to produce a clean and comparable set.

No update of the social outcomes analysis has been undertaken during this period of the evaluation cycle, as it was felt that this, together with the corresponding final update of the SROI model, would be better undertaken during the final 2022 cycle. However, two strands of data analysis have been undertaken during the period, and a summary of both is reported here. The first is a multivariate analysis of the social outcomes data, using factor analysis to examine the underlying dimensions based on correlations between the survey question responses. This process has enabled the formulation of statistically validated scale that could be used to evaluate the psycho-social outcomes of employment inclusivity programmes comparable to GEM.

The second analytical stand that has been undertaken is an interim analysis of the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale data (WEMWEBS) while not conclusive given its interim nature, it does provide an indication of the extent to which involvement in the GEM programme is improving the mental wellbeing of its participants, despite the inevitable influence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 2: GEM Theory of Change



## 1.2 Process (Formative) Evaluation

### Assumptions underpinning the GEM project

The previous four interim reports (June 2017, Sept 2018, Sept 2019, Dec 2020) have identified a number of assumptions regarding what makes the project unique and more likely to succeed where others have failed. At this stage of the project these are being further confirmed and strengthened. They are:

- the quality of the **partnership** with Voluntary and Community Sector delivery partners rooted in the communities they support and who have experience of working with the target groups for the project;
- the **intensive one-to-one support** of the navigator-developers that puts participants at the heart of the project, responding to each individual on their terms and at their pace;
- proactive efforts to engage the **business sector** and develop opportunities for participant engagement;
- the value of principles of **co-production**.

In evaluation terms, these are the ‘theories’ behind the Theory of Change approach taken. They are evident in the proposal documents and data gathered so far continues to support these theories/assumptions.

As part of the continuing cyclical evaluation this section of the report draws on data gathered from interviews conducted with eight participants, twenty Navigator Developers and four Managers.

In all the interviews, whether with NDs or participants, these were recorded and notes were taken, the semi-structured questions focussed on the main process evaluation questions including, what is going well, what could be better. Based on feedback from the interviews other supplementary question were added to specifically check in with Navigator Developers how their participants were coping and engaging, how they were coping and what GEM online was adding to the project.

## 1.3 Inclusive Evaluation Approaches

Four workshops, attended by 6-14 NDs each, were held on the following dates to support the roll out of the Inclusive evaluation tools developed by Creative Sustainability.

Journaling: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Creative Tools: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Mindful Photography: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## 1.4 Economic Impact analysis

Follow up interviews were undertaken with 13 participants involved in the peer researcher interviews that were reported on in December 2020. This provided 13 individual case studies that reflect a cross section of outcomes delivered through the GEM programme around which potential economic benefits have been quantified.

The cashable benefits evident in each of the participant stories are first calculated in terms of potential savings for the state, for example through avoided job support or

medical consultation. This broadly follows nef's Economic Benefits approach.<sup>2</sup> The wider social value generated for the individual is then considered and monetised using appropriate financial proxies that approximate the value of change based on an alternative means of achieving it. For example, the cost of CBT provision is used a proxy for producing improved resilience and self-esteem. By setting the savings for the state and social value generated for individuals against the unit cost for participation on the GEM programme, a set of indicative benefit-cost ratios (BCRs) for the scheme is also provided. This approach is based on the monetisation principles of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework reported in previous GEM monitoring and evaluation interim reports.<sup>3</sup>

Standard assumptions appropriate to the Economic Benefits and SROI approaches are incorporated into the analysis. Most importantly it should be recognised that the main purpose of the case studies is to *illustrate* the potential cost-benefits of the GEM programme, rather than to *evidence* them. They also serve to triangulate against the SROI metrics, and as such will improve the robustness of the impact estimates reported on at the end of the programme.

### 1.5 Partnership assessment

The partnership assessment focuses specifically on the processes and outcomes of the GEM partnership. Via the collection of primary data with representatives of the GEM partners, including Navigator Developers and managers, the development of a partnership logic model will be developed in order to articulate the relationship between partnership activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes. In turn, this will be used to inform a mixed methods data collection framework to identify and explore those aspects which both enhance and impede effectiveness.

This assessment will also integrate elements of WP 5 (Cost Benefit Analysis) by exploring perceived and actual costs and benefits from partnership working of those engaged in the GEM project. Collectively, this data will establish evidence that informs current practice and provide a comprehensive account of partnership working in the present context.

### 1.6 Assessing the impact of GEM on sustainability (Green Impact)

Green Impact is an international United Nations award-winning programme run by SOS-UK, an educational charity which is part of the NUS. In the UK it currently has 24,692 people taking part across 190 organisations.

The Green Impact scheme works using an online toolkit, divided into Bronze, Silver and Gold level modules, with 10 modules within each level. As part of their Service Agreement, the 24 GEM partner organisations were required to achieve Silver level accreditation. The modules contained a mixture of themes including travel, procurement, biodiversity, energy, recycling and community. The concept behind the toolkit was to encourage organisations to analyse their everyday working practices, to see if they could run more sustainably. This is the third year that the GEM project has included activity towards attainment of Green Impact gradings.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example Vardakoulis (2013) *The Economic Benefits of Ecominds: A case study approach*. nef consulting, London.

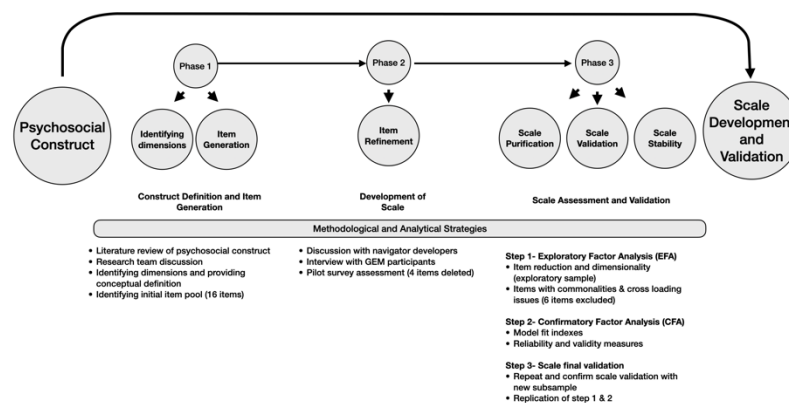
<sup>3</sup> See for example Wright, T. and Schifferes, J. (2012) *Growing Social Capital: An SROI of the impact of the community and voluntary sector funded by grant aid*.

## 3.0 Outcomes Evaluation

This section of the report presents findings from the GEM monitoring statistics and the retrospective outcomes survey completed by participants engaged in the GEM project.

### 3.1 Social Outcomes scale development and validation

The social outcomes survey used routinely to evaluate the outcomes experienced by participants as a result of their involvement with GEM was used to develop and validate a refined measurement scale that: a) would allow the underlying dimensions of psychosocial outcomes to be identified; and b) produce a statistically valid scale that could be applied to other socially inclusive employment programmes in the future. Development of the scale involved three phases; (1) identifying a pool of items relating to psychosocial outcomes (previously developed from the GEM Theory of Change with reference to supporting literature); (2) developing the Psycho-social scale; and (3) assessing and validating the scale through the data collected from GEM participants at their start time with the project. Figure 1 displays the methodological and analytical strategies in each stage of the process



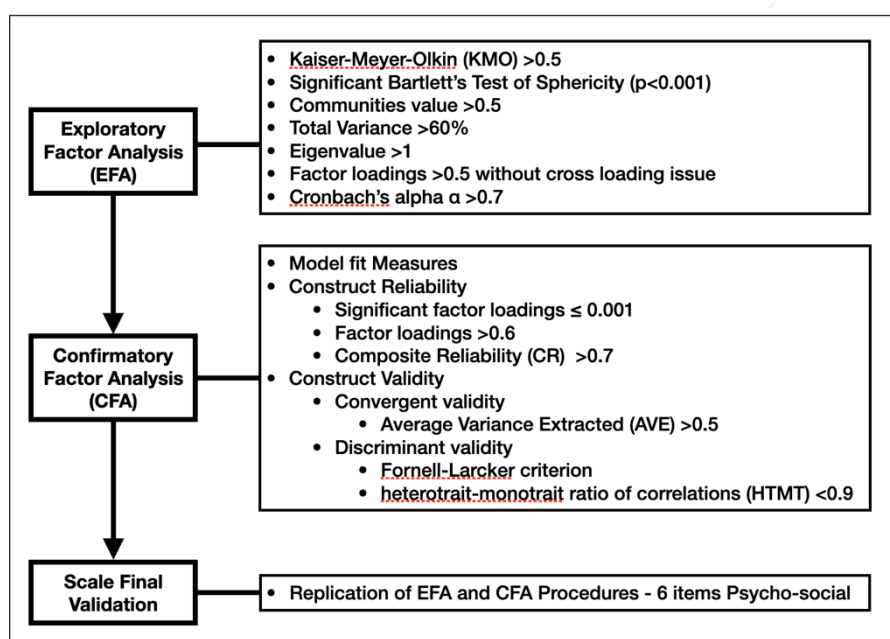
### Development of the scale

Several steps were employed to refine the survey tool with the identified potential set of items between 2016 and 2020. Survey drafts were first reviewed by Navigator Developers (ND), with feedback on items clarity and reading level incorporated into the final survey. Next, the item review was involved by evaluating team to check if they could be scored in a meaningful way and perfectly reflect the project central purpose. Finally, the survey was evaluated by the review panel to offer suggestions on adding or eliminating of items. This iterative process resulted in a final 12 item survey that became part of the GEM induction and exit paperwork.

The 12 item social outcomes survey
E1- I find it easy to obtain help and advice about employment or training.
E2- I often get a chance to learn new things.
E3- I feel that I am making a difference to my life.
E4- I have a wide range of skills to help me at work, in training or in my daily life.
E5- In general, I feel very positive about myself.
E6- I feel generally healthy and have good energy levels.
E7- I feel that I can manage my money and finances.
E8- I regularly volunteer or get involved in activities to help others.

E9- I feel ready to take up a new opportunity - for example, training / work / volunteering.
E10- I often meet socially with friends, relatives or colleagues.
E11- I will try something even if there is chance it might not work.
E12- I can do pretty much anything that I set my mind to.

To validate the scale three subsamples were randomly selected through the derived dataset. An exploratory sample was used to perform Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA); a confirmatory sample was then used to measure the Confirmatory Factor Analysis; and a replication sample was used to examine the scale stability. A One Way ANOVA test was applied to examine for any differences or changes between the three subsamples and revealed that there were no significant differences ( $p$  values are  $>0.005$ ) between the three subsamples in their responses to the survey. This enabling the scale assessment and validation.



**Figure 2** characteristics of scale development and factorial structure of measures

Table 2 shows the characteristics of three groups used in this study for scale assessment. As demonstrated, all the three groups have a similar distribution across the various categories presented. There were a few dissimilarities as follows: the replication sample had a slightly higher proportion of 36 to 45 years old participants compared to the other two groups. The exploratory sample had a slightly lower percentage of unemployment less than six months and a slightly higher length of unemployment equal or more than 16 months. And the Replication sample had a slightly higher proportion with no primary or secondary educational qualifications. In total, all three groups were broadly representative of the entire participant population, with similar distributions in different categories.

	Characteristics	Exploratory Sample	Confirmatory Sample	Replication Sample	Total
Gender	Male	54.00%	53.60%	59.20%	55.60%
	Female	46.00%	45.50%	40.80%	44.10%
	Prefer not to say	0.00%	0.90%	0.00%	0.30%

Age Group	25 and below	20.90%	22.70%	17.10%	20.20%
	26 to 35	23.30%	23.20%	25.20%	23.90%
	36 to 45	17.20%	15.20%	21.20%	17.90%
	46 to 55	24.20%	19.90%	18.50%	20.80%
	56 to 65	12.60%	17.50%	16.20%	15.40%
	66 and above	1.90%	1.40%	1.80%	1.70%
Ethnicity	Asian / Asian British	2.80%	2.80%	4.50%	3.40%
	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	2.80%	2.80%	2.70%	2.80%
	Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	3.30%	1.90%	4.00%	3.10%
	Other ethnic group	4.70%	3.30%	4.50%	4.20%
	White	86.50%	88.20%	84.30%	86.30%
	Prefer not to say	0.00%	0.90%	0.00%	0.30%
Employment status	Inactive, including not in education or training	53.80%	55.40%	59.70%	56.40%
	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	46.20%	44.60%	40.30%	43.60%
Length of time unemployed (coded)	Less than 6 months	16.50%	20.70%	25.30%	20.70%
	Between 6 to 11 months	15.40%	18.40%	18.10%	17.20%
	Between 12 to 23 months	18.70%	13.80%	16.90%	16.50%
	Between 24 to 59 months	22.00%	20.70%	15.70%	19.50%
	Equal or more than 60 months	27.50%	26.40%	24.10%	26.10%
Highest educational attainment (upon joining)	Does not have primary or lower secondary education	5.10%	3.10%	10.20%	6.20%
	With primary education or equivalent	3.60%	2.10%	3.40%	3.00%
	With lower secondary education or equivalent	13.70%	16.90%	14.10%	14.90%
	With upper secondary education or equivalent	46.70%	48.20%	37.90%	44.10%
	With post-secondary education or equivalent	18.30%	18.50%	19.90%	18.90%
	With tertiary education or equivalent	12.70%	11.30%	14.60%	12.90%
Lacks basic skills	No	70.60%	68.70%	66.50%	68.60%
	Yes	29.40%	31.30%	33.50%	31.40%
Referral route	Navigator Developer	61.40%	62.60%	54.90%	59.50%
	Introducer	23.70%	19.00%	27.20%	23.40%
	Self - Referral	14.90%	18.50%	17.90%	17.10%
Disability	No	25.10%	20.40%	27.20%	24.30%
	Yes	73.90%	77.20%	72.30%	74.40%
	Prefer not to say	1.00%	2.40%	0.50%	1.30%



## Results of the Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 3 shows the summary results of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (which were duly supported by the replication sample), that produced a six-item psychosocial construct across two underlying dimensions, labelled *Optimistic Future* and *Empowerment*, respectively.

	Factor loadings	Variance Explained (%)	Factor Loadings (p value $\leq 0.001$ )	HTMT
<b>Factor 1- <i>Optimistic future</i> (<math>\alpha = 0.838</math>)</b>		56.001	✓	
E9 - I feel ready to take up a new opportunity - for example, training / work / volunteering	0.816		0.756***	
E11 - I will try something even if there is chance it might not work	0.938		0.748***	
E12 - I can do pretty much anything that I set my mind to	0.824		0.744***	
<b>Factor 2- <i>Empowerment</i> (<math>\alpha = 0.790</math>)</b>		17.845		
E1- I find it easy to obtain help and advice about employment or training	0.849		0.772***	
E2 - I often get a chance to learn new things	0.931		0.811***	
E3 - I feel that I am making a difference to my life	0.653		0.711***	
<b>Total variance explained</b>		73.846		
<b>Discriminant validity of factors</b>				0.645

The rationale for the labelling of the two dimensions is then based on a combined inductive - deductive approach. Inductive in the sense that a new theory, or concepts, are being developed based on the evidence arising from the GEM data, and deductive in the sense that elements of existing theory are drawn upon to help label the factors.

In simple terms, what the two factors tell us is that feeling ready to take up new opportunities is correlated with trying something even if there is a chance it might not work (confidence) and feeling like they can do pretty much anything that they set their mind to (positive functioning). And this dimension is distinct from the second, whereby finding it easy to obtain help advice correlates strongly with often getting a chance to learn new things (Competence and engagement) and feeling as though they are making a difference to their life (purpose). Another way to look at it is this: Those participants who feel ready to take up new opportunities also feel willing to try something even if there is a chance it might not work, and that they can do pretty much anything that they set their mind to. Similarly, those participants that find it easy to obtain help and advice about employment and training are also feeling that they often get a chance to learn new things, and are making a difference to their life.

A deductive layer of interpretation is then applied to help identify concise labels to help describe each of the dimensions as they relate to the respective 3-item construct they comprise of. And for this we referred to Tew et al's (2011) work examining the conceptual dimensions underlying the relationship between social factors and mental health difficulties and recovery. This suggested *Optimistic Future* and *Empowerment* to be

relevant and legitimate labels for the respective factors, based upon the constructs within them. Inductively, this also makes sense.

There are two main ways to interpret the analyses. The first relates to the summative impact of GEM on its participants - if we were to distil that down how could we articulate it? In short, participation on the GEM programme generates two distinct (and statistically defensible) areas of impact for its participants: it provides them with a sense of optimism about their future generated by employability relating to improved confidence and positive functioning ; and it generates feelings of empowerment through access to advice relating to improved competence, engagement and purpose.

The second is that the analyses produces a statistically valid six item construct - or scale - by which to assess the psychosocial outcomes of employment inclusivity programmes which are comparable to GEM in terms of aims and scope. Thus, the derived scale itself represents an important legacy of the GEM programme, and is one way that it can legitimately inform the design and evaluation of socially inclusive employment programmes in the future.

### 3.2 Mental Health Impacts

In late 2019 the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was incorporated into the social outcomes survey to formally measure the impact of GEM on the mental well-being of its participants. WEMWBS is a freely available self-completion survey funded by the Scottish Executive National Programme for improving mental health and well-being, commissioned by NHS Health Scotland, developed by the University of Warwick and the University of Edinburgh, and jointly owned by NHS Health Scotland, the University of Warwick and the University of Edinburgh<sup>4</sup>. Since its development in 2006, the has been survey widely used by projects to evaluate the impact of interventions on their participants mental well-being (Putz, R., O'Hara, K., Taggart, F. and Stewart-Brown, 2012). The 14 statements used in the survey are shown in table 1.

*Table 1 - 14 statements used in mental well-being survey (WEMWBS)*

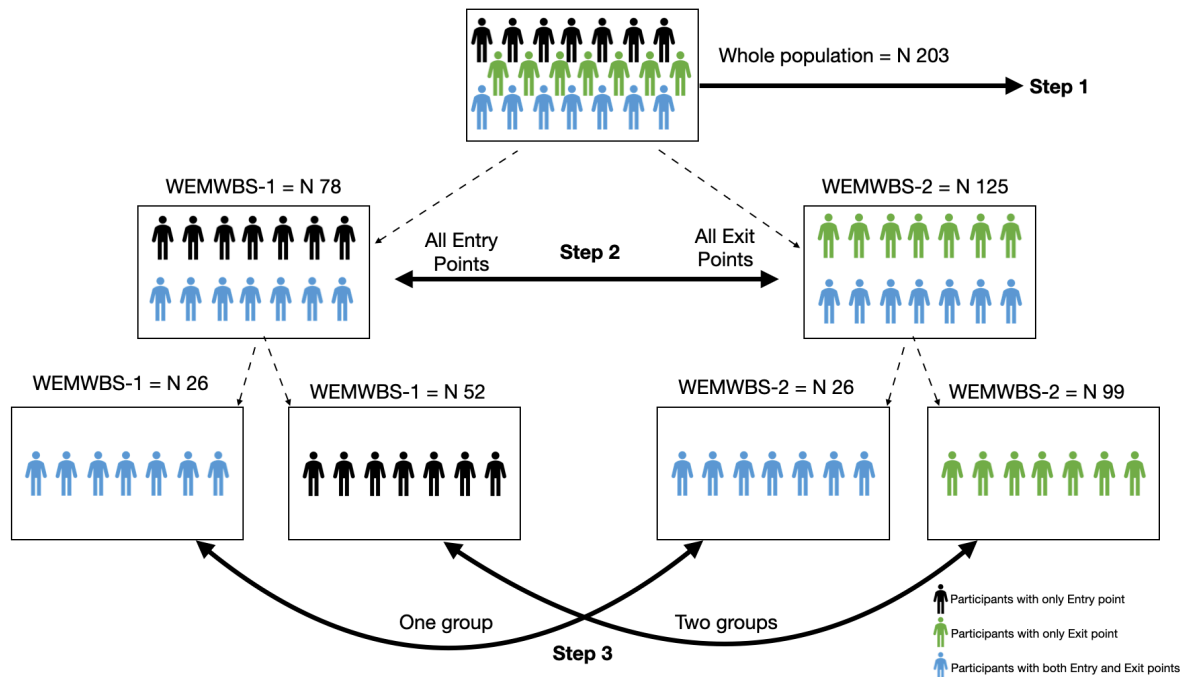
Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)	Coded in dataset
1) I've been feeling optimistic about the future.	1) Optimistic
2) I've been feeling useful.	2) Useful
3) I've been feeling relaxed.	3) Relaxed
4) I've been feeling interested in other people.	4) Interested
5) I've had energy to spare.	5) Energy
6) I've been dealing with problems well.	6) Dealing
7) I've been thinking clearly.	7) Thinking
8) I've been feeling good about myself.	8) Good
9) I've been feeling close to other people.	9) Close
10) I've been feeling confident.	10) Confident
11) I've been able to make up my own mind about things.	11) Own mind
12) I've been feeling loved.	12) Loved
13) I've been interested in new things.	13) Interest
14) I've been feeling cheerful.	14) Cheerful

#### 3.2.1 Analysis of WEMWBS

Figure 1 illustrate the analysis steps on WEMWBS in this evaluation process. In step one, total of 203 responses were involved in WEMWBS analysis (whole sample analysis). In second step, we evaluated WEMWBS responses in two reference points, 'Entry' (start of project) and 'Exit' (end of project). In step three of analysis, the 'Entry' and 'Exit' samples were divided to two groups: 'one group' and 'two groups'. 'One group' involved responses of WEMWBS from same participant at two reference points, start of project and end of project (total 26 participants have both 'Entry' and 'Exit' points data). At 'two groups' category, we included 'Entry' and 'Exit' responses to WEMWBS from different participants. In 'two groups' analysis, responses of 52 participants to WEMWBS-1 considered as 'Entry' point (start

<sup>4</sup> Permission to use WEMWBS in GEM project was obtained by monitoring and evaluation team at University of Gloucestershire (UoG) - completing registration form and conducting Dr Frances Taggart: frances.taggart@warwick.ac.uk or Prof Sarah Stewart-Brown: [Sarah.Stewart-Brown@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Sarah.Stewart-Brown@warwick.ac.uk). Following the guidelines, the reproduction copyrights for WEMWBS are presented on GEM paper and online designed surveys: "Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) © NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2006, all rights reserved".

of project) and responses of 99 participants to WEMWBS-2 considered as ‘Exit’ point (end of project). The WEMWBS’s data from ‘one group’ was not involved in the ‘two groups’ analysis, neither in ‘Entry’ nor in ‘Exit’ point. Comparing the three study groups allows us to understand if there is a change in the mental well-being of participants as a result of their involvement in GEM, and to formally assess whether average scores from the whole sample are statistically consistent with those of the smaller sample of participants who completed both entry and exit WEMWBS in the timeframe.



**Fig. 1 - Mental Health Analysis steps**

As recommended, the paper and online surveys, both included an additional question presented after WEMWBS measurement to ensure on the clarity of statements (“Please use this space to share your experience of completing the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being (WEMWBS) Scale. Some responses are as follows:

There is a quote from a participant with autism:

*“[the participant] found the scale easy to use and understand. [the participant] felt the scale was important because people with autism are more susceptible to mental health problems than people who do not have autism. [the participant] thinks that measuring [the participant] progress and monitoring how GEM have supported [the participant] will help [the participant] mental health.” (WEMWBS-1)*

Here is another comment on WEMWBS:

*“I found this easy to understand, especially as he usually finds surveys pointless” (WEMWBS-1)*

Another GEM participant highlighting on clarity of WEMWBS:

*“This was easy to read and understand.” (WEMWBS-1)*

A quote from a GEM participant on ‘Exit’ Survey:

*“I’m surprised to find myself intuitively confident about how high to score... rather than indecisive. That raises my confidence.” (WEMWBS-2)*

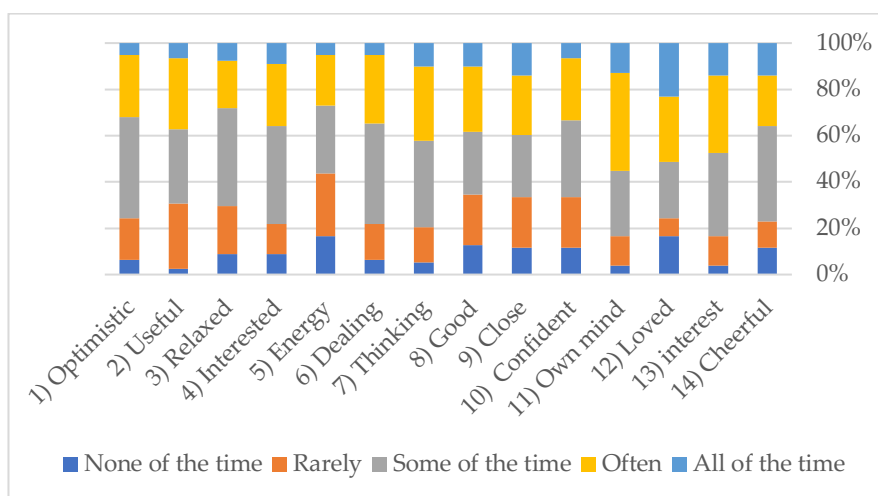
### WEMWBS Results

The characteristics of respondents presented in this investigation (203 in total) was first examined, and confirmed a uniform distribution between different genders and among different ages. The majority of the population had a white English background and very small minority had primary education or lower. The navigator developer was the most indicated referral route to GEM project. Two thirds of the population declared having a disability and among those, mental health and developmental disorders represented the greatest proportions.

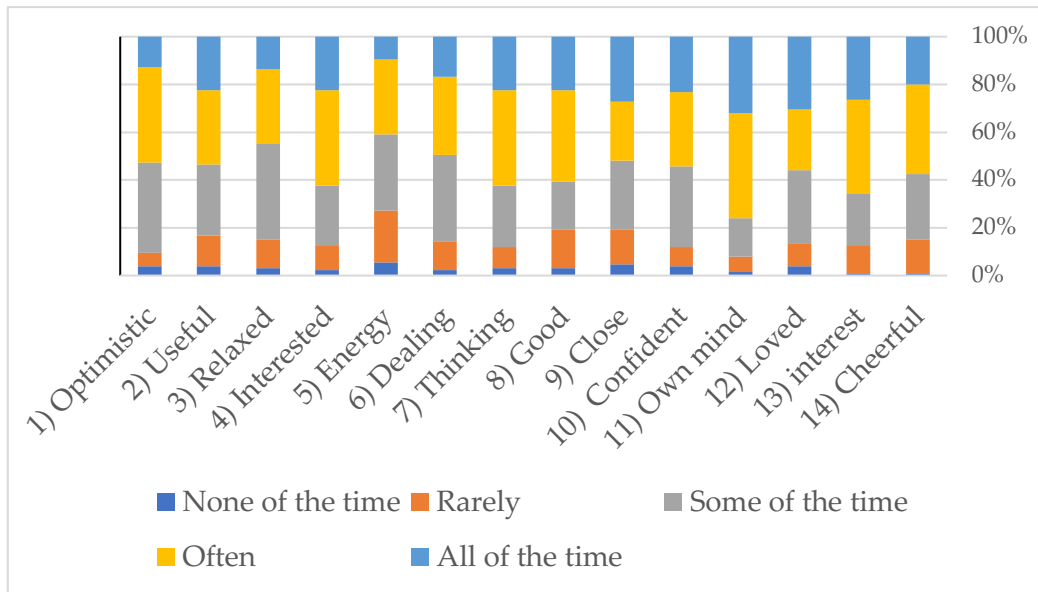
The minimum and maximum scores in WEMWBS range from 14 to 70, where lowest scores indicate lower level of positive feelings and thoughts, and highest scores indicates higher level of positive feelings and thoughts. The total score result consisting of all 203 responses to WEMWBS covered the full range of 14 to 70, with scores normally distributed across the study population, and a mean score of 47.86.

#### ‘Entry’ and ‘Exit’ Points Analysis

Figure 2 and Figure 3 display responses of respondents that classified based on their responses to WEMWBS-1 (‘Entry’ point = 78) and WEMWBS-2 (‘Exit’ point = 125). As it can be seen, a range of answers have been provided for all the questions; from (1), ‘none of the time’ to (5) ‘All of the time’. In the ‘Entry’ result, most of responses belong to the categories of (2) ‘Rarely’, (3) ‘Some of the time’ and ‘Often’ (4). While in the ‘Exit’ result, most responses go for categories of ‘Rarely’ (3), ‘often’ (4), and ‘All of the time’ (5). This effect is expected because the anticipation is that the respondents at the end of their involvement with the GEM project has higher score compared to the beginning of it. Same also goes for those who selected response category of (1) for the answers in ‘Entry’ and ‘Exit’ surveys. The category of (1) indicates ‘None of the time’ and it has been selected more in ‘Entry’ point compared to the ‘Exit’ point.



**Fig. 4 - Responses to WEMWBS at Entry Point - Total 78**



**Fig. 5 - Responses to WEMWBS at Exit Point - Total 125**

### ‘One Group’ and ‘Two Groups’ Samples Analysis

In the next step, we checked the WEMWBS scores of ‘one group’ and ‘two groups’. Table 3 shows range of response scores for ‘Entry’ and ‘Exit’ points in both ‘one group’ and ‘two groups’ samples. In ‘one group’ sample, there are a total of 52 responses from same participants with data on both WEMWBS-1 and WEMWBS-2 surveys (26 responses in each survey point). In ‘one group’, ‘Entry’ point scores range from 14 to 59 and in ‘Exit’ point, scores range from 31 to 68. The total responses in ‘two groups’ is 151, where 52 belongs to participants replied WEMWBS-1 and 99 belongs to participants replied WEMWBS-2. In ‘two groups’, the scores in ‘Entry’ point have a range between 19 to 66 and the ‘Exit’ point has a range between 25 to 70.

Bi-variate *t*-tests were to measure the statistical significance of differences between ‘one group’ and ‘two groups’ samples. Table 3 presents the result. Paired sample t-test showed significant difference in ‘Entry’ and ‘Exit’ total scores of ‘one group’ sample. For sample ‘two groups’, the independent t-test was used, and it showed significant difference in the responses of ‘Entry’ and ‘Exit’ surveys. These results indicate, the differences in scores in each sample is significant with moderate effect<sup>5</sup>.

We conducted t-test analysis in three levels. First, it was performed on responses to WEMWBS-1 at ‘Entry’ point, where study sample were grouped to 26 participants and 52 participants. The t-test independent analysis showed that there is no significant difference between these two samples in their ‘Entry’ responses. Similarly, we then performed a t-test analysis on responses to WEMWBS-2, where included the responses of 26 and 99 participants at their ‘Exit’ point, which again showed these two samples are not significantly different from each other. The results of both tests confirm the efficacy of using the complete sample

<sup>5</sup> Use of effect size determines how big the differences in each response time can be. The Cohen's d and Hedges correction was used in this step. Following the recommendations (Cohen, 1988), a value of ‘0.20 < 0.50’ is weak, ‘0.50 < 0.80’ is moderate and ‘0.80 < 1.20’ determine strong effect. As table 3 shows the effect size result in ‘one group’ sample is close to moderate (Cohen's d= **-0.475** with Hedges' correction= **-0.468**) and in ‘two groups’ sample is with medium effect (Cohen's d = -0.642 with Hedges' correction= -0.638).

(n=203) to assess the impact of GEM on the mental well-being of its participants by comparing all Entry and Exit scores.

Bi-variate t-test analysis was then undertaken to compare average entry and exit responses for the entire sample (n=203), for the sample containing exit and entry scores from the same participants (n=26), and for the sample containing independent Entry and Exit entries (n=52 Entry; 99 Exit). All three results confirm a statistically significant difference between mean Entry and Exit scores, in turn confirming the positive impact that involvement in GEM has had on the mental wellbeing of its participants.

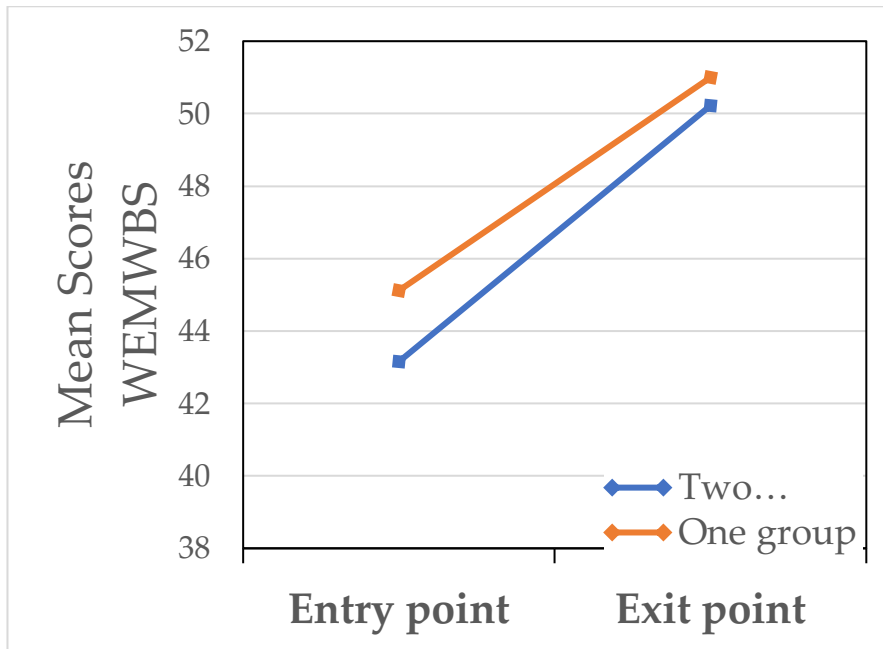
**Table 3 - Score WEMWBS in 'one group' and 'two groups' classification and significance of differences**

	WEMWBS surveys	N	Missing items	Range of Response scores	Mean WEMWBS Score (SD)	Median	T-test Sig. (2-tailed)	T (df)	Effect size Cohen's d (Hedges' correction)
Two Groups	WEMWBS-1 Entry point	52	3	From 19 to 66	43.15 (11.13)	43	<.001***	-3.746 (149)	-0.642 (-0.638)
	WEMWBS-2 Exit point	99	3	From 25 to 70	50.22 (10.95)	51			
One Group	WEMWBS-1 Entry point	26	-	From 14 to 59	45.12 (12.73)	48	0.023*	-2.424 (25)	-0.475 (-0.468)
	WEMWBS-2 Exit point	26	3	From 31 to 68	51.00 (10.19)	52.5			
Entry Point	WEMWBS-1 (Entry)	26	3	From 14 to 59	45.12 (12.73)	48	0.487	0.699 (76)	0.168 (0.166)
	WEMWBS-1 (Entry)	52		From 19 to 66	43.15 (11.13)	43			
Exit Point	WEMWBS-2 (Exit)	26	6	From 31 to 68	51.00 (10.19)	52.5	0.744	0.327 (123)	0.072 (0.072)
	WEMWBS-2 (Exit)	99		From 25 to 70	50.22 (10.95)	51			
Entry and Exit Points	WEMWBS-1 (Entry)	78	9	From 14 to 66	43.81 (11.64)	44.5	<.001***	4.102 (201)	-0.592 (-0.590)
	WEMWBS-2 (Exit)	125		From 25 to 70	50.38 (10.77)	51			

Notes: 1. Effect size is Cohen's d  
\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

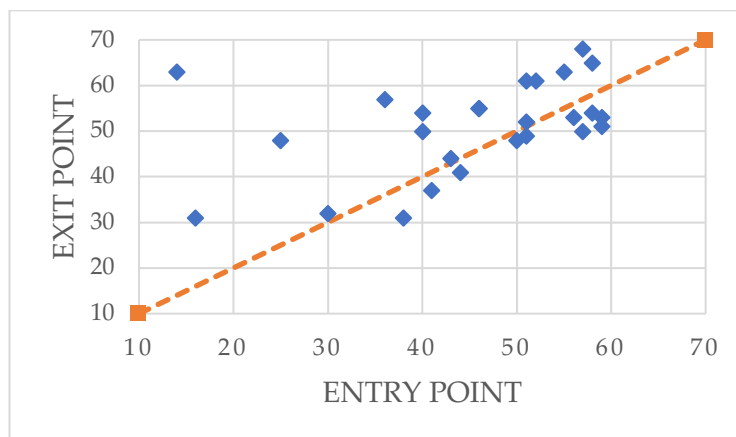
Figure 4 investigates this positive impact further. Average WEMWBS scores for 'two groups' sample in 'Entry' point was 43 and increased to 50 at the 'Exit' point. For the sample 'one group', the average score for 'Entry' was 45 and it increased to 51 in 'Exit' point. The 'two groups' sample shows an increase of seven and 'one group' sample shows an increase of six in the total average. This shows the similarity between two samples, confirming the change and demonstrating that the GEM project has a similar outcome for both study samples. A change from 3 to 8 is advised to be considered as a change in before and after response (Putz, R., O'Hara, K., Taggart, F. and Stewart-Brown, 2012), and both samples highlight such an improvement in scores. Similarity of the results in both samples also demonstrates that the data collected from separate groups at 'Entry' and 'Exit' points provides the information needed to understand the impact of the GEM program. Furthermore, it shows

how responses to WEMWBS was improved during the participants involvement with the GEM project.



**Fig. 4 - The mean scores of WEMWBS for Entry and Exit points of both samples**

Some further context is provided by Figure 5, which drills down further into the One group sample, containing scores from the 26 participants who completed both an entry and exit survey. In the graph, each blue dot represents one individual where the X axis shows the 'Entry' point total score for that individual and Y axis shows the 'Exit' point total score. The diagonal line shows no change at all in the total score in 'Entry' and 'Exit' point. The dots which are above this line representing an improvement in before and after scores (higher 'Exit' point score compared to 'Entry' point score). Individuals which are under this line had a slightly lower score (as evidenced by their close proximity to the line) at 'Exit' point compared to the 'Entry' point and thus a lower average score at the end of their participation in GEM project. However, the relatively greater distance of positive scores from the line compared to negative scores is important - and is reflected in the average improvement in WEMWBS scores for this cohort, which as demonstrated is statistically significant.



**Fig. 5 - Mean of WEMWBS scores for individuals in 'one group' sample**



Nevertheless a follow up examination was conducted on these cases to understand why this might be and what else might have influenced the WEMWBS scores. Looking at the notes provided, there is a comment, which could explain this decrease in responses:

*'I completed this survey during the Coronavirus pandemic so my answers reflect this.'*(WEMWBS-2)

Another participant indicated:

*"I suffer from mental health problems so can feel down a lot of the time. But since joining GEM and talking positively about my future it has helped to increase my confidence."* (WEMWBS-1)

Thus, the marginal negative changes recorded in WEMWBS items are likely to have due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, combined in some cases with more severe mental health issues. However, despite this the statistical analysis presented in this report still demonstrates a positive impact on mental wellbeing. As shown in Figure 5, most of the individuals had an increase in their 'Exit' point scores and are substantially above the diagonal. The increase in the total score of WEMWBS for one individual is as high as 49, followed by 7 more individuals with the improvement scores of 10 or higher. While a change of 3 and higher in total scores from before to after is an indication of positive effects, such improvements mentioned above are significant outcomes of the GEM project with respect to the mental well-being of participants.

## 4.0 Economic Impact analysis

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The purpose of the peer research method - reported on in December 2020 - was to evaluate the impact of GEM project on its participants' experiences entering from a variety of backgrounds including unemployment and health related issues. The participants' experience of GEM was found to cohere around three main themes; perceived navigator developer support, meaningful involvements and associated experiences, and making positive progress and improvement. Perceived navigator developers' support emerged as the most contributing factor in helping participants' perception of supportiveness in the GEM project. This theme demonstrated the perception of social support received through having a navigator developer to help participants in each step of their GEM journey to move forward towards securing employment. It was found to be an important mechanism in providing participants' successful experience of supportiveness of the GEM project. This support has been perceived in setting up a clear career planning strategy, pursuing final career achievement, job searching, regular weekly meetings, developing interpersonal relationships, finding opportunities and receiving help with other complicated life issues. The quality and impact of this support has exceeded participants' expectations and found to be a prominent contributing factor in aiding perception of emotional and psychological support received through the GEM project.

The two remaining themes were also revealed to be very important in participants successful experiences of GEM project. For example, the majority of study participants were involved in doing at least one meaningful activity (e.g. attending courses, doing voluntary work) and they believed it to be a positive experience. As a result of this involvement, they experienced interaction with others (social interaction and engagement), participation in community (social participation), purpose and structure in everyday life, psychological and physical health, gained skills to develop their CV and received peer support. Furthermore, it was revealed that study participants made some incidental progress and improvement as a result of these experiences. Indeed, several beneficial outcomes relate in some way to this theme, which also helps to understand how participation in the GEM project has impacted on participant experiences of getting into employment or moving towards their personal goals. Such outcomes include having less anxiety and building up confidence, the existence of encouragement and motivation and making positive changes, and nurturing an optimistic outlook about their future career. All are important factors in relation to goal achievement and coping with persistent unemployment.

Study participants also provided some recommendations how the GEM project could be improved from their perspective. As the evaluation has revealed, any positive experiences and outcomes cannot be delivered without the support of navigator developers. Perceived supportiveness in this project was almost always attributed to the one-to-one support and help of navigator developers throughout the project. First, it is important for navigator developers to ease the process easier for participants - particularly those with mental health issues and social anxiety - as they may not be able to progress easily and quickly. NDs also need to provide support without pressure, especially if participants have experienced long-term unemployment and/or have struggled with a lack of confidence to apply for jobs.. Second, in the case of participants with physical disabilities, it is also vital that navigator developers provide supplementary support, for example by going to the participants' home to help them with job finding or filling out job applications. And third, it is important for navigator developers to understand fully what kind of job a participant is interested in applying for. Sometimes, participants were encouraged to apply for jobs that they did not want to pursue, whether paid or voluntary work.

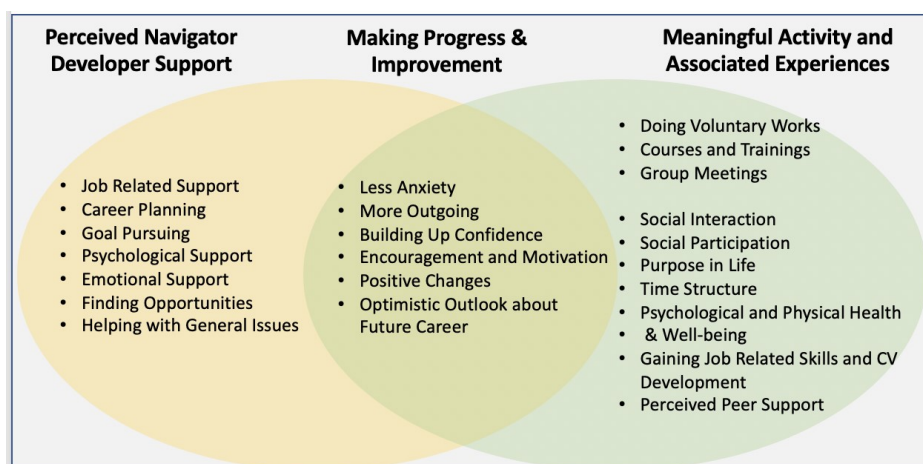
It was also recommended that participants be able to remain on the programme after they have secured employment. Study participants were concerned that the project is a 'one-time thing' and they will not be able to register on it again once they have left. In particular, participants with on-going mental and physical health issues expressed that, because they were always likely to have these barriers, what they needed was on-going support to secure permanent employment. In addition, because some paid work is temporary, they need the GEM programme to provide on-going support to actually help them into more fulfilling longer term jobs. Temporary jobs were also cited as being challenges in the area of meaningful involvement and participation as well. Specifically, it was felt that involvement in more permanent activities without a 'hard ending' such as volunteering on a garden allotment, for example, were crucial because it gave some much needed structure to their life. As one participant expressed:

*It's not six weeks and then over, this is something that is just going on, I think in a way I've kind of almost sort of latched on to it a bit more effectively and for that reason I think its had more of a positive effect as well. Because it doesn't seem like tokenism or temporary or whatever, you might sort of feel, it doesn't feel tokenistic. This is something that is on-going. (study participant 3)*

Other recommendations from the study participants included the provision of traineeships and apprenticeships through GEM - from a very basic level up to obtaining sufficient experience to get a paid job-; advertising the project widely to help more people; having more navigator developers to help participants with valuable job related practical skills and the provision of (paid) opportunities for peer-to-peer participant support on the programme.

In conclusion, the peer researcher approach has highlighted GEM participation to be an effective experience for study participants in coping with the challenges of unemployment and to build the necessary skills and attributes to help them progress and improve along their GEM journey. Although the peer research data produced a number of prominent contributing factors such as perceived supportiveness, the whole GEM experience can be viewed holistically to entail a set of very positive outcomes for participants, as summarised in figure 10.

### Central Experiences and Theme Associations from the peer researcher interviews



Participation in the GEM project has helped individuals to reduce uncertainty about their future career, thereby strengthening the participants’ willingness to further themselves and seek real and meaningful achievement. Working with solutions, talking about career opportunities and discussing possibilities, undertaking training and doing voluntary work are all things that have certainly enabled participants to have a positive and beneficial experience through engaging with the GEM project. As a result of their involvement in such activities, they have built up confidence and developed some tangible employability and sociability skills. GEM participation has not only enhanced participants’ ability to move forward in getting into employment, but has also increased their motivation to be more pro-active in finding a job and has engendered a positive approach to job hunting. These experiences represent achievements which are greatly valued by study participants and are valuable contributors in enhancing participants’ psychological, physical, emotional and social health and well-being.

### Follow up interviews to facilitate the economic analysis

As described in section 1.4, follow up interviews were undertaken with the 10 study participants by the research team to produce more fine grained case study portraits of each, with a view to calculating economic benefits at an individual level in terms of cost savings to the state and social value generated by involvement in the GEM programme. An updated summary of the headline findings from the interviews is presented in figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1 - updated summary from the follow up peer researcher interviews

An overview of the 10 study participants is provided below

SP1	Study participant 1 is 28 and graduated from university. She is frustrated and got depressed in looking for jobs without any success and support. She feels lonely and has no family support in job searching. She is shy and needs support in networking to increase job opportunities. The GEM data base shows that she lives in a jobless household.
SP2	Study participant 2 is in his late 30s. He had cancer before starting with GEM. It was a brain tumour Grade III. His life was changed vastly since then and he no longer have used of his right arm. He lost his confidence and experiences high anxiety. He was on various types of physical and psychological therapies before referring to GEM programme.
SP3	Study participant 3 in his late 40's who has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He used to do job-wise but got off from the job as it was too stressful for him to coming to work with a load of people. He was on help from mental health services for many years before starting the GEM project.
SP4	Study participant 4 is 27 and has low confidence to get a career, has anxiety and does not know how to get an employment. He has mental health issues like being autistic, ADHD, Asperger, that have affected his life in many ways. He was out of work for a long time and live in a family, without support and has a physically disabled sibling. Also has Personality Disorder.
SP5	Study participant 5 is 47 and s had a lot of ill health- mental health-wise for most of his adult life, which has stopped him doing a lot of things. There is always in the back of his mind that he is behind everybody else and should be doing more. He referred to GEM as a good way of opportunities to set some employability goals and move towards voluntary work or paid jobs to not be on benefits. The GEM data base shows that he claims the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and lives in a jobless household.
SP6	Study Participant 6 is 36 and experience long-term unemployment. He has several mental health and well-being problems. He experiences social isolation, depression, and anxiety. He has unclear career path and feels uncomfortable to get an employment with his health and well-being conditions. The GEM database shows that SP6 lives in a jobless household and has a disability).
SP7	Study Participant 7 is 58 and came to GEM with several job-related issues like job lost and not working well with her line manager. She lost her confidence in getting a new job after several complications she faced. She does not know how to search jobs online, how to write CV and how to upload it along with her job applications. The GEM database reports that he 'lacks basic skills'.
SP8	Study Participant 9 is 29. He has struggle with anxiety. He got a late autism and dyspraxia diagnosis. He is desperate in getting an employment and was not actively looking for a job when he involved with GEM project. The GEM data base shows that he lives in a jobless household
SP9	Study Participant 12 has depression and anxiety. She is in early 40s and on benefits because she is a parent with two children. She has been out of work since she got pregnant. She is on bereavement councillor after her best friend died and is on medication for her depression for many years.
SP10	Study Participant 13 is in her late 30s. She worked as a primary teacher for 10 years. She came out of a job and then the lockdown happened, and it significantly affected her life and employment position that she was looking for.

**Study Participant 1 - Summary Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP1 used student's loan to study in university. She has had recruitment companies to get a job for her. She struggled in finding jobs on her own, without help. She is worrying about being unemployed for long time. GEM helped her with job searching as well as working on her employability transferable skills, whatever it is a voluntary position, job experience or training courses to engage her CV and make her employable.

- *I think the most important change would just be having someone there who is actually helping you look for a job, like who is actually involved, so like I've had recruitment companies come forward and say, we've got this job available, but they are not involved in the whole process, from me applying to a job, and then we go to an interview, or starting over again, because that keeps happening.*
- *I also didn't expect to meet as many people as well, I mean, its gone above my expectations of what I thought it was. ... I'm always going out, I feel like my confidence is building, especially when talking to people, so that's something that I was quite nervous before approaching people by myself, so it's definitely helping that, I think that would be the main thing.*
- *I think I feel more positive about job hunting than I did before. I was getting really frustrated before, it gets quite depressing when you are just looking for jobs and it's just not coming along.*

**Key outcomes for SP1 are summarised as follows:**

<b>Job finding support, interview preparation, encouraged to stay positive in job hunting and be close in getting opportunities</b>	Having job support was one of the main outcomes of GEM for SP1. The navigator developer involved with her at whole job process, from putting CV together, searching and applying for jobs and doing mock interviews. The mock interviews allowed her to practise what to do and what to say during an interview to increase her chance. The regular meetings and continues support provided by the navigator developer encouraged her to stay positive about job hunting. GEM helped her to be on the right direction to be close to making contacts and getting opportunities.
<b>Perceived support in being employable, not getting depressed with being unemployed, enhancing psychological well-being and preventing mental health problems</b>	Providing job support, by navigator developer, helped her to feel less frustrated in the job finding journey and not get depressed. She knows that there is always someone ready to help her with job searching, applying, and gaining employability skills. She is not feeling lonely as navigator developer provided comfortable approaching for her to GEM and ensured her, she can help her to get a job. The continues support helped her to get relax which can led to her psychological well-being to be in a positive state, during her unemployment time. Regular meetings and ensuring support helped her to stay positive and not worrying herself about being unemployed for long time, which may cause many mental health issues for her.
<b>Improved confidence, networking, and finding available opportunities</b>	Doing the voluntary works helped SP1 to get out more and talk with people, which she found it difficult before involvement with GEM. As a result, she built more

	confidence in making new contacts and finding opportunities. For example, she got offer to study PHD in university when she was doing a voluntary job as well as she is planning to meet someone that might lead to a job opportunity, on her own.
<b>Meeting peers, sharing experiences, and worrying less about being unemployed</b>	Involvement with GEM, she met peers who were looking for jobs alongside with her on the project. She found it nice to share their experiences and felt less frustrated in searching for jobs and less worry about not having employment. Worrying about being unemployment have negative consequences for mental health.
<b>Gaining transferable skills which are applicable in job finding, improve CV and improved confidence to apply for job, and finding job opportunities because of working on building employability skills</b>	Doing voluntary works and relevant job-related courses ('principle of team leading', 'mental health awareness' and 'working with disabilities' helped her to develop some transferable employability skills to add to her CV and increase her chance of getting a job interview invitation. SP1 was a fresh graduated with no work experience. GEM supported her to be employable by participating in some activities to show some work skills like leadership and teamwork abilities on her CV. The skills she obtained through GEM made a real difference on her CV and she found a short-term job with payment and signed off the GEM project. After the short-term work, she applied for another job on her own. She had the skills as well as a recent employment on her CV and know how to appear in an interview with confident to create strong first impression. GEM empowered her with the right tools to be able to have a sense of achievement, enabling her to find another job on her own, resulting not have a long period of time without employment. She recognised her abilities in job finding, which is a key to apply and get a full-time job. Having a full-time employment will enable her to return the student's loans.

### Translation of Study Participant 1's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP1 are as follows:

- **Job search support** - Which has included assistance with her CV and staying positive with job hunting. The fact that SP1 has received tangible support from her Nav Dev in this area has almost certainly represented a cost saving to the state in that she has not received this through mainstream unemployment support services. A one-off cost saving to the state of £1,923 can be derived from the Vine Centre's SROI assessment of getting clients back into work through their Centre Job Club<sup>6</sup> where each client helped back into employment was estimated to represent an equivalent saving in Job Seekers Allowance in the 2017-18 financial year.
- **Improved psychological wellbeing** - SP1 states clearly that her psychological wellbeing has improved and that support from her Nav Dev and the GEM engagement has prevented her mental health from deteriorating. While credible valuations of general well-being are difficult to obtain, the valuation of £1,493 per

<sup>6</sup> Mitchell (2018) A Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the Vine Centre.  
<http://www.thevinecentre.org.uk/uploads/images/b86c39296253389529bf9b7d2ace763d.pdf>

household for improved emotional well-being through the Common Assessment Framework<sup>7</sup> is derived from the respected Troubled Families Cost Database.

- **Increased sense of trust and belonging** - SP1 makes several references to the opportunities that GEM has afforded her to get out and meet people and network, reducing her social isolation and increasing her sense of trust and belonging in the community. The annual value to an individual (25-49) of feeling like they belong in their neighbourhood was 2,252 in 2014 (sourced from the SROI Global Value Exchange network)
- **Improved agency, self-efficacy and empowerment** - A number of the individual outcomes SP1 has experienced through GEM have led her to feel more confident. But this is arguably not the final measurable outcome, as it is clear from SP1's story that this increased confidence has led to greater agency, self-efficacy and empowerment, that SP1 has mobilised through her efforts to seek and secure positive opportunities. A useful proxy to capture this is the SROI Network's well-being valuation of £1,400 per person<sup>8</sup> for improved autonomy and control.

### Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP1

Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 1		(2020 prices)
<b>Cost savings for the State</b>		<b>Value (£)</b>
Job search support		2,002
<b>Social value generated</b>		
Improved psychological well-being		1,958
Reduced Social Isolation		2,578
Increased Agency, self-efficacy and empowerment		1,587
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>8,125</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM		2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>		<b>2.85:1</b>

<sup>7</sup> Taken from the LARC3 Cost Effectiveness of CAF Report, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Sourced from the SROI Network database in 2015 and used in the prospective SROI by Courtney (2016) for Hulme Community Garden Centre, Manchester.



**Study Participant 2 - Summary Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

Getting diagnosed with the brain tumour did change the Steven's life, massively. It significantly impacted on his confidence, dealing with his anxiety and impaired his quality of life. He was on various types of physical and mental health treatments. GEM helped him to move forward by pursuing his hobbies to calm down his anxiety, boost his confidence to get out as well as get physically active.

- *Yes, [I was] very scared. I was diagnosed ... in 2017, my whole world collapsed. I thought that was it. I was going to die. I had seven seizures, five funny turns, two blackouts, where each of them ended up with me in the back of an ambulance, not knowing how I got there. I had ECG's, blood pressure, heart monitor, a range of things put into me, not knowing how I got there, was the scariest thing.*
- *She's taught me lots in a good way, so for example, my confidence is in good condition, my self-esteem is now higher, my anxiety has gone. Just spending time with G. from GEM has really helped me, yes. Yes. My experiences were G. from GEM are second-to-none, really well, really good. G. from GEM, has been brilliant. She's awesome in my view. She's really brought me on as part of the team, yes.*
- *Not having anxiety issues, is like a breath of fresh air, I no longer feel that I'm walking into a space of all these people in front of me, staring at me and I don't know what to say. I'm confident enough to speak to them.*

**Key outcomes for SP2 are summarised as follows:**

<b>Reduced anxiety and feeling more confident to get out and about</b>	Lifting out the anxiety and building up confidence is one of the main outcomes of GEM project for SP2. Now, he is feeling his anxiety is low, which enables him easily get out and do things on his own.
<b>Taking a break, getting excited to pursue personal hobbies, and positivity</b>	Experiencing days without anxiety helped him to believe his potential and move towards achieving his personal hobbies, which was wildlife photography. In the photography club he met other photographers, who have the same values and interests. Simple act of following personal hobbies, enabled him to take a break and do something actively and get out of the house. He went to photo taking trips with other people. He surrounded with motivated people and get motivation to continue achieving his improving wildlife photography. Although he had anxiety at the beginning, improvement in photography induced excitement in him and he enjoyed the process of doing what he loves. It allowed him to take a break and do something that he enjoys, enabling him to take control over his anxiety and keep going with life, positively.
<b>Integrated physical activity into everyday life, increasing emotional and physical well-being, improve immediate mood as well as generate long-term health benefits</b>	Doing regular exercise in the gym and taking wildlife photos provided active lifestyle for SP2, which reduce the risk of developing serious diseases and reoccurrence of his Brain tumour and Cancer. Getting out and living an active life can help Steven to look on the bright side, which are linked with his mental health. Regular exercise in gym is a powerful tool for increasing his emotional and physical well-being and can provide immediate and long-term health benefits for Steven, which improve his quality of life and boost his mood to reduce his psychological and physical health treatments.

<p><b>A sense of achievement, positive thinking, taking action and happiness</b></p>	<p>The quality of the SP2's life after being diagnosed with the cancer was very low and he was thinking that he is dying. He thought that it never happens to him to continue with life easily with having Brain Tumour. He felt very unhappy and was on psychological therapist service with Let's Talk to have help for his mental health conditions. Too much hopelessness can lead to depression and is related with other health issues. He was on many psycho-physiotherapy sessions which provided further resources and supports to help him with his health situation. Pursuing the hobbies, through GEM, put him on the path towards his goal and he feels a distinct change in how he enjoys and is happy. It helped him to distract himself from negative thoughts with focusing on something he likes to do. It helped him to think positively, after the difficult time he had, to start again, and chase his hobby to feel satisfaction and feeling less sad. GEM helped with pursuing personal goals and having something to look forward to, added meaning to his life to stay positive and get himself back on track. Taking actions with following hobbies helped SP2 to reduce the intensity of negative thoughts and concentrate on present life with happiness.</p>
<p><b>Perceived support, doing hobbies with excitement, facing fear of anxiety, being confident again and possibility of making income and support family</b></p>	<p>SP2 lost his confidence with unexpected things happened to his life. He thought that the Brain Cancer forever changed his life, and he was at a dead end. He found himself on the end of the stick and need help to hit it. He clearly explained that his navigator developer helped him to get out of anxiety, helped with his confidence and self-esteem to regain his energy to stay on track. Instead of being upset about things happened to him, he learnt to focus on present with following his hobby. He faced with his fear of anxiety by doing wildlife photography, which was through GEM. He did overcome with anxiety by making a phone call to register for the photography course. He did not expect to do it or do a simple conversation with people, before GEM. The GEM program provided a great way for him to get out and boost his social confidence in meeting people at photography club or do exercise in gym. His confidence is rising, and he is enjoying the excitement with something he has always wanted to do. The significant impact of gaining confidence back and the excitement, eventually, can enable him to make an income along the way and be able to provide for his family.</p>

### Translation of Study Participant 2's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP2 are as follows:

- **Avoided Occupational Therapy treatment costs** - being involved in the GEM programme and receiving close support from his Nav Dev has almost certainly reduced SP2's need for (at least additional) occupational therapy to help him get back on his feet and rebuild his life, as the GEM experience has evidently helped to enable. Using data from the NHS reference costs, the mean average cost for a non-consultant led (non-admitted) follow-up occupational therapy attendance in 2014/15 was estimated to be £53 by PSSRU (2015). Assuming just 6 equivalent sessions were avoided due to his engagement in GEM would have represented cost savings to the NHS of £318.
- **Reduced costs for treatment of anxiety** - SP2 has clearly experienced reduced anxiety and improved mental health as a result of his engagement in GEM. In 2008 the average cost to the NHS of treating anxiety and depression was estimated by

the Troubled Families database to be 942 p.p per anum. This represents costs incurred to the NHS (including GPs) only, and excludes any wider additional costs through lost earnings and benefit provision.

- **Improved physical health and vitality** - In addition to improvements in mental health it is evident that GEM facilitated outcomes like improved confidence, resilience and self-esteem have led to tangible improvements in his general physical health and vitality. Based on one A&E visit and 4 GP visits per anum, 2011 NHS reference costs for maintaining good physical health are valued at 609 p.p per anum.
- **Improved agency, self-efficacy and empowerment** - A number of the individual outcomes SP2 has experienced through GEM have enabled him to regain the confidence, self-esteem and positive functioning that he lost as a result of his illness. There are various outcomes where valuations might be applied to, but to avoid double counting these can usefully be framed in terms of greater agency, self-efficacy and empowerment, that has enabled SP2 to rebuild his life and pursues activities, hobbies and interest that are already translating into vocational attributes. A useful proxy to capture this is the SROI Network's well-being valuation of £1,400 per person<sup>9</sup> for improved autonomy and control.

#### Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP2

Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 2		(2020 prices)
<b>Cost savings for the State</b>		<b>Value (£)</b>
Avoided OT treatment		360
Reduced treatment for anxiety		1,285
Improved physical health and vitality		759
<b>Social value generated</b>		
Increased Agency, self-efficacy and empowerment		1,587
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>3,991</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM		2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>		<b>1.40:1</b>

<sup>9</sup> Sourced from the SROI Network database in 2015 and used in the prospective SROI by Courtney (2016) for Hulme Community Garden Centre, Manchester.

**Study Participant 3 - Summary of Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP3 came out of work with symptoms of social anxiety and stress. He was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and was on talking therapy and other mental health therapist with NHS services (like Combat Stress and local NHS) to get help with his anxiety and related disorders, for many years. GEM helped SP3 with the next step of his treatment, which was along with social prescribing aims, getting back out with people and not isolating himself so much.

- *Before we were doing lots of therapies. In fact three years. Lots of different therapies to help with my PTSD mostly.*
- *Its given me lots of support like sees me most weeks to how we chat and / Yes. / very supportive and Really helpful, very hands-on and sort of helps look up things and find out what's available, could be available and / happy to sit there and listen to what I need to say sometimes and get it off my chest how I'm feeling.*
- *Coming here is a structure and a good routine, plenty of things to do, don't have to, you can just plod along and get on with things without having to do it. You're not told to do it.*

**Key outcomes for SP3 are summarised as follows:**

<b>Getting out and not isolating</b>	The focus of SP3's interaction with GEM was getting out of house and not isolating himself. SP3 worked for 8 years but his anxiety and mental health condition made it hard to continue with his employment. In the GEM project, SP3 had the opportunity to come back and mix with people through participating in voluntary work on allotment, wildlife course and Breakfast club and have the opportunity to manage his anxiety and stress. Get out of house and have face to face interaction in the real world are important to stay on track.
<b>Being listened to, improvement of mood, well-being, and mental health</b>	With PTSD people may need to talk about the traumatic events, repeatedly, as he was doing with his therapist for many years. In GEM project, the navigator developer provided support by offering SP3 to talk as many times as he needs and listen to him without being judgmental. Comfortable conversation with navigator developer helped SP3 to talk with ease, rebuilt trust and safety. Talking and being listened to can help to reduce the emotional, physical, and psychological symptoms of PTSD. Act of listening attentively was clearly indicated by SP3 that was important for him to get start with new people. It helped in elevating his mood, which can result in greater levels of happiness and wellbeing and benefits his mental health, in short and longer time.
<b>Ease back into social interaction and calm down anxiety</b>	GEM helped SP3 to slowly re-enter social situations without any pressure. Previous uncomfortable experiences of working with too many people provided so many stresses for him. In GEM, SP3 started by connecting with his navigator developer, first. It was a comfort space, one-to-one interaction with someone who he can trust to talk. Then, they expand the circle and he started doing social activities that he enjoyed. Over the course of Wildlife, breakfast clubs, and allotment, he experienced outgoing and being around new people. He got out of the house and interacted with people in a comfortable environment and had opportunity to overcome his anxiety.
<b>Finding the courage, increased positive social</b>	Anxiety and feeling distress with working with people significantly affected on SP3's confidence to work with people.

<b>engagement and confidence in doing works with people</b>	GEM helped SP3 to increase the level of positive social engagement. SP3 feels more confident to be around people in Breakfast club and allotment, which are on-going events, and he is making regularly. With long-term being out of work, SP3 had minimal social interaction. Being on GEM, gave him sometimes to be with people at his comfort level and handle his anxiety. His confidence is growing, and he is willing to take risk and to go the extra mile to help people, by doing peer mentoring. Increasing confident in social engagement can be resulted in getting back to do voluntary works or re-employment.
<b>Being physically active in nature, increasing physical health and enhancing psychological and emotional health and well-being</b>	Getting out by going gardening in the allotment project provided direct contact with nature for SP3, in an active way. Gardening can reduce negative thoughts and feelings and improve mental health disorders. Many aspects can be improved by being out in nature, which can benefit better physical, emotional, and psychological health states and reduce use of NHS health-related services.

### Translation of Study Participant 3's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP3 are as follows:

- **Reduced PTSD treatment costs** - being involved in the GEM programme and receiving close support from his Nav Dev has evidently reduced SP3's need for (at least additional) PTSD therapy to help him get back on his feet and rebuild his life. Using data from the NHS reference costs, the mean average cost for a non-psychotic challenging disorder is £352 for the initial assessment and £23 for subsequent sessions (2015 prices). Assuming that GEM negated the need for 12 sessions represents a cost saving of £712.
- **Improved physical health and vitality** - In addition to improvements in mental health it is evident that GEM facilitated outcomes like improved confidence, resilience and self-esteem have led to tangible improvements in SP3's general physical health and vitality. Based on one A&E visit and 4 GP visits per anum, 2011 NHS reference costs for maintaining good physical health are valued at 609 p.p per anum.
- **Reduced social isolation**- A number of outcomes for SP3 can be traced back to opportunities for social interaction afforded by GEM - including reducing social anxiety, increasing confidence and general wellbeing. The annual value to an individual (25-49) of feeling like they belong in their neighbourhood was 2,252 in 2014 (sourced from the SROI Global Value Exchange network)
- **Improved psychological wellbeing** - Beyond the constraints of PTSD and related social anxiety impacts, it is clear that SP3 has benefited greatly from GEM in terms of general emotional and psychological wellbeing, not least through greater engagement with nature, and with people. While credible valuations of general well-being are difficult to obtain, the valuation of £1,493 per household for improved emotional well-being through the Common Assessment Framework<sup>10</sup> is derived from the respected Troubled Families Cost Database.

<sup>10</sup> Taken from the LARC3 Cost Effectiveness of CAF Report, 2010.

**Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP3**

<b>Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 3</b>		<b>(2020 prices)</b>
<b>Cost savings for the State</b>		<b>Value (£)</b>
Reduced PTSD treatment		712
Improved physical health and vitality		759
<b>Social value generated</b>		
Reduced Social Isolation		2,578
Improved psychological well-being		1,958
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>6,007</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM		2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>		<b>2.11:1</b>

**Study Participant 4 - Summary Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP4's life is very challenging with full of mental health issues and personal difficulties. SP4 is shy, very nervous and is not confident to get a job. His mood, concentration and energy level is very low. GEM helped him to feel more confident and set his career goals and to make the target of finding a job feel more achievable, encouraging him to make progress toward that.

- *One challenge that I've faced is when we were at the summer BBQ I was very anxious, so that was one of my challenges to face, getting over my fear of anxiety and meeting other people.*
- *My experience with GEM is really good, I mean, it's an excellent project to be on, they work around your barriers, your needs and they understand where things can be improved, where things could possibly be kept at a steady level and, yes, it's / like you know a balance of trying to pick up everything to hopefully get a job and a career.*
- *The most important change for me is my ability to focus better, my focusing before was just how do I say it /dog's doo/ it's like/it was very bad. I can focus a bit better; I still need to work on it, but I'm getting there and with S.'s help I think I can get 100% better at it.*

**Key outcomes for SP4 are summarised as follows:**

<b>Opportunities to meet people and get over with anxiety</b>	The summer party gave him a time to participate in a social event and meet people. It was a good experience as SP4 could face with his fear of anxiety and be able to calm it down.
<b>Setting goals and planning future career, positivity, and encouragement to pursue career goal with interest to not be on benefits</b>	SP4 set a career goal and planned what he wants to do as a job. GEM helped him to have goal and purpose in his life. He is doing a course to get to his goal of being a full-time chef and have a restaurant. Being on a course and setting career planning helped him to be optimistic about his future career. With the clear idea of what his future job could be, he is motivated to pursue his goal of being a full-time employment and not to be on benefits.
<b>Understanding barriers, making progress, happiness and enhancing further action and progress in goal achievement</b>	Being on the GEM, SP4 was encouraged to accept his barriers and get past through them. He looks at the bright side to attain his goal of employment. Clearly, we can see that accepting barriers, helped SP4 to make some progress, which resulting in increased subjective well-being and happiness, enabling him enhances his action for making further goal progress.
<b>Perceived support, subjective well-being, and positive mental health state</b>	SP4 also experienced support through regular meetings to have help to move forward towards his goal. SP4 has many problems on his life and the navigator developer supported SP4 with challenges along the way, making life a lot easier and better for him to stay on the task. His navigator helped him get past any hiccups along the way and then get him on to the next hurdle of his achievement (like a mother). Ensuring the support when he needed resulting to be happy and stay positive on pursuing of his goals, with aspiration. Perceived support has the potential to enhance subjective well-being and positive mental health, which are necessary for goal progress and attainment.
<b>Focus better, making progress and self-confidence to move forward to get a job</b>	The most important change for SP4 was his ability to focus better. His focusing because of his mental health issues was very bad. He can focus better now. He still needs to work on it but he thinks with GEM's help he can get 100% better at it. Being on the GEM and working towards getting to understand his own barriers and improving them built some self-confidence in SP4 to work through so many hurdles and move to the next stage. This positive

	progress provided self-confidence in him to try to improve it better to get a job.
<b>Better sleep, better mood, and better health</b>	Being a participant on GEM helped him to work around his barriers, which resulting of his mental health condition and understand his needs. SP4's life has improved in many ways. Provided support enabling him to get better night's sleep, which resulted in better concentration, energy level and mood condition. With sleep deficiency, SP4 felt grumpy, which impacted his behaviour with people. Good quality sleep can enable him to keep feeling healthy and decrease his anger, frustration, irritability, and sadness. Moreover, in the longer time, it can reduce the risk of chronic health problems.

### Translation of Study Participant 4's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP4 are as follows:

- **Reduced costs associated with a sleep disorder** - SP4's involvement in GEM has greatly improved the quality of his sleep, providing greater focus and general health and vitality. The cost of a sleep disorder course to provide equivalent benefits is somewhere in the region of £295 (Open College UK, STR accredited distance learning course). This does include any prescription based treatment so real cost savings to the NHS may be higher.
- **Improved psychological wellbeing** - It is evident that SP4 has benefited greatly from GEM in terms of general emotional and psychological wellbeing, through being able to focus more but also through the nuanced approach to improving SP4's subjective wellbeing that he has experienced. While credible valuations of general well-being are difficult to obtain, the valuation of £1,493 per household for improved emotional well-being through the Common Assessment Framework<sup>11</sup> is derived from the respected Troubled Families Cost Database.
- **Improved agency, self-efficacy and empowerment** - Improved confidence is clear thread of SP4's personal GEM journey of change. And it is clear from SP4's story that this increased confidence has led to greater agency, self-efficacy and empowerment, that SP4 has translated this into employability related outcomes, that will most likely lead to additional value and cost savings further down the line. For now, a useful proxy to capture this is the SROI Network's well-being valuation of £1,400 per person<sup>12</sup> for improved autonomy and control.

<sup>11</sup> Taken from the LARC3 Cost Effectiveness of CAF Report, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Sourced from the SROI Network database in 2015 and used in the prospective SROI by Courtney (2016) for Hulme Community Garden Centre, Manchester.



**Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP4**

<b>Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 4</b>		<b>(2020 prices)</b>
<b>Cost savings for the State</b>		<b>Value (£)</b>
Reduced costs associated with a sleep disorder		295
Improved physical health and vitality		759
<b>Social value generated</b>		
Increased Agency, self-efficacy and empowerment		1,587
Improved psychological well-being		1,958
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>4,599</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM		2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>		<b>1.62:1</b>

**Study Participant 5 - Summary Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP5 has mental illness, which stopped him from continuing education and working. SP5 lost his self-confidence because of not doing any jobs in his life and being failure in education. GEM helped SP5 with building his confidence up and to believe in his potential in doing jobs and making decision to move toward doing voluntary works or paid jobs.

- *I wasn't very confident beforehand, I've always struggled with confidence, but my confidence level is a bit higher now than it was two years ago so that's definitely been a good outcome I think.*
- *If GEM never happened, I would still be doing not much, and my mental health would be worse if it was not for doing GEM.*
- *I've achieved more in the past two years than for a lot of my life, I still struggle with my mental health, and that's an on-going struggle, but I think I've achieved more in the past two years whatever than I thought I could.*

**Key outcomes for SP5 were as follows.**

<b>Growing self-confidence, taking risk, doing voluntary works and paid jobs</b>	GEM helped SP5 to boost self-confidence that he needed to take risks and do jobs. He did some voluntary jobs through the opportunities GEM provided and built some strengths as a result, to believe in his potentials.
<b>Perceived support and perceived subjective well-being</b>	Providing effective support during difficult times, offered by navigator developer, enabled SP5 to perceive support. Perception of availability of support and satisfaction with the support are important resources, in increasing the positive emotions and enhancing subjective well-being.
<b>Proactive approach to do voluntary works, courage, and motivation and willingness doing works</b>	Slowly being involved in doing jobs, helped him to get confidence to apply for more voluntary works. SP5 got a paid job because of actively participating outdoors, which motivated him to do more. Voluntary works provided right resources, which encouraged him to try and get another voluntary work or paid job. He feels more in control of things and is ready to move forward. Interest in being active in seeking a voluntary or part-time jobs is a key to having a full employment, which can enable him to repay his student's loan.

**Translation of Study Participant 5's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits****Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP5 are as follows:**

**Improved psychological wellbeing** - SP5 states clearly that his emotional and psychological wellbeing has improved and that support from his Nav Dev and the GEM engagement has enabled him to feel more positive and generally happier. While credible valuations of general well-being are difficult to obtain, the valuation of £1,493 per household for improved emotional well-being through the

Common Assessment Framework<sup>13</sup> is derived from the respected Troubled Families Cost Database.

- **Improved agency, self-efficacy and empowerment** - Improved confidence is central to SP5s journey of change on GEM, and in feeling empowered to achieve considerably more in the space of two years than in previous times. This increased confidence has led to greater agency, self-efficacy and empowerment, that SP5 has channelled into seeking voluntary opportunities, reinforcing the positive cycle. A useful proxy to capture this is the SROI Network's well-being valuation of £1,400 per person<sup>14</sup> for improved autonomy and control.

### Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP5

Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 5		(2020 prices)
Cost savings for the State		Value (£)
<b>Social value generated</b>		
Improved psychological well-being		1,958
Increased Agency, self-efficacy and empowerment		1,587
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>3,545</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM		2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>		<b>1.25:1</b>

<sup>13</sup> Taken from the LARC3 Cost Effectiveness of CAF Report, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Sourced from the SROI Network database in 2015 and used in the prospective SROI by Courtney (2016) for Hulme Community Garden Centre, Manchester.

**Study Participant 6 - Summary Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP6 has mental health and well-being issues and not feel confidence to move to employment and take the responsibilities. Not having a job for long time and lack of social interactions. GEM helped SP6 with social opportunities to do something with community regularly, to build confidence he needs.

- *P. has always been very understanding, sympathetic and supportive ... he's able to talk about it in a real sense, which I always feel is very important. ... He understands the nature of what I have dealt with and what I'm dealing with, the relationship we have is almost social, and a lot of times it's a case of meeting up, what you been up to, and so on.*
- *All of those things and being outside as well and also exercise, although it isn't sort of you know ridiculously vigorous, and of course there's no one cracking a whip, so everyone is free to work in whatever way they wish, to whatever extent and depth or whatever, but I mean I also feel, whether that's my imagination or not, but it doesn't really matter, feel that it has actually improved my fitness level.*
- *I've described it as realness and I will accept that as well. The big part of what we do is sociability, and different / you know / the opposite of what I was saying about Facebook and similar, is this is real sociability, you know, this is / genuine conversations about whatever, passes our mind, with genuine people and it's not contrived and it's not / you haven't got an agenda of any sort and its not got you know / so yes, I mean, and yes, so literally the opposite of being socially isolated, it is being sociable and then tie that in with, as I say, that sense of working to a common goal, which is growing things, then that's sort of you know.*

**Key outcomes for SP6 were as follows.**

<b>Getting out, having human interaction, and decreased social isolation</b>	Through the GEM project, SP6 had participated in several active projects, to have something to do with other people in the real world. SP6 is getting out more and have human interaction, instead of being socially isolated.
<b>Physical activity, fitness, and present and future health outcomes</b>	Being physically active in allotment helped SP6 with his fitness and flexibility. Regular physical activity and physical fitness helps with functionality and related to present and future health outcomes.
<b>Involving in voluntary work, face to face interaction with people, motivation to do more and being sociable and connection</b>	Doing voluntary works helped him to find his footing and created motivation to do more. Through involvement in projects, SP6 found opportunities to work with people towards common goals, being sociable with a sense of belonging in the community. Being a participant of GEM helped him with having a space where he can involve and engage with other people and talk about ideas and practical activities, resulting in sense of social connection.
<b>Active participation in nature, psychological relaxation, emotion regulation, mental health, and quality of life</b>	Participation in allotment project helped SP6 to have some relaxation time to calm down the negative thoughts. The direct effect of being exposed to real nature makes a significant change from negative thoughts to positive emotions, which can lead to restoration of emotional state, resulting in enhancing mental health and well-being as well as better quality of life.
<b>Perceived support, perceived emotional attention, and emotional well-being</b>	SP6 was isolated and lonely. It became clear that having an immediate employment is not the primary reason of SP6's referral to the GEM project. Because of his mental health and well-being issues, he is not ready to move to employment and take the responsibilities. He is worry about doing interview, training and all other things come to jobs. He was depressed and know that he need help. The navigator developer provided support by regular meetings, emphatic relationship and

	understanding his barriers. Perceived emotional attention, listening, and providing information to make progress are highly connected with the emotional well-being, particularly, when people experience depression, stressful situations or have problems, which leading to poor mental health.
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## Translation of Study Participant 6's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

### Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP6 are as follows:

- **Improved psychological wellbeing** - The spirit of SP6's journey of change on GEM centres very much around emotional and psychological wellbeing, from having greater opportunity to relax and calm negative thoughts to the inspiration of healthy activity and human interaction. While credible valuations of general well-being are difficult to obtain, the valuation of £1,493 per household for improved emotional well-being through the Common Assessment Framework<sup>15</sup> is derived from the respected Troubled Families Cost Database.
- **Improved physical health and vitality** - Improved health and vitality features strongly in the personal journey of change of SP6 on GEM, resulting from increased physical activity through his work on the allotment, and a step change in fitness and functionality afforded and inspired by participation of GEM. Based on one A&E visit and 4 GP visits per annum, 2011 NHS reference costs for maintaining good physical health are valued at 609 p.p per annum.
- **Reduced social isolation** - SP6 makes some interesting and poignant references to the negative impacts of social media, which through opportunities to get up and participate in real situations has enabled GEM to alleviate. And much of this can be framed in terms of reduced social isolation. SP6 makes several references to the opportunities that GEM has afforded him to get out and meet people and network, reducing his social isolation and increasing her sense of trust and belonging in the community. The annual value to an individual (25-49) of feeling like they belong in their neighbourhood was 2,252 in 2014 (sourced from the SROI Global Value Exchange network)
- **Improved agency, self-efficacy and empowerment** - The opportunity to volunteer and to develop a set of life and work skills in a supportive environment can be usefully framed in terms of helping SP6 to develop greater agency, self-efficacy and empowerment. And with the support of his Nav Dev opportunities to capitalise and nurture this has been harnessed. A useful proxy to capture this is the SROI Network's well-being valuation of £1,400 per person<sup>16</sup> for improved autonomy and control.

<sup>15</sup> Taken from the LARC3 Cost Effectiveness of CAF Report, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Sourced from the SROI Network database in 2015 and used in the prospective SROI by Courtney (2016) for Hulme Community Garden Centre, Manchester.

## Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP6

Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 6		(2020 prices)
<b>Cost savings for the State</b>		<b>Value (£)</b>
Improved physical health and vitality		759
<b>Social value generated</b>		
Improved psychological well-being		1,958
Reduced Social Isolation		2,578
Increased Agency, self-efficacy and empowerment		1,587
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>6,882</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM		2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>		<b>2.42:1</b>

**Study Participant 7 - Summary Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP7 needs help with online job searching and how to make application and write her CV to apply for jobs. She is overwhelmed with losing her jobs and lost her confidence with being treated unfairly in her previous employment. GEM helped SP7 to gain job search skills to look for jobs online, and build some transferable job-related skills, self-confidence, for example.

- *I felt I needed to find a job and I really wanted someone to help me find a job. I've always found my own jobs before but as I've got older I just needed someone's support but didn't know really where to get it. So when I met F. it was brilliant, yes.*
- *I've met a lot of people from different walks of life and I've heard lots of peoples different life stories, they tell you about things and you realise a lot of people have hardship, and it's almost like a bit of counselling with people, back and forth, they tell you one thing and you might give some advice .... it's nice to talk to people, and help people, just share life experiences really, yes, its been positive really positive.*
- *We go on to the search engine, and look at different websites, Indeed and Total Jobs and yes we just look together sometimes, or sometimes I'll just look on my own, yes, / it's quite tricky applying for these jobs online, because they need your CV and so you've got to know how to upload the CV, for potential employers, so we've done that, so the navigator and the guy called S. he's a volunteer there, he's helped a lot, he's fantastic and he's uploaded my CV and that, yes.*

**Key outcomes for SP7 were as follows.**

<b>Support in looking for jobs</b>	SP7 did not know how to search jobs online. She needed support with her job searching, CV writing and interview technique and skills. GEM helped her by providing a location to go and use the internet and computer to look for vacancies and opportunities online. She received support in looking at the job searching websites, list of vacancies for specific companies and sending applications and uploading CV.
<b>Building up confidence to apply for jobs online</b>	She is feeling more confidence with job searching online and she is having a go. Keep emailing and applying can increase her chances of hearing back and getting a job she likes.
<b>Meeting peers, sharing experiences, and increasing social networks</b>	Through the process, SP7 met other people and shared their experiences. Meetings, talking, and sharing are important experiences, which can reflect on people's emotion regulation, help to cope with stress of being unemployed, reduce isolation and increase social networks. Sharing tips and strategies in job searching offer new ways to explore new approaches and identify available opportunities, which all are beneficial.
<b>Creating a daily job routine and renewing energy</b>	Going to the location to search for jobs and do workshops renewed her energy. Twice a week going to the center and looking for jobs created a daily routine, like it is a job, to keep her on the right track.

## Translation of Study Participant 7's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

**Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP7 are as follows:**

- **Job search support** - Which has included access to and assistance with IT resources and skills, impacting on her CV and attitude to job hunting. The fact that SP7 has received tangible support from her Nav Dev in this area has almost certainly represented a cost saving to the state in that she has not received this through mainstream unemployment support services. A one-off cost saving to the state of £1,923 can be derived from the Vine Centre's SROI assessment of getting clients back into work through their Centre Job Club<sup>17</sup> where each client helped back into employment was estimated to represent an equivalent saving in Job Seekers Allowance in the 2017-18 financial year.
- **Increased sense of trust and belonging** - An important thread running through SP7's GEMs journey has been the sharing of experiences with her peers and developing some all important networks. SP7 makes several references to the opportunities that GEM has afforded her to get out and meet people and network, reducing her social isolation and increasing her sense of trust and belonging in the community. The annual value to an individual (25-49) of feeling like they belong in their neighbourhood was 2,252 in 2014 (sourced from the SROI Global Value Exchange network)

### Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP7

Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 7		(2020 prices)
<b>Cost savings for the State</b>		<b>Value (£)</b>
Job search support		2,002
<b>Social value generated</b>		
Increased sense of trust and belonging		2,578
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>4,580</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM		2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>		<b>1.61:1</b>

<sup>17</sup> Mitchell (2018) A Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the Vine Centre.  
<http://www.thevinecentre.org.uk/uploads/images/b86c39296253389529bf9b7d2ace763d.pdf>



**Summary of SP8's Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP8 has never had an employment. After getting so many job rejections for an extended period, he became disheartened. He felt stuck and stopped looking for jobs. GEM helped SP8 to feel positive and motivate to continue with his job searching.

- *She {navigator developer} helps me to find a job during the session, so every Monday, every time that there is an appointment scheduled, then every appointment, she's helping me to look for jobs and that sort of thing, so there is support there.*
- *I've been a lot more professional. I've been a lot more looking for jobs and looking for things as well and also being a bit more measured, being a bit more impartial with things.*
- *I feel like I'm achieving the goals. Such as when I came very close to getting the job at Wagamamas, that was a time when I had thought that I might be actually be employed and I might be able to finally say to GEM project thank you very much for helping me to get a job, thank you very much for your help and I wish you all the best with every single you know case that you have to deal with in future.*

**Key outcomes for SP8 were as follows.**

<b>Meeting GEM participants, talking about opportunities, and being inspired</b>	SP8 met other GEM participants, who were from different background and languages. Talking with non-native English speakers enabled him to identify the opportunity of working toward being an English teacher and have his own employment. It gave an inspiration for his employment situation, when there was no more hope left for him after he keep getting rejections from jobs.
<b>Opportunity of working, sense of having a job, and reengaging in looking for jobs</b>	SP8 was late diagnosed with several mental health issues. His family provided support by protecting him to stay home instead of going to school. He was aided in learning to cope with difficulties by avoidance. When SP8 got rejection in job searching, he stopped it as found it depressing. GEM helped SP8 to do a job and feel a sense of how it is to get an employment. It helped SP8 with a self-image of having a job, enabling him to find motivation and remain positive throughout and look for job.
<b>Having job interview invitation, getting close to the jobs and positivity</b>	SP8 received help to apply for jobs and get more prepared how to appear in the interviews to increase his chance of making a strong first impression with confidence. By doing the experiment day, he felt confidence in himself to do the jobs. It brought him to explore further opportunities, instead of sitting at home, not doing anything relevant with jobs and feeling more depressed. The resulting power of positivity and optimism can have positive impact on his physical and mental health and well-being.
<b>Making positive decision and being pro-active in job searching</b>	SP8 has done interviews and work, that has been the best experiences that he has had in the GEM project. He had help in getting a job and getting applications out of the way. The whole experience helped him to make decision to make a positive change and be more pro-active in looking for jobs.

<p><b>Routine and structure to life and distract from negative thoughts of being unemployed</b></p>	<p>SP8 has been unemployed for an extended period and did not do anything relevant to jobs. By finishing his college, he was just sat at home and taking care of his siblings. Through GEM project, SP8 had something to do outside of house to create a daily routine to his life like meeting the navigator developer regularly, attending in GEM participant Council (PC) meetings and other GEM social events. Having a daily routine can help to feel more in control to cope with stresses of being unemployed as well as establishing healthy life habits, which are beneficial for mental health recovery.</p>
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## Translation of Study Participant 8's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP8 are as follows:

- **Job search support** - Which has included access to and assistance with IT resources and skills, impacting on her CV and attitude to job hunting. The fact that SP7 has received tangible support from her Nav Dev in this area has almost certainly represented a cost saving to the state in that she has not received this through mainstream unemployment support services. A one-off cost saving to the state of £1,923 can be derived from the Vine Centre's SROI assessment of getting clients back into work through their Centre Job Club<sup>18</sup> where each client helped back into employment was estimated to represent an equivalent saving in Job Seekers Allowance in the 2017-18 financial year.
- **Improved agency, self-efficacy and empowerment** - Having never been in full employment before, this aspect of GEMs influence on the life of SP8 is central to the journey change he has experienced. Participating in GEM has not only afforded SP8 with confidence and motivation to seek work, but has provided him with a routine, giving him a sense of purpose and leading to additional impacts on his mental health and wellbeing. The opportunity to volunteer and to develop a set of life and work skills in a supportive environment can be usefully framed in terms of helping SP8 to develop greater agency, self-efficacy and empowerment. And with the support of his Nav Dev opportunities to capitalise and nurture this has been harnessed. A useful proxy to capture this is the SROI Network's well-being valuation of £1,400 per person<sup>19</sup> for improved autonomy and control.
- **Reduced costs for treatment of anxiety** - As mentioned above, SP8 has clearly experienced reduced anxiety and improved mental health as a result of his engagement in GEM, and the motivational attributes and routines it has afforded him. In 2008 the average cost to the NHS of treating anxiety and depression was estimated by the Troubled Families database to be 942 p.p per anum. This represents costs incurred to the NHS (including GPs) only, and excludes any wider additional costs through lost earnings and benefit provision.

<sup>18</sup> Mitchell (2018) A Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the Vine Centre.  
<http://www.thevinecentre.org.uk/uploads/images/b86c39296253389529bf9b7d2ace763d.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Sourced from the SROI Network database in 2015 and used in the prospective SROI by Courtney (2016) for Hulme Community Garden Centre, Manchester.

## Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP8

### Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 8 (2020 prices)

Cost savings for the State	Value (£)
Job search support	2,002
Reduced costs for the treatment of anxiety	1,285
<b>Social value generated</b>	
Increased Agency, self-efficacy and empowerment	1,587
<b>Total Benefits</b>	<b>4,874</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM	2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>	<b>1.71:1</b>

**Study Participant 9 - Summary Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP12 is a mum, left her job 10 years ago and is on private weekly counselling to get help with her depression and anxiety. She uses antidepressants for 10 years, after being pregnant with her first child. GEM helped her to build some employability skills and boost her confidence, which enabled her to find a job to be around her family and match with her children school time.

- *The workshops, they are like therapy session but for me, it depends what your problems are but for me it was like therapy sessions because I suffer very badly with anxiety and confidence and breathing, so you know I'm always worried I did I lock the door did I this did I leave the gas on, so with jam it just helped sort of channel it and control it even more.*
- *I see a private counsellor, I still see my counsellor, but less than I used to, I was seeing her every week, but before about the last year, I am seeing her every fortnight*
- *I've got so much more confidence, so much more confidence than I had. Particularly, the three workshops, self-expression, be seen be heard, assertiveness and decision making helped me to manage my anxiety, in a way that tablet don't because they are just natural exercises and things, tablets don't always work, some do, some don't. But, now it's like I found the right balance, we moved house from Gloucester to Cheltenham, just before the very first lockdown, just before the pandemic started, so the new doctor has been very good as well. So, it's like I found the right medication, right antidepressant, not too strong, so all the workshops just have been absolute brilliant and I really confident about that. Really helped with my confidence and anxiety, absolutely brilliant, these were the best things I have ever done.*

**Key outcomes for SP9 were as follows:**

<b>Involvement in online sessions and rebuilding confidence</b>	SP9 came to GEM to have help to get back to jobs after being out of work for many years. Through taking part in some online sessions that were organised by GEM, she started to rebuild her confidence.
<b>Managing anxiety, less depressed and mental health improvement</b>	Participating in GEM sessions and being around people and doing active things, helped her to manage her anxiety. SP9 is using antidepressants to treat her clinical diagnosed depression and seeing medical doctors for many years, and clearly articulated that doing drawing, writing and colouring in sessions worked like a therapy and helped with her mental health improvement.
<b>Adding transferable job-related skills to CV, getting back on track and getting interview invitation</b>	Participating in GEM online sessions, enabled her to add some transferable skills to her CV, decision making, for example. SP12 was offered a job interview and she did it well, enabling her to feel more confident in getting back to applying for jobs.
<b>Doing a short-time job, filling the gap, and confidence in applying for jobs</b>	After being out of work for many years, GEM helped SP9 with finding her first job. It was for a short period of time, which enabled her to add it to her CV and feel positive about her skills and abilities to apply and get a long-term job.
<b>Finding a perfect job, happiness, and emotional well-being</b>	SP9 came to GEM to find a job and get back balance into her life. She needed a job which offer flexible hours. As a result of being on GEM and building employability skills, she found a perfect job - around the school time- part-time with the possibility of working from home. She is on her ideal journey, as she articulated, can work, and take care of her children, which makes her feel happy and relax. Positive feelings and

	happiness are related with enhancing emotional well-being and reducing negative outcomes.
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## Translation of Study Participant 9's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP9 are as follows:

- **Job search support** - Participating in GEM online sessions, enabled her to add some transformable skills to her CV, decision making, for example. SP9 was offered a job interview and she did it well, enabling her to feel more confident in getting back to applying for jobs. A one-off cost saving to the state of £1,923 can be derived from the Vine Centre's SROI assessment of getting clients back into work through their Centre Job Club<sup>20</sup> where each client helped back into employment was estimated to represent an equivalent saving in Job Seekers Allowance in the 2017-18 financial year.
- **Reduced costs for treatment of anxiety** - Participating in GEM sessions and being around people and doing active things, helped her to manage her anxiety. SP9 is using antidepressants to treat her clinical diagnosed depression and seeing medical doctors for many years, and clearly articulated that doing drawing, writing and colouring in sessions worked like a therapy and helped with her mental health improvement. In 2008 the average cost to the NHS of treating anxiety and depression was estimated by the Troubled Families database to be 942 p.p per anum. This represents costs incurred to the NHS (including GPs) only, and excludes any wider additional costs through lost earnings and benefit provision.
- **Improved emotional and psychological wellbeing** - As a result of being on GEM and building employability skills, she found a perfect job - around the school time-part-time with the possibility of working from home. She is on her ideal journey, as she articulated, can work, and take care of her children, which makes her feel happy and relax. Positive feelings and happiness are related with enhancing emotional well-being and reducing negative outcomes. While credible valuations of general well-being are difficult to obtain, the valuation of £1,493 per household for improved emotional well-being through the Common Assessment Framework<sup>21</sup> is derived from the respected Troubled Families Cost Database.

### Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP9

Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 9		(2020 prices)
<b>Cost savings for the State</b>		<b>Value (£)</b>
Job search support		2,002
Reduced costs for the treatment of anxiety		1,285
<b>Social value generated</b>		
Improved emotional and psychological wellbeing		1,958
<b>Total Benefits</b>		<b>5,245</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM		2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>		<b>1.84:1</b>

<sup>20</sup> Mitchell (2018) A Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the Vine Centre.  
<http://www.thevinecentre.org.uk/uploads/images/b86c39296253389529bf9b7d2ace763d.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Taken from the LARC3 Cost Effectiveness of CAF Report, 2010.

**Study Participant 10 - Summary Case Study and 'HOW' GEM Helped:**

SP10 is an experienced teacher, left her job at the pandemic and needed help to change her career. GEM helped her with funding virtual course to become a certified English teacher, develop contact networks and gain practical experiences.

- *It was very difficult time as well because I started with the GEM project just before the 2nd lockdown and so I was meeting once a week and then I had to stop and they all went on to the phone and then after lockdown I caught COVID, so I couldn't continue and then by the time everything has stopped and we were in 3rd lockdown so it was really tricky to kind of keep going but every time I spoke to my navigator developer she was really positive, really encouraging, she was really lovely to work with and really supportive actually coz I was spoken to her about possibly doing a course that's what I was interested in our thinking in the change of direction and she said that she could apply something to help me with that and I was very worried about it I was just I would be too much. She said no, this is why the project is here, we have this money to help, and this is a really good thing for you. She really supported me and encouraged me and really helped me with the course and things like that, so I was really pleased.*
- *{If it wasn't because of GEM} I would probably be struggling a lot more than I am now, I don't think I would have made as much progress in achieving my own goals right at this moment, I think I'd be in a very different position because I've met a lot of people through each other that wouldn't have happened I think not having that network, not having the support I have had, not having the opportunities that I've had, would be affected my life to move forward as well as I have done.*
- *I definitely say my health and wellbeing is much better and when I'm finished with this so my course will finish before long then I'm looking for that to lean into paid environment and so that will have an impact on my health because that'll help me become more financially stable so I think in that way absolutely that it is having impact on my sort of health and then with finances, I am working towards paid employment and I think that will have an impact as well.*

**Key outcomes for SP10 were as follows:**

<b>Struggling with job lost, perceived support and encouraged in setting up career goal</b>	SP10 left her job at the time of COVID, and it was very difficult for her. She was struggling quite a lot and the GEM project was a good match up for her at the time. The navigator developer helped her to focus on the job she wanted and supported her to get the funding to take the course. She feels supported and encouraged to set up her goal of being Second language English teacher.
<b>Taking TEFL course and became certified to make plan for getting a career</b>	Having the TEFL qualification enabling her to plan her next career and work toward getting a job.
<b>Experience of online teaching and feel more confident</b>	SP10 is an experienced teacher but not quite confident to teach adults, particularly in group sessions. Working with the navigator developer in GEM through online 'ESL' sessions, provided the opportunity for her to gain experience and the courage that she needed. She had a group session teaching by herself, and she was able to manage it, resulting in feeling more confident to do more to develop her skills in working with non-native English speakers.

<b>Making networks and satisfaction</b>	Participating in GEM online sessions, enabled her to make contacts with people to expand her work networks and is happy that she can use her skills.
<b>Put in touch with learners of English as a second language, doing voluntary teaching and developing skills to feel more confident</b>	Through doing the ESL, she put in touch with people to voluntary help them with their English. She provides individual lessons based on what they need, enabling her to become more confident in teaching English to second language learners who are in different levels and need different methods of teaching.
<b>Finding the right career way, satisfaction, improvement of health and well-being and optimistic in getting paid employment</b>	GEM helped her to find the right career path which fit with her interest, she is happy and satisfied with her progress and clearly expressed that her health and well-being is much better, and she is hopeful in getting a paid employment to become financially stable, impacting her health state and quality of life.

## Translation of Study Participant 10's GEM Outcomes into Economic Costs and Benefits

Salient outcomes and associated economic valuations for SP10 are as follows:

- **Job search support** - The navigator developer helped SP10 to focus on the job she wanted and supported her to get the funding to take a TEFL course. She felt supported and encouraged to set up her goal of being Second language English teacher. A one-off cost saving to the state of £1,923 can be derived from the Vine Centre's SROI assessment of getting clients back into work through their Centre Job Club<sup>22</sup> where each client helped back into employment was estimated to represent an equivalent saving in Job Seekers Allowance in the 2017-18 financial year.
- **Improved agency, self-efficacy and empowerment** - Working with the navigator developer in GEM through online 'ESL' sessions, provided the opportunity for her to gain experience and the courage that she needed. She had a group session teaching by herself, and she was able to manage it, resulting in feeling more confident to do more to develop her skills in working with non-native English speakers. The opportunity can be usefully framed in terms of helping SP10 to develop greater agency, self-efficacy and empowerment. And with the support of his Nav Dev opportunities to capitalise and nurture this has been harnessed. A useful proxy to capture this is the SROI Network's well-being valuation of £1,400 per person for improved autonomy and control.

## Summary of cost savings to the state and social value generated for SP10

Summary of Economic Benefits for Study Participant 10	(2020 prices)
<b>Cost savings for the State</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>
Job search support	2,002
<b>Social value generated</b>	
Improved agency, self-efficacy and empowerment	1,587
<b>Total Benefits</b>	<b>3,589</b>
Unit Cost of participation in GEM	2,846
<b>Benefit-Cost-Ratio (BCR)</b>	<b>1.26:1</b>

<sup>22</sup> Mitchell (2018) A Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the Vine Centre.  
<http://www.thevinecentre.org.uk/uploads/images/b86c39296253389529bf9b7d2ace763d.pdf>

Applying the economic impact analysis methodology to the 10 participant peer researcher case studies provides a further illustration of magnitude of social value and cost savings to the state that are being generated by GEM. Viewed through the lens of individual case studies provides a finer grain of detail of how such value is generated, and in turn the power of the GEM model to generate value for society and the state that goes considerably further than the core remit of the programme - to move disadvantaged people closer to education, training and employment. While GEM has comprehensively succeed in delivering on this, the economic impact analysis illustrates the associated - and wider - cost savings and social value that is generated as participants continue along their unique journey of change afforded to them through participation on GEM. The analysis implies that GEM could represent total economic benefits in the region of around £3,545 - £8,125 per participant.

#### Summary of economic benefits for GEM on a participant-by-participant basis

Case Study Participant	Cost Savings for the State (£)	Social Value generated (£)	Total Economic Benefits (£)	Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR)
SP1	2,002	6,123	8,125	2.85
SP2	2,404	1,587	3,991	1.40
SP3	1,471	4,536	6,007	2.11
SP4	1,054	3,545	4,599	1.61
SP5	0	3,545	3,545	1.25
SP6	759	6,123	6,882	2.42
SP7	2,002	2,578	4,580	1.61
SP8	3,287	1,587	4,874	1.71
SP9	3,287	1,958	5,245	1.84
SP10	2,002	1,587	3,589	1.26
<b>Mean</b>	<b>1,881</b>	<b>3,317</b>	<b>5,144</b>	<b>2.00</b>

Taking the mean of each of these ranges illustrates that on a participant by participant basis GEM is worth around £1,881 through cost savings to the state; and £3,317 through wider social benefits generated for the individual. This represents an indicative mean benefit-cost ratio of £2.00 for every £1.00 invested in the GEM programme.



## 5.0 Process evaluation

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During the 2021 evaluation cycle, interviews were conducted with eight participants, twenty NDs and four Managers.

### Feedback from NDs and Managers:

Interviewees were asked about successes and potential areas for improvement. The feedback could be grouped under 4 key themes, GEM project structure effectiveness, project partnership effectiveness, impact on Organisational strategy/ culture and meeting needs of participants.

#### 1. GEM project structure effectiveness

There were several key positives. Firstly, the way the project ran during a turbulent year was commended. For example, recognition was given to the ease with which the project moved swiftly online. GEM did a good job at adapting, for example, providing continued support throughout the lockdowns and creating additional services such as the extensive online timetable. Further, a shift towards the necessary focus on participant wellbeing, was acknowledged.

Secondly, changes in how the ND team operated were also noted as good practice, such as encouraging home working where possible, and creating social contact points. This support and connection were not always available from the individual partner organisations, which meant the support GEM gave, was vital to NDs. Examples of this include things such as coffee with “opportunity hunters” and the 10@10 catch-ups.

*‘10@10 starts my week. As I’m only part time, it’s nice to see everybody, keeps you knowing what’s going on. People have come in and spoken to us about specific issues.’ (ND, quote)*

In addition, extra supervision was invaluable to support mental wellbeing.

*‘Peer support needs to be formalised as to what it is and what it isn’t. It was put in when a few people started to get poorly. They put in extra support and access and for me has been invaluable.’ (ND, quote)*

As in previous reports, the Extra Mile Fund (EMF) continues to be useful for enabling NDs to tackle barriers and the flexibility has been very helpful. Support by the staff from the GEM central team was acknowledged and very well received.

Generally, there was an acknowledgment that the way GEM works enables NDs to be very invested in the individual’s outcomes. One ND describes it as such.

*‘I’ve got as much out of their journey as they have.’ (ND, quote)*

Finally, many Organisations found that Green Impact and the pandemic gave people a chance to be greener, with many stating that Green Impact had made a big difference to their Organisations this year.

In terms of things that could have gone better this year, feedback identified some staff struggled with the isolation of home working, which resulted in a lack of team connectiveness. One suggestion was to establish a GEM multi-desk hot desk space for NDs.

As in 2020, the need for more supervision/wellbeing support for NDs to discuss their own issues, and process issues that they deal with in work was highlighted. The topic of suicide arose during conversations with NDs, and it was felt more support from GEM was needed as NDs are often not trained social workers. More specifically, the peer support group for NDs felt they would benefit from a therapeutically qualified session leader. There was acknowledgement that the GEM ND role was not a 9-5 job but that the hours must be adhered to, to balance wellbeing and family. Some NDs had informally buddied up to overcome issues of isolation when they found the peer group was not for them.

It was felt there was a gap in terms of aspirations of Organisation and GEM outcomes, an example of which was that 'volunteering is not a GEM outcome'. One charity felt a little hampered due a lack of capacity to make innovative ideas happen, acknowledging the capacity issues of being a small charity.

As in previous years, there were comments about the paperwork. It was felt the pandemic solutions about paperwork were good practice but there was frustration post lockdown at having to go back and acquire actual signatures on paper. As reported previously, paperwork is viewed as a burden, which can be detrimental to the participant.

There was some acknowledgement that due to the pandemic and climate, there had been lower numbers signing up and that online was not for everyone, despite the great support to provide technology where needed. Additionally, it was felt by one ND that the jobs that the GEM participants are offered can be low paid and menial, which meant drop-out rates from employment were quite high.

## 2. GEM project partnership effectiveness

Feedback showed that partners are already thinking ahead and aspire to continue working with other GEM organisations. One participant commented '*The GEM Partnership is fantastic*' (Manager, quote).

It appears that GEM has become embedded in many organisations, so much so that several organisations appeared to suggest they had developed a reliance on GEM to extend the reach of their work to a wider group, to link in with their other offers and to fill a skills gap around education and training knowledge. On the other hand, there was feedback that GEM is not always a close fit with organisational aims. In particular, the GEM outcomes focus is not always in harmony with a person-centred approach, due to a lack of measurement or reporting of additional softer benefits gained during GEM.

The success of the partnership with Council and CVS was also noted by one ND. '*GEM is perceived by Council as being very successful, GEM is an example of that successful working between the Council and the Voluntary sector.*'

Finally, it was suggested that in the last year of GEM, it could be useful to invest in training for the partner CEOs to ensure the long-term sustainability of the work, potentially forming action learning sets, leading to modules of learning that could lead to HE qualifications.

## 3. Impact on Organisational strategy/ culture

Those interviewed only offered positives comments about the impact of the Project in terms of the strategy and culture. Working on GEM has created aspirations for one

Organisation to get more outdoor volunteering in place and other plans to extend their activities and the work of GEM to a wider geographical area.

The EMF has enabled the team to think creatively in other areas and through GEM, one Manager had noticed that this has developed a culture within their wider team of applying for grants to tackle barriers. Similarly, one Organisation noted the knowledge of progress into education, employment or training was previously missing and provided a much-needed skillset in the team.

One Organisation, through Green Impact, has had a complete turnaround. They acquired gold and most of their team have now become enthusiastic about these ambitions and have seen a change of mindset. This was echoed by several interviewees. Organisations have risen to the challenge and enjoyed the deadlines of working towards the Awards Ceremony. It was noted by one that it was a lot more extra work.

*'People have to buy in to the idea that they want to do that- environmental catastrophe is on all our minds, having a deadline to have things in place is very motivating and the award is a nice thing.'* (ND, quote)

It was felt Gloucestershire County Council staff and the Gloucestershire Gateway staff have led the GEM project with passion and motivation which has inspired others like GEM NDs.

*'I think the passion and motivation for the project and what it can achieve really knocks on to the navigator developers that I manage and ourselves.'* (Quote, Manager)

#### **4. Meeting needs of Participants**

One Organisation was given more ND staff time, which hugely benefited capacity and has extended the reach to many more participants. Overall, the strength of feeling was that GEM gives an intensive support that is very much needed at the current time.

*'Having the intensive one-to-one and that offer of that one-to-one support for an hour every week to enable them to achieve their goals, it aligns beautifully with our overall vision and streams of work'* (Quote, Manager).

In addition, it was acknowledged by both Managers and NDs that the online service continued to be supportive to participants and technological barriers were overcome.

The focus and support for mental health and wellbeing issues that has been so prominent this year was widely applauded and appreciated by interviewees.

There was great importance placed on the softer outcomes which are sometime overlooked, one ND stated:

*'Some of my more treasured outcomes have been the softer outcomes, e.g., helping someone who hasn't left the house for several years and then goes to College'* (quote, ND)

#### **Feedback from Participants:**

Interviewees were asked about successes and potential areas for improvement. The feedback could be grouped under 4 key themes, perceived ND support, meaningful

involvement, and associated experiences, making progress and improvement and wider support from GEM- people and service.

### 1. Perceived ND support

Participants were overwhelmingly supportive of the opportunity to work with an ND and offered their gratitude for the invaluable personalised support they received. 1:1 Meetings not only supported them in working towards goals but also provided a wide range of additional benefits, including focusing on wellbeing and confidence building. NDs provide regular phone calls, support and encouragement to attend GEM online courses which was viewed as beneficial.

‘GEM provided more than I expected in terms of the support. The main benefit was the 1:1, the ND taking the lead and pushing you to do it’. *(Quote participant)*

One participant who found it hard to leave the house, with the support of her ND who went with her, has been doing Covid testing data analysis and has now found employment. Another found it very stabilising and supportive having been in and out of employment before.

### 2. Meaningful involvement and associated experiences

Participants mentioned several beneficial experiences, which contributed to their overall opinion of their experience. Some of the involvements mentioned were:

- Being supported to move house
- Accessing volunteering opportunities e.g., at a local charity shop
- Social distanced face to face walks and conversations on the phone or WhatsApp calls
- Attending innovative events due to the pandemic, e.g., 4 hours a day online learning support to help participant do ESOL at college
- Working towards finding a job, attending Job clubs
- Attending one to one meetings
- Connections through online socialising such as during quizzes, making friends
- Attending exciting projects such as the Stepping Up course at Cheltenham Borough Homes Borough Homes
- Taking part in the Be Seen Be Heard course, making presentations
- Undertaking a well-being course and understanding about the power and importance of grounding and taking time to compose oneself.

Overall, the feedback across the participants interviewed was that they feel very grateful for the experiences that have been provided through GEM.

In terms of potential improvement, it was felt that there could be more GEM organised opportunities for NDs to meet with participants and further peer to peer support and buddying. Many participants themselves are very experienced and there is a consistent theme over previous years of wanting to help others. Prior to a return to face-to-face meetings, some participants stated they were looking forward to resuming them.

### 3. Making progress and improvement

All the participants that were interviewed felt they had made progress through the project, with some of them feeling it was quite significant and others highlighting making

small steps which they were pleased with. Some of the progress that was highlighted included:

-Becoming more confident having initially been very anxious.

‘GEM has been very beneficial, and I would definitely recommend it to other people especially to people like myself who are quite nervous have got high anxiety and things like that. I find it very helpful.’ *(Quote, participant)*

- Having used the online schedule to create their own weekly schedule/ routine
- Having gained exposure therapy- getting out with their ND to get used to being around people particularly after a difficult year due to covid restrictions.
- Leading an online session when usual leader was unavailable
- Training as a Green Impact auditor and undertaking audits in the GEM partnerships with help from the GI team
- Training opportunities

‘I’ve done a security training course and then I’m doing a trial shift with the security firm to see if I like the job and I will hopefully start work after that’. *(Quote, participant)*

‘I’m making progress but I’m without a job yet. I’ll continue to make progress through attending my course’ *(quote, participant)*

- More organisation of life
- More responsible

‘I’m organising my life a bit more it makes me a little bit more responsible. With the use of zoom I’ve been able to keep in touch with people which has been great’. *(Quote, participant)*

#### **4. Wider support from GEM- people and service**

This year, there was also recognition of the wider GEM team and the role they have played in supporting individuals.

‘The wider GEM networks are supportive, other people met through GEM have also been willing to help.’ *(Quote, participant)*

This support has been provided through joining in things such as Green Impact, job club online- gaining interview skills and job searching.

‘I’ve met the navigator developer from the Cheltenham job club and there’s not much more they could do to help people- it’s top notch!’ *(Quote, participant)*

There was also noticeable recognition of the importance of having a supportive employer which reinforces the value of the inclusive works activity launched this year.

‘I wasn’t really going to get anywhere with this because I’ve always been in and out of jobs and I’ve not been very comfortable but hopefully now they’re going to help me get into supported employment with a supportive employer.’ *(Participant, quote)*

## 5.1 Inclusive Evaluation

Four workshops, attended by 6-14 NDs each, were held on the following dates to support the roll out of the Inclusive evaluation tools developed by Creative Sustainability.

Journaling: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Creative Tools: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Mindful Photography: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021

During these events additional research evaluation feedback was gathered, which largely echoed feedback above. In addition, NDs were keen to trial the new techniques, particularly in pre-engagement activity, and would welcome additional funds for creative resources. They were willing to feedback on how their use of the new tools would be received.

Creative Sustainability provided a very informative document on developing and utilising creative evaluation methods, which will be very useful for all partners for future projects and their current work on the GEM project.

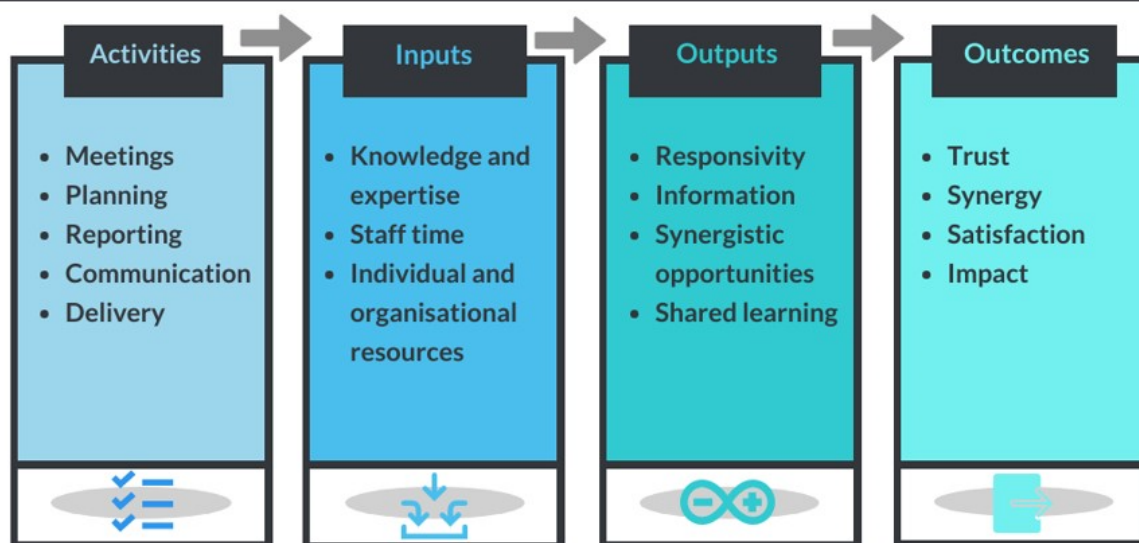
A significant amount of additional feedback was provided regarding the Warwick Edinburgh well-being survey, which some navigator developers found very difficult to use with participants with complex needs. They found the questions could be quite triggering, leading to conversations that they found quite difficult. Some of the techniques presented in relation to the inclusive evaluation tools seemed to be very supportive and a gentle way into some quite challenging conversations, particularly when they were trying to get to know their participants. These were well received by the NDs.

## 6.0 GEM Partnership Assessment

Earlier work on WP6 involved two qualitative data collection workshops were conducted with Navigator Developers and managers, the result of which was the development of a partnership logic (see below). The logic model articulates a chain of causes and effects that lead to the hypothesized partnership outcomes. The model is rooted in the contextual conditions surrounding GEM including social, economic and political factors, access to resources and advice, communication and management issues, and interpersonal factors.

### GEM partnership logic model:

Situation: Intentional and focused collaboration to support the successful implementation of GEM activities and targeted outcomes



The model incorporates a number of aspects concerning partnership structure and processes which reflect the perceptions of multiple cross-sector organisations who work together under the umbrella of the GEM project. Within the model it is envisaged that partners work together to mobilise resources in order to achieve better outcomes as measured by the needs of the beneficiaries which, in turn provide additional benefits to the organisations and those working within them. Specifically, the principal outcomes include:

**Trust:** concerns the expectations that stakeholders will act with the interests of others. It is an aspect of individual and organisational behaviour that arises within groups who share norms of cooperative behaviour and provides a ‘glue’ which provides the foundations for successful partnerships.

**Synergy:** the breakthroughs in thinking and action that are produced when collaborative processes successfully combine the complementary knowledge, skills, and resources of a group of diverse participants

**Satisfaction:** how people feel about the work or processes of the partnership. Satisfaction is related to effective leadership, good communication, effective management and planning, and influence in decision making.

**Impact:** the perceived quality of partnership outputs and outcomes i.e. the difference that the GEM project is actually making (whether 'real', perceived or both).

The partnership logic model provides the basis for developing the online survey tool which is being used to investigate more deeply the partners' perceptions and experiences concerning the processes and outcomes of the GEM partnership (see attached). The data will allow us to explore in detail the nature of partners' perceptions and how these relate to their involvement with the GEM partnership. In doing so, the findings will inform current practice and provide a means of increasing the level and depth of evaluation data so as to provide a more comprehensive account of partnership working in the present context and help understand how partnership fits into the wider puzzle of GEM delivery.



## GEM partnership survey - summary of items:

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### Profile

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- 1 Please state your current role title:
  - 2 How long have you been working with your current organisation (in months e.g. 12)?
  - 3 How long have you been working with the GEM partnership? (in months, e.g. 12):
  - 4 Have you worked with / in any networks or partnerships before?
  - 5 How involved have you been in the GEM partnership?
  - 6 How long have you been involved in your current professional role? (in months e.g. 12):
  - 7 On average, in any given month, approximately how many hours of your time do you spend on GEM-related activities?
  - 8 Organisation
  - 9 In your opinion, does the GEM partnership have sufficient representation from groups / organisations to accomplish its objectives?
  - 10 If you answered 'no' above, in your opinion, which type of groups / organisations / agencies do you think are NOT well represented?
- 

### Operations and process

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- 11 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding leadership and management of the GEM partnership?
  - 12 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the function of the GEM partnership?
  - 13 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding communication?
- 

### Decision making

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- 14 Please indicate how much influence you personally have in GEM's decision making: (0 = No influence at all, 100 = A significant amount of influence)
  - 15 Please indicate how comfortable you are overall with the decision making process:
  - 16 Please choose the response that represents the amount of conflict in the GEM partnership:
  - 17 To what extent do you agree that the following represent barriers to the GEM partnership?
- 

### Involvement

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- 18 to what extent have you or your organisation contributed to the activities of the GEM partnership?
  - 19 how many times over the last 6 months you personally have done one of the following:
  - 20 To what extent do you agree that the following been a benefit for you or your organisation?
  - 21 To what extent do you agree that the following been a problem or disadvantage for you or your organisation?
  - 22 Commitment
  - 23 In your overall opinion, how would you compare the benefits with the difficulties of being a member of the GEM partnership?
- 

### Partnership performance

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- 24 how much you agree or disagree that the GEM partnership has produced the following impacts?
  - 25 Trust
  - 26 Satisfaction
  - 27 Synergy
  - 28 Other comments
- 

### Respondent info

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- 29 Background
-

## 7.0 Evaluating the impact of GEM on Sustainability - Green Impact

Green Impact is an international United Nations award-winning programme run by SOS-UK, an educational charity which is part of the NUS. In the UK it currently has 24,692\* people taking part across 190 organisations.

According to the ESF Cross Cutting Themes, environmental sustainability is a priority for all projects that are funded, whether they have an environmental focus or not. Therefore, in order to meet the requirement that all providers must have sustainable development policies and implementation plans in place, Green Impact was chosen by the GEM project to address sustainable practices.

The aims with the sustainable development implementation plan to meet the ESF Cross Cutting Themes through Green Impact were to ensure that each partner involved in delivery of the contract on the project would undertake specific action to:

- (a) minimise waste;
- (b) minimise energy consumption;
- (c) minimise use of travel and promote use of public or green transport where travel is unavoidable.

The Green Impact scheme works using an online toolkit, divided into Bronze, Silver and Gold level modules, with 10 modules within each level. As part of their Service Agreement, the 24 GEM partner organisations were required to achieve Silver level accreditation.

A screen shot of the toolkit is shown below.

Workbook Preview - Organisation: Going the Extra Mile

Back to Workbook | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Special

Save Changes | Completed 0 of 10, Total Points 0 of 10

+ Show All

- (B001 - B002) Environmental Policy and Procedures + Show All Completed 0 out of 2
- (B003 - B005) Saving energy + Show All Completed 0 out of 3
- (B006 - B006) Travel + Show All Completed 0 out of 1
- (B007 - B009) Waste and Recycling + Show All Completed 0 out of 3
- (B010 - B010) Community Action + Show All Completed 0 out of 1

The modules contained a mixture of themes including travel, procurement, biodiversity, energy, recycling and community. The concept behind the toolkit was to encourage organisations to analyse their everyday working practices, to see if they could run more sustainably.

This is the third year that the GEM project has included activity towards attainment of Green Impact gradings. The work has achieved significant improvements in year 2 as lessons learned from year 1 have been implemented. In addition the work was brought in to the evaluation team remit for closer management. The offer of training for auditing was also offered to GEM participants, many of whom reported in the process evaluation about how much they had gained from the experience.

As of July 2021, 1 GEM partner had achieved Platinum, 9 had achieved Gold, 9 had achieved Silver and 3 had achieved Bronze, clearly establishing the positive impact of GEM on the environmental sustainability of its partner organisations.

### GEM PARTICIPANT'S COUNCIL AWARDS

#### Participant's Council Award 1 - Going above and beyond

This award will go to the organisation that demonstrates that they are not just taking a 'tick-box' approach to Green Impact and have made changes that are not required by the award but will make a significant difference to their environmental impact.

**Winner - Creative Sustainability**

**Participant's Council Award 2 - Most creative impact to the current COVID-19 crisis**

This award will go to the organisation that has been the most creative in adapting their work on the environment to the pandemic and has taken advantage of the current situation to make positive changes to the way in which they work.

**Winner - Inclusion**

**Participant's Council Award 3 - Participant Engagement**

This award will go to the organisation that shows that they have made a significant effort to involve GEM participants in their work on the environment.

**Winner - Young Gloucestershire**

**X001 - Sustainability Hero**

In no more than 300 words tell us who you think deserves to be crowned as this years' Sustainability Hero. This can be a person in your department or elsewhere, who you think has done exceptional work to champion sustainable actions. You can even nominate yourself! The person you nominate may have helped staff in your department realise the importance of taking action on climate change and/or social justice, inspired people to get involved through their enthusiasm, or be very good at their sustainable role. The winner will receive a special commendation at our annual awards ceremony and will be entered into the national Green Impact level competition.

**Winner - Adrian McKie from National Star**

**X002 - Innovation**

In no more than 300 words tell us how your team/department has engaged more people in sustainability activity and what results you have seen: what innovative techniques and ideas have you used to get people excited to take part? Green Impact wants to award real innovation in engaging staff and students in Green Impact and sustainability. The more people we can actively engage, the bigger positive impact we can all have. We want to hear from you on what truly innovative ideas you have used to get other people involved to help us reach that goal. The winning entry will be given a special commendation at our annual awards ceremony and will be entered into the national awards.

**Winner - Prospect Training Services Ltd.**

**X004 - Community**

In no more than 300 words tell us about how your team or department has lead, developed or participated in innovative community action throughout your Green Impact year, that has generated positive outcomes for the wider community (such as a charity, organisation or a local group). Over the years we have seen some brilliant examples of teams working in partnership with community groups, developing new projects and helping their organisation to take Green Impact out into the wider community. The winning entry will be given a special commendation at the annual awards ceremony, and will be entered into the National Green Impact Special Awards competition.

**Winner - Forest Voluntary Action Forum**

## 8.0 Summary and Key Action Points

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Based on the synthesis of the findings presented in this report, the following action points are intended to provide stimulus for purposeful discussion - with the GEM OMC in the first instance - and action that supports the continued development of the programme. As in previous evaluation cycles, they are based on doing more of what works and addressing those challenges that can support the success of the project and shape what follows in a positive way.

### 8.1 Actions to support the current success

- Consider establishing a GEM multi-desk hot desk space for NDs.
- Address the need for more supervision/wellbeing support for NDs to discuss their own issues, and process issues that they deal with in work, perhaps involving a therapeutically qualified session leader
- Discuss the perceived gap with respect to aspirations of Organisation and GEM outcomes, an example of which was that 'volunteering is not a GEM outcome'.
- Consider the fact that GEM paperwork continues to be considered a burden, which can be detrimental to participants.
- Discuss the fact that jobs that the GEM participants are offered can be low paid and menial, which mean drop-out rates from employment were quite high.
- Discuss various points of GEM legacy, and the transition to a post GEM world. For example, the organisational reliance on GEM to extend the reach of their work to a wider group, to link in with their other offers and to fill a skills gap around education and training knowledge.
- From both an M&E and managerial perspective consider the perception that the GEM outcomes focus is not always in harmony with a person-centred approach, due to a lack of measurement or reporting of additional softer benefits gained during GEM.
- Consider investing in training for the partner CEOs to ensure the long-term sustainability of the work, potentially forming action learning sets, leading to modules of learning that could lead to HE qualifications.

### 8.2 Actions to support future work

Further to a meeting with the OMC on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 the team would seek to explore the following actions:

1. GEM providing a space to NDs for hot desk at employment and skills Hub and if possible through libraries in the county.
2. CASE to be contacted regarding joint work regarding a therapist to facilitate the peer group. In addition, buddying is important between NDs and if the work goes forward after GEM with less capacity- worth including more formally.
3. NDs to gain greater awareness of the representation of softer outcomes in evaluation through presentation of this year's evaluation findings and links/ value to future funding.
4. Low paid jobs issue- to be addressed through highlighting career progression, exploration of the publicising of a case study in inclusivity works of someone who has progressed to create aspirations and inclusion in the skills strategy.

5. Continued partnership of VCS as a Forum to share expertise to be developed with a possible link to anchor institutions agenda. Link to Health and wellbeing targets to influence social value policies wider than just apprenticeships but include inclusivity works agenda.

### 8.3 Next steps for the GEM Monitoring and Evaluation

The experience and findings presented in this report also have implications for the design of the evaluation cycle in 2022. We aim to continue the mixed-methods approach of gathering different forms of data from a variety of stakeholders, along with pushing the boundaries of evaluation methods, which benefits GEM's concern with harder to reach groups. In summary, the research team intend to pursue the following in the year 2022:

1. Process evaluation to look back at the whole experience of GEM and capture key learning and best practice from perspectives of NDs and GEM Managers. This will encompass a final iteration of the GEM evaluation cycle.
2. Evaluation of Inclusivity Works, which will demonstrate the impact of the GEM programme on employment inclusivity and person-centred approaches from the perspective of the partner organisations and related businesses.
3. A final analysis of the psychosocial outcomes generated by GEM, and the impacts of GEM on the mental wellbeing of its participants.
4. Computation of the final evaluative Social Return on Investment (SROI) model, which will demonstrate the value generated by GEM for its participants and for wider society.
5. A consolidation of the participatory approaches to explore and tell the story of GEM in an inclusive and emotionally sensitive way.
6. A comprehensive analysis of the GEM partnership outcomes drawing on evidence gathered through a partner survey.
7. The legacy and success of GEM will be described and formalised through peer reviewed papers targeted at relevant academic outlets.
8. Wider dissemination of the success of GEM will include evidenced based recommendations for future employment inclusivity programmes, and a move away from a one size fits all approach towards person-centred approaches in employment support.