



BELFAST  
EXPOSED



Social Value Analysis

# BELFAST EXPOSED.

Undertaken by



Social Value  
Engine

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# WHO WE ARE.



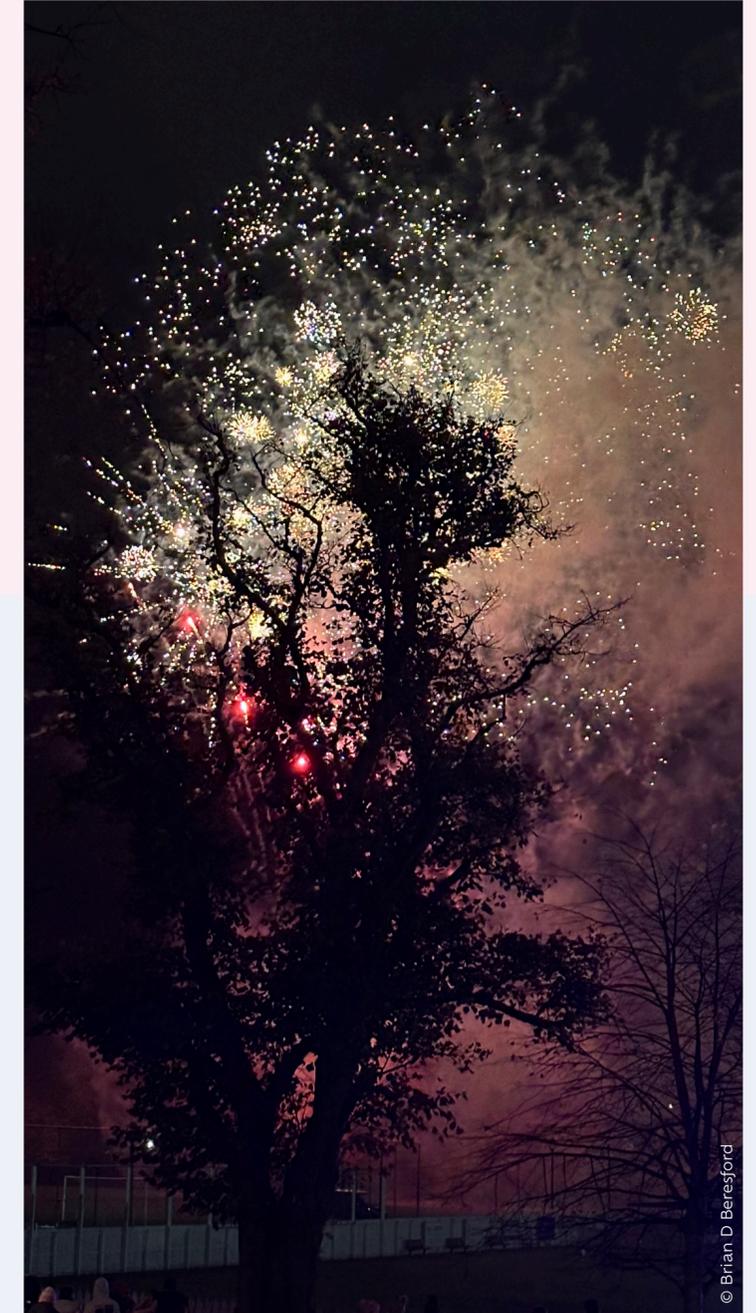
Rose Regeneration is a leading rural and coastal evaluation firm with nearly 20 years of experience supporting voluntary and community organizations, as well as funding bodies. Founded by Ivan Annibal, the business is known for its deep expertise in driving impactful change. This report has been crafted by Conor McGale, our Evaluation and Impact Manager in collaboration with Ivan Annibal.

# OUR PARTNERS.



For over 40 years, Belfast Exposed has used photography to challenge and inspire, capturing our past, present, and future while preserving a lasting legacy.

Emerging from troubled times, we have become a creative force, breaking boundaries and earning recognition for innovation. We nurture talent, host exhibitions, and build partnerships that support artists, mental health, and cultural heritage. Art is central to everything we do, connecting communities, shaping aspirations, and driving lasting impact through creativity and collaboration.



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## INTRODUCTION.

Rose Regeneration were commissioned to carry out a Social Value analysis of the activities that Belfast Exposed carried out from April 2023-March 2024.

This analysis was completed by working closely with Belfast Exposed carrying out desk research of available monitoring information, arranging interviews of a sample of organisations that received support from

the scheme, and using [the Social Value Engine](#), an online measurement tool which has assisted over 100 organisations and projects across the island of Ireland to determine the impact of the work carried out.

“  
THE HISTORY OF  
PLACES IN BELFAST  
AS WELL AS LEARNING  
WHAT TO LOOK  
FOR WHEN TAKING  
PHOTOGRAPHS.



# BACKGROUND.

Belfast Exposed is an independent, registered charity photography organisation situated in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter. Founded in 1983 by a group of photographers and activists to challenge media representation of Belfast's experience of conflict, their work reflects contemporary currents in photography whilst continuing to be highly socially engaged, responding to social, political, and environmental issues and inequalities.



Believing that photography is for everyone, Belfast Exposed strives to make the medium accessible and meaningful, serving as a catalyst for dialogue, storytelling, and reflection. Collaborations with community partners, health trusts, government departments, photographers, artists, academics, and business partners help extend their vision to a wider audience.

Belfast Exposed operates a diverse, socially engaged public programme specialising in mental health and well-being. Their unique therapeutic photography programmes create safe, inclusive spaces where participants can explore their emotions, share experiences, and build resilience through creative expression and storytelling. Tailored to the needs of diverse groups, including individuals affected by trauma, social isolation, neurodiversity, or long-term mental health challenges, they employ methodologies such as PhotoVoice, SHOWED, and therapeutic photo collage. These techniques promote self-awareness, community engagement, and personal growth, enabling participants to process complex emotions, develop confidence, and forge meaningful connections.

Belfast Exposed's Mental Health Community Hubs offer accessible, non-clinical environments where individuals can engage in therapeutic photography.

Participants benefit from tailored workshops, skill development, and opportunities to showcase their work through exhibitions, which celebrate their journeys and raise awareness of mental health. By partnering with health trusts and local community organisations, Belfast Exposed engages marginalised communities, provides holistic support and creates pathways for empowerment, resilience, and stronger community ties.

The organisation houses five public galleries that exhibit world-class art and maintains an archive of international significance, fostering dialogue, reflection, and storytelling. Their 'Our Futures' programme supports emerging artists and curators by providing mentoring and exhibition opportunities. Additionally, they offer various youth programmes for those interested in photography, encouraging the most disadvantaged to connect, find inspiration, and develop skills and qualifications for both personal enjoyment and employment.

With decades of experience, the organisation provides extensive photography training programmes to the public, enabling participants to learn and develop new skills and knowledge in photography. They also collaborate with businesses to deliver skills training, well-being workshops, and offer a unique city-centre venue for various events



# WHAT IS SOCIAL VALUE?

Measuring the tangible costs and outputs of an activity is relatively straightforward. We may know what our inputs are (e.g., the funding, equipment, or volunteers we need to run our activity) and the outputs expected of us (e.g., a target for the number of people participating in our activity); the greater challenge is quantifying the wider social, economic, and environmental outcomes we are delivering. This is what social value does. It asks the question 'if £x is spent on delivering an activity, what is the value of that same £x in terms of wider benefits for the local community?'

Examples of social value might be the value community members experience from increasing their confidence or living near green space; or it could be the value of the time the community group has spent collaborating with other organisations to improve health services in a local area.

The Social Value Engine (<https://www.socialvalueengine.com/>) helps organisations identify and measure the social value of the outcomes achieved by their activity.

This information can then be used to:

- understand where an organisation is having the most impact.
- make decisions about where to invest resources internally or externally.
- demonstrate the value of an activity to funders and other stakeholders.

Whilst Social Value has been embedded in legislation in England & Wales since 2013, and Scotland in 2014, that has not been the case in Northern Ireland. However, from 1 June 2022 public sector tenders must include a minimum of 10% of the total award criteria to score social value. This minimum will apply to contracts for services and works above the threshold where the Procurement Regulations apply (i.e. service contracts valued above £122,976 and consultation contracts valued above £4,733,252). Where appropriate, Government Departments can also score for Social Value on contracts outside of these thresholds. They can also give greater weight to social value than the 10% minimum.

It is expected that Social Value will become a key component for service delivery contracts and funding arrangements for many groups in the Community, Voluntary & Social Enterprise sector in Northern Ireland going forward.

# THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL VALUE.

Social Value International, the international network for organisations working in social value & impact, have developed 8 principles of social value. These are the basic building blocks for anyone wanting to take social value into account, and to be embedded into any methodology used to calculate the work of a project or organisation.

The principles are

**1. Involve stakeholders**

People and organisations involved in your work can help you to identify outcomes and determine if change has occurred.

**2. Understand what changes**

Understanding the links between your context, activity, outputs, inputs, outcomes, and impact you are making.

**3. Value the things that matter**

Capturing what matters most from the perspective of your stakeholders.

**4. Only include what is material**

Only include what is relevant and significant within your analysis.

**5. Do not overclaim**

You will need to take account of five factors, what are called 'deflators' to understand your unique contribution to the outcomes you are measuring.

**6. Be transparent**

Be clear about the scope of your calculation including duration and timeframe.

**7. Verify the result**

Check your data and analysis with stakeholders, peers, and a third-party verification provider.

**8. Be Responsive**

Pursue optimum Social Value based on decision making that is timely and supported by appropriate accounting and reporting.

These 8 principles are inherent in all Social Value analysis that Rose Regeneration carries out and were adhered to during this analysis.

# ABOUT THE SOCIAL VALUE ENGINE.

The Social Value Engine <https://socialvalueengine.com/> has been developed by Rose Regeneration and is only one of two Social Return of Investment tools accredited by Social Value International. To date it has been used by over 100 projects and funders within the island of Ireland, and over 400 throughout the UK.

The SVE provides:

- A systemised and academically robust assessment of social value to forecast, plan and evaluate activities.
- Nearly 400 peer-reviewed financial valuations/proxies derived from reliable sources and tagged against several widely recognised evaluation frameworks
- A description of how a project or activity creates value and a ratio that states how much social value (in £) is created for every £1.00 of investment.
- Information about how activities are making a place better to live in – by tagging outcomes and financial proxies against one of the seventeen aims of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

# APPROACH TO SOCIAL VALUE.

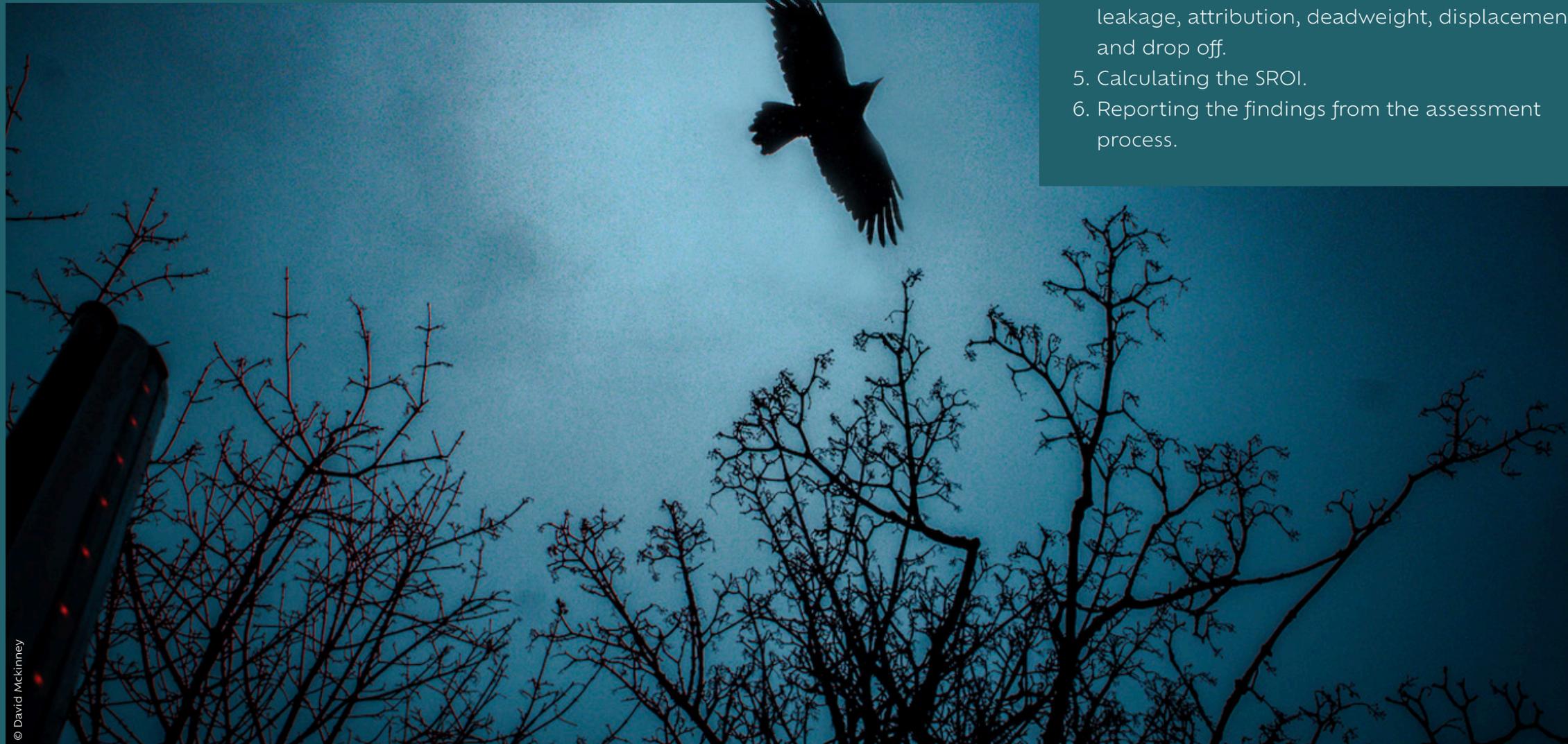
There are six steps to the standard Social Return of Investment (SROI) process namely:

1. Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders to identify impacts.
2. Mapping project outcomes with stakeholders.
3. Evidencing project outcomes and giving them a financial value.
4. Establishing project impact – accounting for leakage, attribution, deadweight, displacement and drop off.
5. Calculating the SROI.
6. Reporting the findings from the assessment process.

Additionally, this analysis has focused on how Belfast Exposed's outcomes relate to the local place, a sustainable community where people want to live, work, and invest. To do this, our approach involves relating each of the organisation's impacts to improvements in the sustainability of local areas.

We do this by cross referencing each of the proxies/valuations within the Engine into the 17 themes of the Sustainable Development Goals. This approach enables us, not just to offer a financial Social Value of this work, but to set out the contribution that it has made to the relative sustainability of the area where the organisation operates in and are based.

This approach is particularly powerful in supporting a narrative element to social value reporting which brings a local context to the Social Value process to accompany a financial value.



© David McKinney

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

For this analysis and with the agreement of Belfast Exposed, we analysed the Social Value of the organisation's outcomes against the UN Sustainable Development Goals framework.

On September 25, 2015, global leaders adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to protect the planet, fight against, and attempt to eradicate poverty to build a more prosperous world for future generations. These goals were established as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 17 SDGs aimed to engage governments, companies, civil society, and individuals. Each goal includes a series of targets, each with their own indicators to determine whether the objective has been achieved.

The complete list of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is as follows:



# OUR METHODODOLOGY

Rose Regeneration has worked with the Belfast Exposed team to identify the social and economic values which can be applied to their work.



**THIS HAS STAYED WITH ME BECAUSE I CAN NOW LOOK AT LIFE FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW, ALL HELPING ME ALL ENABLING ME TO SEE LIFE IN A DIFFERENT WAY AND WHEN I AM TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS ALL MY TROUBLES JUST FADE AWAY.**

This has been undertaken using a Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology based which the Social Value Engine is based on.

For the project, the approach to analysis involved:

1. Discussion with the Belfast Exposed staff involved in project delivery and/or project monitoring.
2. Analysis of available monitoring information (i.e., Business Plan, Market Research, Project Numbers, Monitoring & Evaluation data etc)
3. Identifying the outcomes achieved by the organisation over a particular time period.
4. Assigning a gross £ value to each of these outcomes, using the range of nearly 400 valuations/proxies contained within the Engine.
5. Via external research, review of internal evaluations that programme participants completed, staff conversations and interviews with collaborative partners, applying a range of 'deflators' to produce a net £ value:
  - **Leakage:** How much of an outcome might have delivered an impact outside of the area that the project originally intended.
  - **Deadweight:** How much of the outcome might have been achieved without the project's intervention.
  - **Attribution:** What proportion of an individual's outcome might be attributed to others because their activity contributed to it.

- **Drop-Off:** What proportion of the outcome will diminish over time.
- **Displacement:** How much of the outcome has displaced other outcomes.

The deflators include:

6. Calculating the input costs – i.e. the organisation's operating costs that it takes to deliver all the activities that are subject to this analysis, as well as any other costs that may be involved.
7. Producing a Social Value figure for the project by dividing the net value of the outcomes by the input costs.

This SVE approach is based on the methodology (and the accreditation it has achieved assessed against) contained within the HM Treasury Green Book.

We identified the outputs delivered by Belfast Exposed through analysis of their core documentation including their annual reports, and review of the type of project data that they normally capture.

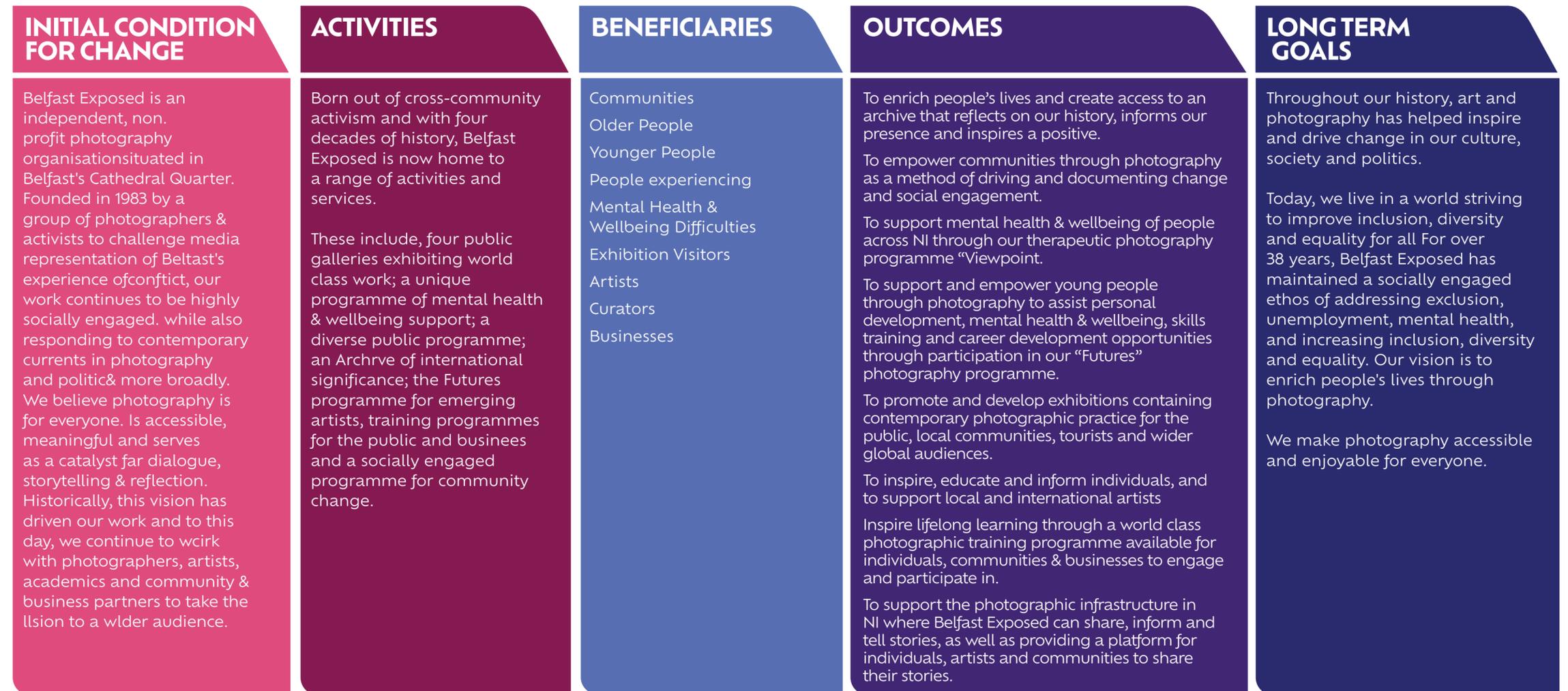
This enabled us to develop a Theory of Change which we were able to discuss and validate with key staff involved with the organisation and delivery of services.

# THEORY OF CHANGE.

We identified the outputs delivered by Belfast Exposed through analysis of their core documentation including their progress reports, funding applications, and review of the type of project data that they capture.

This enabled us to develop a Theory of Change which we were able to discuss and validate with key staff involved with the organisation and delivery of services.

A copy of the Theory of Change is set out below:



# THE NEXT STAGE.

For this report, we analysed the impact of the work carried out by Belfast Exposed from April 2023-March 2024.

“  
I CANNOT SPEAK MORE HIGHLY OF BELFAST EXPOSED AND THE SERVICE THEY PROVIDE. IT HAS HAD A VERY POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR SERVICE USERS, AND I AM VERY KEEN TO COMPLETE FURTHER PROJECTS WITH THEM IN THE FUTURE.

Key elements of this analysis include:

- Identifying a series of credible financial valuations/proxies which can be applied to the impacts identified with Belfast Exposed – the Social Value Engine has approaching 400 curated financial valuations which provide a nationally relevant suite of measures in this context.
- Assessing the impact achieved by applying volumes to the relevant financial proxies and deflating them to take account of external factors namely: deadweight, attribution, displacement and drop off and dividing it by the cost of the intervention to give a social value and a social return on investment figure. The outcomes from discussions we had with Belfast Exposed,

reviewing official documents provided to us by the organisation, reviewing project and client evaluations, interviews carried out by a range of stakeholders that work with the organisation, and reviewing other benchmarked projects of a similar nature including the UK’ Government’s Additionality Guide HCA Policy Covers ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)) have been used to set the deflators for the activities being analysed.

- Reporting the impact in its wider context: the Social Value Engine aligns the impact achieved against the UN Sustainable Development Goals to provide international comparability.



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# ANALYSIS.

Leakage (L) / Attribution (At) / Deadweight (DWT) / Displacement (DISP) / Drop Off (DOFF)

OUTCOME	SVE OUTCOME	VALUATION/PROXY	QUANTITY	YEARS OF IMPACT	UNIT	LEAKAGE (%)	ATTRIBUTION (%)	DEADWEIGHT (%)	DISPLACEMENT (%)	DROP-OFF (%)	IMPACT £
Visitors to Belfast Exposed's Exhibitions	Improved wellbeing through arts, culture and sport	Willingness to pay to physically visit an art gallery	67647 Visitors	1	£5.40	0	20	20	0	15	£233,788.03
Access to Belfast Exposed's Archive	Improved wellbeing through arts, culture and sport	Willingness to pay an average hypothetical subscription for digital archive film services	3000 Visitors	1	£38.52	0	10	10	0	10	£93,603.60
Therapeutic Photography Programme	Improved wellbeing through arts, culture and sport	Therapeutic effect of art and heritage	369 Beneficiaries	1	£3,549.00	0	25	25	15	25	£937,388.50
NHST Wellbeing through Photography Programme	Improved community health	The value of feeling more confident in being with family and other people as a result of taking part in an adult learning course	720 Beneficiaries		£231.00	0	20	20	0	20	£106,444.80
Young People's Photography Programme	Young people supported to do well in education	Cost of mentor training supporting young people	5750 Hours	1	£258.00	0	30	30	15	30	£617,877.75
Professional Photography Training	Learning and training for people to enter and progress in work	Average cost of a personal development course	223 Training Attendees	1	£1,081.00	0	15	15	0	10	£174,168.02
Volunteers involved in Belfast Exposed	Increased volunteering and community participation	Value per volunteer in UK	34 Volunteers		£3,270.00	0	10	15	0	15	£85,052.70
Community Photography Programme including Peace & Reconciliation work.	People enabled to fully participate in their community	Value of Participatory Engagement	356 Beneficiaries	1	£400.00	0	15	15	0	20	£102,884.00
Collaborating with Partner Organisations	Working collaboratively and through partnerships	Cost of inefficient collaboration	30 Partner Organisations	1	£9,180.00	0	15	15	0	10	£198,976.50
<b>Total</b>											<b>£2,550,183.90</b>

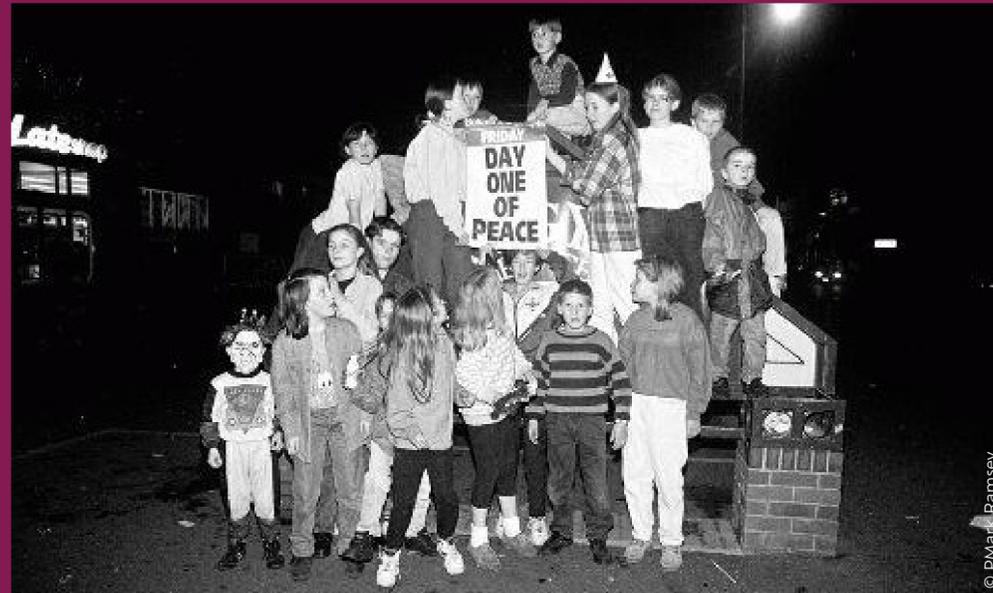
# ANALYSIS.

The Source for each of the financial valuations/proxies used in this analysis (all drawn from peer reviewed and independently published secondary sources) is set out below:

PROXY	SOURCE
Visitors to Belfast Exposed's Exhibitions	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measuring-the-value-of-the-digital-offer-of-galleries-and-museums/measuring-the-economic-value-of-museums-and-galleries-digital-offers-an-exploratory-use-of-contingent-valuation-techniques">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measuring-the-value-of-the-digital-offer-of-galleries-and-museums/measuring-the-economic-value-of-museums-and-galleries-digital-offers-an-exploratory-use-of-contingent-valuation-techniques</a>
Access to Belfast Exposed's Archive	<a href="https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10824-021-09414-7#:~:text=Users%20were%20willing%20to%20pay,4.68%2Fannum%20on%20average).">https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10824-021-09414-7#:~:text=Users%20were%20willing%20to%20pay,4.68%2Fannum%20on%20average).</a>
Therapeutic Photography Programme	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measuring-the-value-of-the-digital-offer-of-galleries-and-museums/measuring-the-economic-value-of-museums-and-galleries-digital-offers-an-exploratory-use-of-contingent-valuation-techniques">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measuring-the-value-of-the-digital-offer-of-galleries-and-museums/measuring-the-economic-value-of-museums-and-galleries-digital-offers-an-exploratory-use-of-contingent-valuation-techniques</a>
NHSCT Wellbeing through Photography Programme	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2020/heritage-and-society-2020/">https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2020/heritage-and-society-2020/</a>
Young People's Photography Programme	<a href="https://www.betterhappy.co.uk/post/how-much-does-workplace-wellbeing-engagement-training-cost-in-2022#:~:text=How%20Much%20Does%20Engagement%20%26%20Wellbeing,%2D%C2%A35000%2B%20per%20person.">https://www.betterhappy.co.uk/post/how-much-does-workplace-wellbeing-engagement-training-cost-in-2022#:~:text=How%20Much%20Does%20Engagement%20%26%20Wellbeing,%2D%C2%A35000%2B%20per%20person.</a>
Professional Photography Training	<a href="https://social-value-engine.co.uk/calculator/Mentoring%20-%20A%20Cost-Effective%20Intervention.pdf">https://social-value-engine.co.uk/calculator/Mentoring%20-%20A%20Cost-Effective%20Intervention.pdf</a>
Volunteers involved in Belfast Exposed	<a href="https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/speech/2014/in-giving-how-much-do-we-receive-the-social-value-of-volunteering">https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/speech/2014/in-giving-how-much-do-we-receive-the-social-value-of-volunteering</a>
Community Photography Programme including Peace & Reconciliation work.	<a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution/devolution-online-hub/public-service-reform-tools/engaging-citizens-devolution-5">https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution/devolution-online-hub/public-service-reform-tools/engaging-citizens-devolution-5</a>



© Belfast Exposed Participant



© PMark Ramsey



© Belfast Exposed Participant

# ANALYSIS.

As stipulated previously, all of the outcomes achieved by Belfast Exposed are linked back to one of the 17 UN Sustainable Development goals.

The table below outlines the total value of the activities carried out by Belfast Exposed’s impact against several of the SDG’s.

UN SDG IMPACT AREA	£
Good Health and Well-Being	£1,371,224.93
Quality Education	£792,045.77
Sustainable Cities and Communities	£85,052.70
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	£102,884.00
Partnerships for the Goals	£198,976.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,550,183.90</b>

The table below outlines the total project value of its outcomes, along with the operating costs to deliver Belfast Exposed’s work.

ACTIVITIES VALUE	£
Project Benefits (Impact figure minus 3.5% discount)	£2,463,945.80
Costs of Project Delivery	£482,829
Social Value SROI	£5.10 for every £1 spent



© Scott Robb

**BY GOING THROUGH THIS PROCESS, THE PROJECT IS DEMONSTRATING A SOCIAL VALUE OF £5.10 FOR EVERY £1 SPENT. THIS DEMONSTRATES A VERY CREDIBLE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT ON THE PART OF THE PROJECT.**

# ANALYSIS.

In terms of this figure, it is worth noting that the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in England have updated their Appraisal Guide (2023) which is used by government departments and local authorities as a means of helping to deliver better evidenced-based policy making. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dluhc-appraisal-guide/dluhc-appraisal-guide>.

In the guide, it provides information and guidance for Departments in outlining what funded projects are seen as a good “value for money” based on their Benefit Cost Ratio. You can see this in the table below.

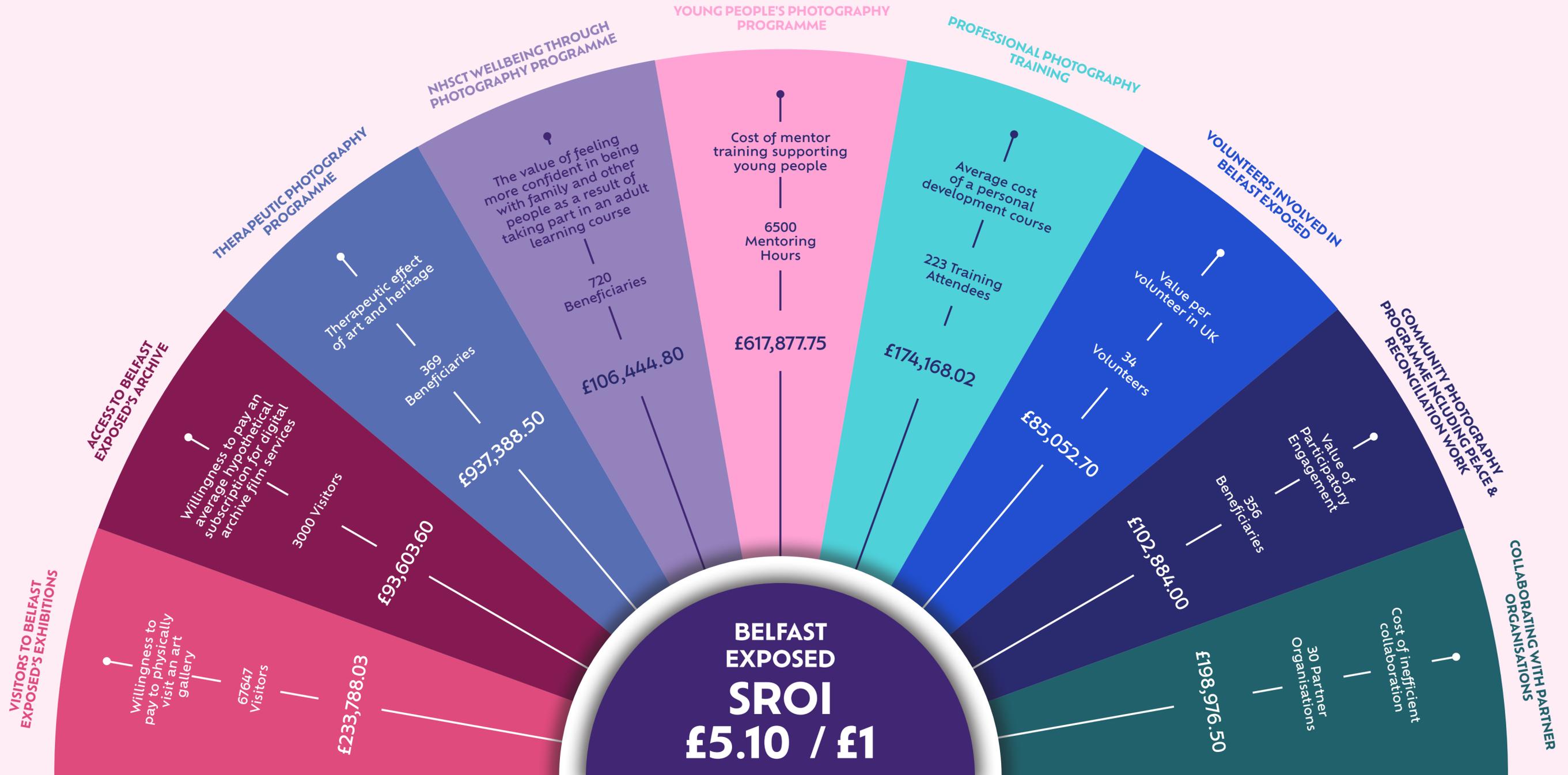
In summary anything over a value of £4 would be demonstrating a very high value for money return on any potential investment. So, the work that Belfast Exposed carries out would be clearly demonstrating that.

The overall impact of Belfast Exposed in 2023/24 can be illustrated in the Impact Map Overleaf.



# IMPACT MAP

The overall impact of Belfast Exposed in 2023/24 can be illustrated in the Impact Map opposite.



# CASE STUDIES

## Case Study 1:

Participant NHSCT Therapeutic  
Photography Workshop.



**AS WITH MANY PEOPLE THE COVID LOCKDOWNS HAD A SERIOUS IMPACT ON MY WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH, I FELT ISOLATED AND LONELY MISSING THE COMPANY OF OTHERS, MISSING MY DAILY ROUTINE, BUT AFTER COVID INSTEAD OF GOING OUT AND CELEBRATING THE FREEDOM TO DO SO, I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE THE HOUSE I LOST MY SELF-CONFIDENCE AND WHEN ONE DAY I HAD TO GO OUT I HAD MY HOUSE BROKEN INTO, THIS IMPACTED MYSELF IN A WAY I FOUND IT HARD TO EVERY LEAVE MY HOUSE AGAIN, I BECAME DEPRESSED AND FELT ALONE.**

“As with many people the COVID lockdowns had a serious impact on my wellbeing and mental health, I felt isolated and lonely missing the company of others, missing my daily routine, but after COVID instead of going out and celebrating the freedom to do so, I didn't want to leave the house I lost my self-confidence and when one day I had to go out I had my house broken into, this impacted myself in a way I found it hard to every leave my house again, I became depressed and felt alone.

My family began to notice and encouraged me to find an activity which would take me out of the house, through Age NI I found that the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) were running wellbeing Therapeutic Photography workshops with Belfast Exposed. Going to different locations within the Trust area and taking photographs, I thought about this and finally decided to pick up the courage and go. I was very nervous, with all the thoughts of the day going around in my head.

But I can honestly say going was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I have made new friends; the group are a family to me. We have had exhibitions, which has built my confidence. It was said to me by Mervyn and Sam when taking a photograph, “Look at your subject from different points.” This has stayed with me because I can now look at life from many points of view, all helping me all enabling me to see life in a different way and when I am taking photographs all my troubles just fade away.

I never thought in my wildest dreams that I'd be doing the things that I'm now doing, I had a sense of uselessness before I started the photography group, I had no purpose in life, now I definitely feel a sense of usefulness and it feels good to be able to give back and help others. This is all possible due to Mervyn and Sam, you made me look at life differently and I find myself passing on your words of wisdom to my family and friends.

Thank you for everything you all do, money couldn't buy it.”

# CASE STUDIES

## Case Study 2:

Therapeutic Photography Participant.

“  
I WAS MADE  
AWARE OF WAVE  
TRAUMA SERVICE  
AND THROUGH WAVE  
I WAS INTRODUCED TO  
BELFAST EXPOSED.”

“I had a very strict upbringing. We were privileged with all the material things we could have ever wanted, but there was a complete lack of affection.

As a result, I rebelled against my parents staying out beyond my curfew times I had been set coming in beyond these. Having pushed the boundaries so many times in my rebellious behaviour, my parents decided to contact Social Services. Through this as a 15 years old, I was sent to a Convent as a form of discipline.

A further major impact on my life happened in 1972 I was kidnapped by paramilitaries, blindfolded, interrogated, beaten and had my hair all cut short, an outward sign to others, I was held for 6 hours, dumped on a country road and had paint thrown over me, all because I had been to a local disco attended by the army.

Through my life I have felt unwanted, unloved, and insecure even when I married, I was a victim of domestic violence, and this together with my experience previously all affected my mental health.

I was made aware of WAVE Trauma Service and through WAVE I was introduced to Belfast Exposed.

I began taking part in their Therapeutic Photography Programme and it has changed my life. I look forward to the weekly sessions, we have a very close bond within our group, I feel valued and wanted, I can be myself, express myself without any judgement and have wonderful support from Mervyn and Sam.

Belfast Exposed have given me a purpose to get up in the morning, put my make up on and feel better about myself.”

# CASE STUDIES

## Case Study 3:

Participant From Down the Lens Group, Belfast Exposed Therapeutic Photography Programme.



**WHEN I CAME OUT OF HOSPITAL, I HAD MANY DIFFERENT PSYCHIATRISTS BUT FELT IT VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT MYSELF AND MY MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESS. ALL THIS LEFT ME VERY FRUSTRATED AND I FELT I WAS NOT MAKING ANY PROGRESS.**

“I am a farmer from Co Down with a family all living on the farm. I enjoyed farming it was a way of life for myself and my family.

This all came to an abrupt end when I had a fall leading to a life changing severe back injury. I was hospitalised and was told that I would not be able to farm again and had to give up the family farm. This led to me developing anxiety and depression leading to a complete mental health breakdown for which I was hospitalised.

When I came out of hospital, I had many different psychiatrists but felt it very difficult to talk about myself and my mental health illness. All this left me very frustrated and I felt I was not making any progress.

My Psychiatric Therapist mentioned a group called Belfast Exposed who through their Therapeutic Photography programme engaged people with mental health issues using photography as a method of opening dialogue using photography, I said I would be interested in this as I always had an interest in Photography.

I was nervous at first but after meeting Mervyn and Sam those nerves faded and I was soon enjoying taking photographs, but more importantly talking using the photographs as a catalyst and symbols to be able to talk about my thought feelings and emotions and opening communication with my psychiatric and mental health nurse using the photographs I have taken to express myself.

Belfast Exposed have been a life saver for me and I set aside a day now to meet up with them, we have formed a small group now, taking photographs having a chat and a coffee. This has led to a great improvement in my own mental health, and I can see a way forward for me now.”

# CASE STUDIES

## Case Study 4:

Participant: David McKinney  
NHSCT Therapeutic  
Photography Workshop.

In 2022, being a missing person with suicidal intent completed my mental health breakdown. The stress from my professional life, compounded by feelings of failure had eroded my self-worth over 15 years. But then, I found the Northern Health & Social Care Trust's therapeutic photography programme run by Belfast Exposed which has changed my life.

Under the guidance of Mervyn Smyth and the support of the other participants, my photography skills began to improve. More importantly, I started to see myself more positively. The act of capturing images helped me break free from the cycles of negative thinking and anxiety that had held me captive for so long. Each photograph I took became a



**THE FEEDBACK FROM SAM ROBB, ONE OF THE PROGRAMMES FACILITATORS, WAS TRANSFORMATIVE. AFTER SUBMITTING EACH OUTING'S PHOTOGRAPHS, SAM GAVE ME ENCOURAGING FEEDBACK. THE PRAISE I RECEIVED OFFERED MOMENTS OF VALIDATION HELPING REBUILD MY SELF-ESTEEM AND KEPT ME GOING WHEN I WAS LOW. THROUGH THE PROGRAMME, I ALSO LEARNED TO EXPRESS MYSELF VISUALLY. PHOTOGRAPHY BECAME A SECOND LANGUAGE, ALLOWING ME TO EXPLORE MY FEELINGS AND UNDERSTAND MYSELF BETTER, EVEN BEFORE I COULD PUT THOSE FEELINGS TO WORDS.**

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moment of clarity, an opportunity to step outside my head and into the world around me.

The feedback from Sam Robb, one of the programme’s facilitators, was transformative. After submitting each outing’s photographs, Sam gave me encouraging feedback. The praise I received offered moments of validation helping rebuild my self-esteem and kept me going when I felt low.

Through the programme, I also learned to express myself visually. Photography became a second language, allowing me to explore my feelings and understand myself better, even before I could put those feelings into words.

The group dynamic is equally healing. Being part of a community of like-minded individuals who are also navigating their own struggles has created a space of empathy and support. This openness has made it easier for me to talk about my suicidal thoughts without fear of judgment.

The regular outings provide something positive and enjoyable to look forward to through visiting various locations to photograph within the Trust’s

area. Along the way, I have built new friendships, which extend beyond the programme.

Sam’s encouragement inspired me to request a portfolio review of a personal photographic project with Deirdre Robb, CEO of Belfast Exposed. The positive impact of the review led to a solo photographic exhibition with community-based gallery, Arts for All, focusing on mental health issues among people over fifty following the loss of three of my friends to suicide.

Without Deirdre’s support and advice, I would not have received an Arts Council of Northern Ireland grant which funded my exhibition, attracting over 300 opening night visitors. The conversations I had during and after the exhibition have shown me the power of photography as a means of communication and healing.

This journey has brought me more than just personal healing—it has opened doors I had never considered before. I received seed funding to start a photographic art businesses and a local business support

initiative offered me free space within a creative arts retail outlet.

I have also been awarded a grant from the SANE Creative Awards Scheme for the second year running which supports artists affected by mental ill-health to take a step towards realising their creative potential.

Looking back, I can see how far I’ve come because of the therapeutic photography programme. I’m excited for what lies ahead as I embark on a Master of Fine Art in Photography at the University of Ulster and participate in Belfast Exposed’s upcoming conference, ‘Healing through Photography – Trauma and the Art of Recovery’, with a solo exhibition charting my journey.

I am immensely grateful to Nicola Arbuckle at the Northern Trust and the whole team at Belfast Exposed who have been instrumental in my recovery through the therapeutic photography programme. My family have seen the positive change in me and our home is a much happier place as a result.

# QUALITY ASSURANCE

We have considered materiality and sensitivity as part of this analysis. All the outcomes chosen make both a reasonable contribution to the overall total value (i.e., none is disproportionately large or small) and we have good third party (i.e., by the beneficiaries themselves) validation of their materiality.

As part of the Social Value process, the final calculation stage undergoes rigorous scrutiny to ensure that each project is not “overclaiming”. When calculating deflator percentages, not only do we take into consideration the data captured/ survey responses/evaluation information we receive, but we also benchmark these figures with other similar social value analysis that we have carried out over the last number of years. This is done by several members within the Rose Regeneration & SVE consultant team not directly involved with the analysis and involves a detailed “deep dive” into the data capture to ensure that there is no double counting. It also ensures that the deflator percentages are accurate in terms of the nature of the activity being carried out, the age/gender of the project participants, and the duration of the activity.

This rigorous approach ensures that a robust and accurate Social Value figure for the projects we analyse are appropriately calculated.

Furthermore, the Social Value Engine has internal safeguards which ensure that project values are not over inflated, double counted, and unrealistic. Using a “traffic light” system when an overall figure may be seen as overly high, the Engine will flag this immediately enabling the user to review all the data inputted to ensure consistency. Again, this adds another layer of scrutiny and robustness to the overall final figures.





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# CONCLUSIONS

This analysis highlights the substantial impact that Belfast Exposed is having through its community outreach programmes, the Therapeutic Photography programme, the training that it offers, its exhibition space, its archive, and its collaboration with many organisations across Northern Ireland.

Delivering £5.10 of Social Value for every £1 spent is a highly credible return and illustrates the clear value for money that the organisation delivers in terms of its funding. Giving the ongoing budgetary challenges faced by many Arts and Cultural groups in Northern Ireland, the work that Belfast Exposed carries out demonstrates clear positive social impacts

in health and wellbeing, cross community work, participatory engagement, skills development, volunteering, and access to creative events.

Their Therapeutic Photography programme is incredibly unique, with its impact on participant's mental health & wellbeing clear to see. As part of the stakeholder engagement process that we carried out for this report, it was evident how the programme has helped clients improve their health and wellbeing and their self-worth.

What was also noticeably clear in the conversations that we had was that programme participants not only felt supported by Belfast Exposed staff throughout this work, but participating in these programmes also helped develop many connections between people. The social connectivity established by taking part in the programme has continued well beyond the initial 10-week programme with many of the groups still meeting to take photographs and socialise with each other.



© Keiran / Belfast Exposed workshop Participant

## CONCLUSIONS

Other key elements that came from these discussions and programme participant evaluations were:

- The interest that many young people have in photography and using Belfast Exposed facilities to improve their skills.



**WHAT A WONDERFUL PROJECT WHICH CLEARLY SHOWCASES THE PROGRESSIVE JOURNEY TAKEN BY TWO GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE POINT WHERE THEY ARE TODAY. NOT ONLY HAVE THE YOUNG PEOPLE MADE NEW FRIENDSHIPS AND IMPROVED THEIR PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE BUT THROUGH YOUR PLANNING, YOU HAVE ENSURED THAT THE PROJECT BECAME SUSTAINABLE, NOT JUST A 'ONE OFF' PROJECT. I KNOW THAT SOME OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN A CAREER IN PHOTOGRAPHY AND THAT IS JUST BRILLIANT.**

Lead for Loneliness

## CONCLUSIONS

Belfast Exposed's Programme bringing together people together from different areas and communities to explore more about photography and the city that they share.



**GOOD TO MEET PEOPLE FROM OTHER AREAS. HEARING PEOPLE'S STORIES ALSO. LEARNED A LOT ABOUT THE HISTORY OF PLACES IN BELFAST AS WELL AS LEARNING WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS.**

Falls Women Centre/Ballybeen Women's Centre Programme Participant

## CONCLUSIONS

The value of their Photography Training Programme to local people wishing to learn or improve their skills.



**I SO THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THE COURSE AND EVERYTHING I LEARNED, AND I WANT TO PURSUE PHOTOGRAPHY AS A FORM OF STRESS RELIEF. TODAY WAS ONE OF THOSE VERY STRESSFUL DAYS BUT LOOKING AT THIS PHOTO CHEERED ME UP! I AM DEFINITELY GOING TO DO THE LIGHTROOM BASICS COURSE IN AUGUST AND LATER THE LEVEL 3 LANDSCAPE COURSE.**

**I'M RESEARCHING A WIDE-ANGLE LENS FOR THE CAMERA TOO. THANKS FOR YOUR GREAT DELIVERY OF INFORMATION AND TAKING THE TIME TO EDIT THIS SHOT.**

Falls Women Centre/Ballybeen Women's Centre Programme Participant

## CONCLUSIONS

The Collaborative nature of the work Belfast Exposed carries out with Statutory Bodies and Community/Voluntary Sector across Northern Ireland.



**OUR SERVICE WORKS WITH CLIENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES WHO ALSO HAVE MENTAL HEALTH AND/ OR FORENSIC NEEDS.**

**OUR SERVICE USERS PROVIDED VERY POSITIVE FEEDBACK REGARDING THE GROUP AND REPORTED BENEFICIAL IMPACTS ON THEIR MENTAL HEALTH. SOME OF OUR SERVICE USERS ARE HIGH RISK OF SELF-INJURIOUS BEHAVIOURS AND POOR MENTAL HEALTH AND MOST REPORTED THAT THE PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP HELPED PREVENT A DIP IN THEIR MENTAL HEALTH, AND THEY WERE ALSO FELT A POSITIVE CONNECTION AND SENSE OF BELONGING WITH THE GROUP. ALL THE SERVICE USERS WHO PARTOOK IN THE GROUP ARE KEEN TO COMPLETE FURTHER PROJECTS WITH MERVYN AND BELFAST EXPOSED.**

**AS AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST WITHIN THE TRUST, I CANNOT SPEAK MORE HIGHLY OF BELFAST EXPOSED AND THE SERVICE THEY PROVIDE. IT HAS HAD A VERY POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR SERVICE USERS, AND I AM VERY KEEN TO COMPLETE FURTHER PROJECTS WITH THEM IN THE FUTURE.**

Northern Health & Social Care Trust

# CONCLUSIONS

The Value of the Exhibition Space and its Archive to local people in showcasing the work of local photographers and Northern Ireland.



**THE RECOGNITION OF THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF USING PHOTOGRAPHY, NOT ONLY IN STORY TELLING BUT ALSO REGARDING OUR LOCAL HISTORY, THE SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY AND GIVING VOICE TO PLACES... HAS BEEN A LIFE CHANGER.**

Visitor

# CONCLUSIONS



In terms of next steps, we note the following

- **Belfast Exposed has recently begun using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to measure in more detail the impact of its programmes on participants Mental Health. This should help them to further demonstrate their social impact particularly around participant's health & wellbeing.**
- **Belfast Exposed should continue to carry out regular surveys, focus groups, and any other appropriate method of data collection so to ascertain the impact of the services that they offer. Collation of this data helps provide evidence of the impact of the work that they carry out as well as ensuring that the service they provide remain effective and meeting the needs of their beneficiaries.**
- **That Belfast Exposed should carry out a Social Value analysis of the work it does either on an annual or biannual basis, to help demonstrate the clear impact of its work to its staff, board, funders and other interested stakeholders.**

