



Union St Social Impact Snapshot

AUGUST 2018



www.union-st.org



“Union St has the perfect balance of being both a friendly, welcoming atmosphere, but also a productive environment where you can get your job done. I’ve been a member of two other co-working spaces, and Union St is by far the best.”

- Co-working Member Amy

Welcome to our impact snapshot

Union St is a place where people can meet, work and collaborate. It exists to make a difference:

For people who are self-employed, sole traders or remote workers.

For new start-ups.

For independent food retailers.

For campaigning and voluntary organisations.

For event organisers.

For community and social enterprises.

For Sheffielders.

For our city.

Union St has created a city centre hub of co-working, street food and public events.

It was founded as an independent social enterprise managed for the benefit of our members rather than for an owner or shareholders.

Surplus income is re-invested for the common good: into developing the facilities and activities our city has identified it needs.

Union St has revitalised a previously empty city centre building.

It has been a springboard for independent food businesses. It nurtures and supports enterprise from pre-start to startup and beyond.

It is recognised nationally as a pioneer in building a collaborative ecosystem: a community of co-workers, food lovers, social entrepreneurs and event organisers working together for, and with, Sheffield.



Matt Hill,
Union St Co-ordinator

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A man with short, light-colored hair is smiling and looking towards the right. He is wearing a dark jacket and jeans. In the background, a woman with long dark hair is smiling and working at a desk. The scene is set in a modern, collaborative office environment with warm lighting. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“Cosy, collaborative, professional and useful: I cannot recommend Union St highly enough. There is nowhere else in Sheffield like this. Being here has made a big difference to staff wellbeing, and therefore to the sustainability of the charity.”

- Co-working Member Paul

Why measure impact: our responsibility

As a social enterprise Union St doesn't only seek to create a positive bottom line on a set of accounts. We can measure our performance against a **triple bottom line** to demonstrate:

- Our financial sustainability. We need to create a surplus to continue doing what we do. As a Community Interest Company, Union St reinvests profits in developing activities which achieve our social purpose.
- The positive social impacts we effect and create.
- Our environmental impact, which we seek to minimise.

Just as we have a legal responsibility to keep our financial records and accounts up to date we believe we have a responsibility to measure and communicate the social impact we create.

Measuring our impact makes us more accountable. This impact snapshot captures many of the outcomes created by Union St and gives us a benchmark against which future impact will be compared.

To measure our impact in a rigorous manner, we engaged independent social enterprise consultant Jamie Veitch to develop a transparent and replicable impact measurement methodology.

The snapshot we publish within this report is the start of an ongoing process to measure, learn from and improve our impact.

Union St exists because of our commitment to creating specific social impacts. We are proud of the impact we have created and we are determined to use the data we have measured to help us do what we do even better.

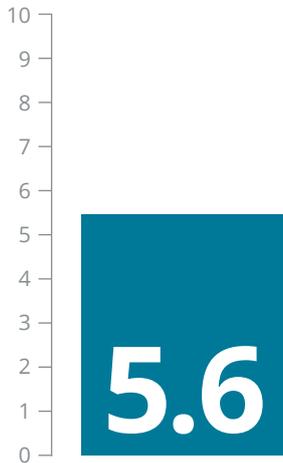
93%

of co-workers have increased productivity since working from Union St.

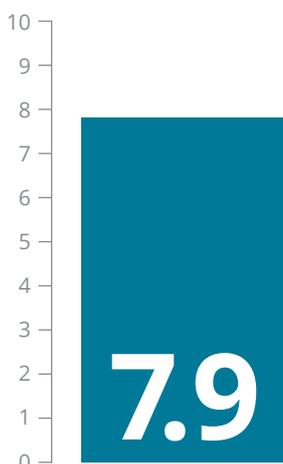


Context: freelancers and the Sheffield economy

How Union St co-working members would have rated their sense of wellbeing and work life balance before joining:



How Union St co-working members rate their sense of wellbeing and work life balance now:



Union St's co-working space exists to meet the needs of people self-employed by choice, along with remote working employees of businesses, charities, social enterprises and education providers.

Self-employment is at a record high in the UK. The number of self-employed has increased from 3.3 million people in 2001 to 4.8 million (15.1% of the labour force) in 2017¹.

Many choose to enter self-employment for flexibility, variety, control and work-life balance. For others self-employment was not a deliberate choice but is their only route to earn an income.

The increase in 'gig economy' work and the use of zero-hours contracts have been met with concern. IPSE (the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed) has called for better support for the vulnerable self-employed, and pressed for action on businesses falsely treating workers as self-employed. This has been the subject of much media and parliamentary debate and a large focus of last year's Taylor Review².

IPSE is concerned that the public perception of self-employment is being distorted by 'a disproportionate focus on this minority of gig economy workers.'

It finds work related satisfaction for people self-employed by choice to be generally high, but has identified a number of challenges faced by self-employed professionals.

IPSE sought to answer the question, 'What makes for good self-employment,' in a recent publication³.

Sheffield

108,000 people – 8.5% of adults – in Sheffield are self-employed, according to the Office for National Statistics' annual population survey covering April 2017 to March 2018⁴.

The city is the fifth best place in the UK to be self-employed, according to respondents to 2017's *Definitive Study of the Self-Employed*⁵ commissioned by online accounting software provider Intuit QuickBooks, albeit with the third lowest mean yearly income of £24,791.

Freelancers and micro business owners in Sheffield have one of the biggest late payment problems in the UK, according to research by another online accounting software provider, FreeAgent. Their research analysed 50,000 businesses and hundreds of thousands of invoices. Only 29% of invoices sent by their Sheffield users were paid on time.

Late payment, irregularity and volatility of income are significant contributors to anxiety and have a detrimental impact on mental health, according to IPSE; a culture of poor or late payment is one of the main things dragging down wellbeing and contentment in the sector.

Isolation and loneliness

Isolation is a problem for many self-employed people, and for remote-working employees.

Being Freelance podcast host Steve Folland calls it the biggest challenge people have to overcome:

“For many people there’s an immediate loneliness to being a freelancer. So many of my guests struggle with these things, and unfortunately that can feed into mental health issues if you don’t get out there and take care of yourself. I speak to a lot of freelancers who struggle with mental wellbeing because of isolation.”⁶

2017 research by Aldermore found loneliness and isolation significant, with 39% of their respondents (1003 self-employed adults) saying they have been affected. “The self-employed in the UK are currently struggling with feelings of loneliness and a loss of control which need to be addressed if more people are to successfully make the transition,” according to their report⁷.

Loneliness and isolation can have a profound impact on productivity, wellbeing, mental health, and physical health. It has been linked to depression and risk of heart attack.

For many people co-working spaces are the perfect antidote to isolation, according to IPSE:

“Co-working spaces can be an extremely valuable resource to help combat social isolation and provide important moral and psychological support. They can also help reduce the risks that prolonged remote independent working can pose to mental health.”

One of the four key recommendations of their “What makes for good self-employment?” report is to promote co-working to help self-employed people support each other.

“Co-working spaces allow the self-employed and freelancers to operate in an office-like environment generally on an as-needs, flexible basis – and without any of the politics or costly overheads.”

¹Trends in self-employment in the UK, Office for National Statistics, February 2018. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/trendsinselfemploymentintheuk/2018-02-07>

²Good work: the Taylor review of modern working practices, July 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-work-the-taylor-review-of-modern-working-practices>

³What makes for good self-employment? IPSE (the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed) and the IPA (the Involvement and Participation Association), 2018. <https://www.ipse.co.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/3e806704-e4f2-4140-853ff55bc-cad6ca3.pdf>

⁴Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics, Office for National Statistics. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/lep/1925185559/report.aspx>

⁵Definitive Study of the Self-Employed, 2017. <https://quickbooks.intuit.com/uk/resources/self-employed/top-uk-cities-to-be-self-employed/>

⁶The loneliness of the long-distance freelancer, *Modern Work Magazine*, December 2017. <http://modernworkmag.co.uk/article/loneliness-long-distance-freelancer/1512726060>

⁷Loneliness and lack of control – report highlights key stresses facing UK entrepreneurs, March 2017. <https://www.aldermore.co.uk/about-us/newsroom/2017/03/loneliness-and-lack-of-control-report-highlights-key-stresses-facing-uk-entrepreneurs/>

“As a sole trader, co-working at Union St has been a real life line. I work with clients all over the country, and Union St has given me roots in my home city of Sheffield. I have developed my business through the coaching and workshops on offer to members. Having access to affordable spaces has been really useful for hosting meetings and training events. Union St has helped me connect with inspiring people working in lots of different fields. Social events, chats around the kettle and regular yoga have been great for my wellbeing. There is a real collective energy and positive buzz about the place which feels different to any other co-working place I’ve been to.”

- Co-working Member Catherine

Our impact: supporting co-workers

Our community interest company, The Co-working Co-operative CIC operates the co-working space on Union St's 3rd floor. It is run for the benefit of members and to support the building's regeneration.

But it is more than a physical place. Our city centre co-working space was developed specifically to support freelancers and remote workers. It is home to a creative, collaborative community in a positive, friendly and productive environment.

The diversity of what our co-workers do is a strength of Union St.

Members' work includes:

Illustration, design, writing, programming, app development, coding, social enterprise, marketing, copywriting, engineering, analysis, award judging, filmmaking, business psychology, campaign organising, event organising and many more areas of economic and creative activity.

Since opening Union St we've developed the layout and design of our co-working and public spaces, meeting rooms and event space to better meet our members' needs. Many members have told us about the positive effects of being part of Union St on their work, their productivity and their health and wellbeing.

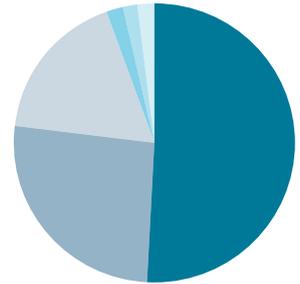
Until this snapshot we'd not formally captured this impact. Independent social enterprise consultant Jamie Veitch worked with us for a couple of days in August 2018 to design a simple impact snapshot – and create a benchmark for future impact measurement and comparison.

We asked all 75 of our current co-working members and personal desk residents to take part in a short survey between the 10th and the 13th of August.

57 members participated: a healthy 76% response rate, especially considering the time of year and short timescale.

Union St co-workers include freelancers and sole traders, remote workers, and people who are part of a University.

Just over half of respondents are sole traders or freelancers. Union St offers significant appeal to remote workers too, some from micro-enterprises but also 10 (17.5%) who work for a business, social enterprise or charity with over 10 staff.



- Sole trader or freelancer (50.9%)
- Part of registered business/social enterprise/charity with 1-3 staff (26.3%)
- Part of registered business/social enterprise/charity with 4-10 staff (17.5%)
- Part of registered business/social enterprise/charity with over 10 staff (1.8%)
- Remote worker for company with over 10 (50+) staff (1.8%)
- Part of a university (1.8%)

Our impact on isolation, health and wellbeing

40%

increase in members' wellbeing and work life balance since joining Union St.

"This is a great space, with great people and a great atmosphere. I always find it an incredible calm working environment, where I am very productive."

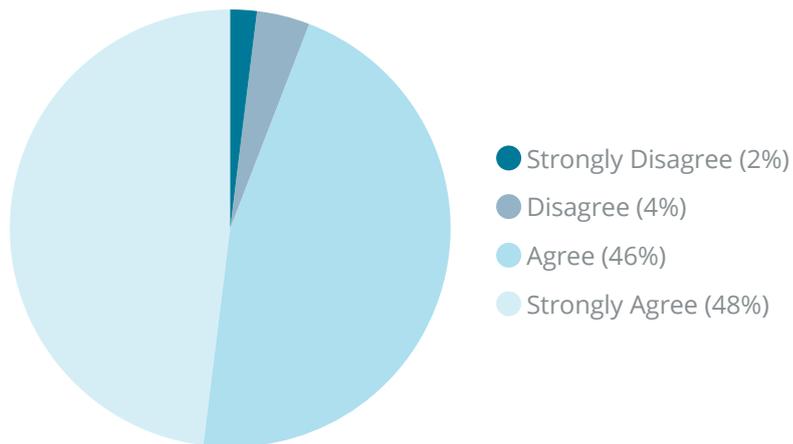
Co-working spaces and collaboration with others help to address the well-documented issues of isolation, loneliness, and work-life balance which prove so detrimental to many freelancers' health. These issues can lead to significant mental and physical illness – we summarised recent evidence of these problems on pages 6 and 7.

We asked members:

Since working from Union St have you experienced a reduced sense of isolation?

YES 93%

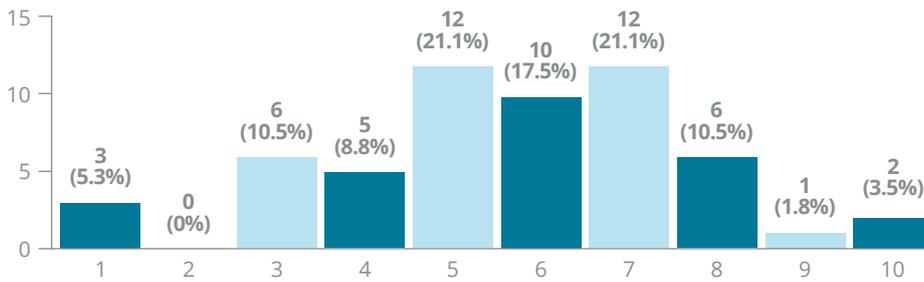
We asked members whether membership of Union St has impacted on their health and wellbeing. 94% of members said membership has had a positive effect. Many members made comments, which you can read throughout this report:



94% of respondents agree or strongly agree that becoming a member has been good for their health and wellbeing.

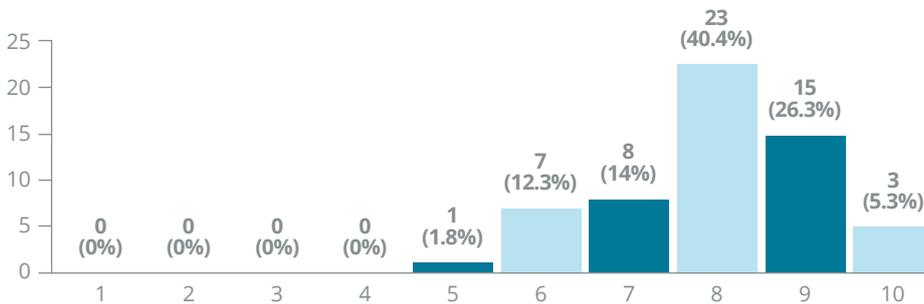
We wanted to measure the ‘distance traveled’ so far by members, and asked them to score their sense of wellbeing and work life balance before and after they joined Union St:

Before you were a member of Union St, how would you have rated your sense of wellbeing and work life balance?



Mean score from all respondents: 5.6 (out of 10)

How would you rate your sense of wellbeing and work life balance now?



Mean score from all respondents: 7.9 (out of 10)

The mean score members give about their wellbeing and worklife balance is over 40% higher now than before joining Union St, increasing from 5.6 to 7.9.

Moving forward we will ask new members to score their sense of wellbeing when they join Union St as part of our induction questionnaire.

“In a world where it is becoming more common to work remotely or as a contractor, spaces like Union St are not only good for business, they are good for workers – preventing the inevitable isolation of working from home.”

Our impact on productivity, opportunities, and members' businesses

15%

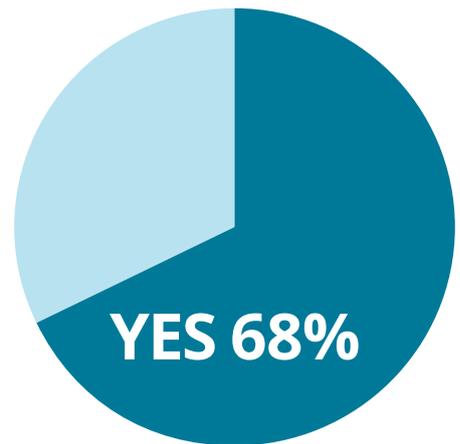
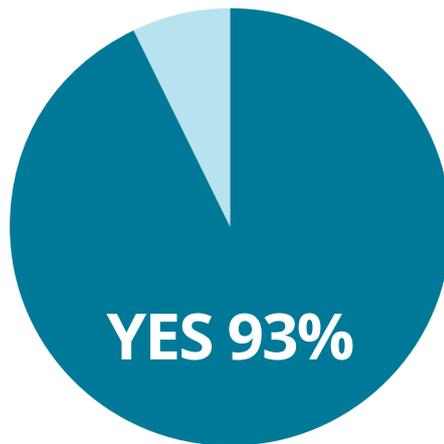
increase in members' confidence in their business' future sustainability since joining Union St.

"I find the space at Union St a very productive one and I enjoy working alongside other people who are freelance and understand its ups and downs."

Beyond the significant impact that working at Union St has on members' wellbeing, our co-working space has helped many members to develop their businesses. We asked members:

Since working from Union St have you increased your productivity?

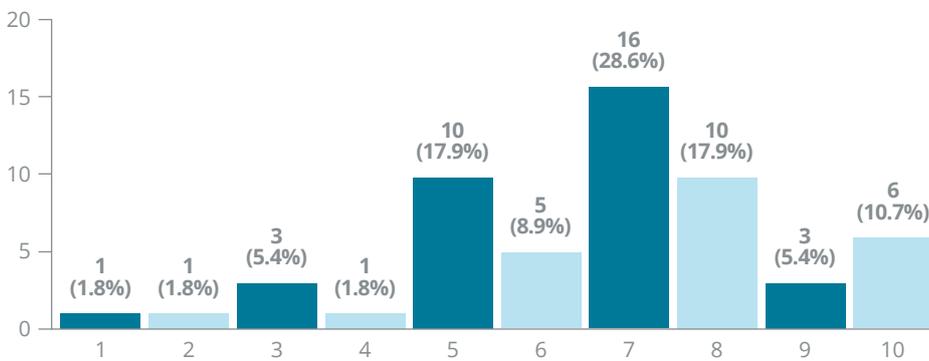
Since working from Union St have you generated new opportunities?



Our members' confidence in the future sustainability of their business

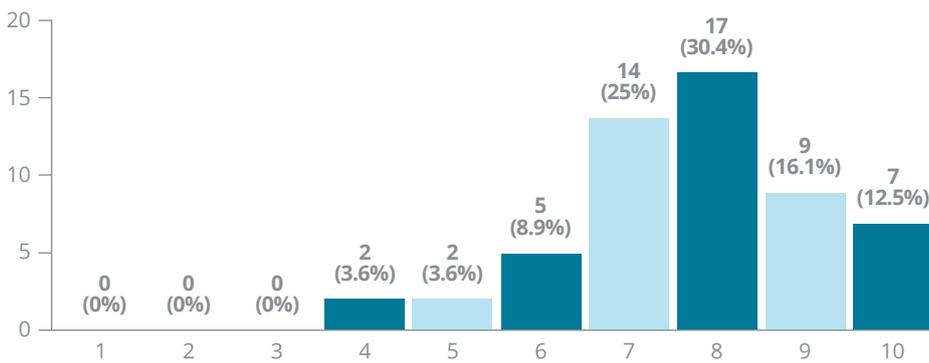
Confidence has been described as 'the most important contributor to the success or failure of a business' and a number of indices within Sheffield, Yorkshire and the UK attempt to measure business leaders', entrepreneurs' and social entrepreneurs' confidence. It can of course be affected by a variety of external factors, outside of the control of individuals, and there's a documented link between uncertainty and lower confidence.

Before you were a member of Union St, how confident were you about your business' future sustainability?



Mean score from all respondents: 6.6 (out of 10)

How confident are you now about your business' future sustainability?



Mean score from all respondents: 7.6 (out of 10)

The mean score members give for their confidence in their business' future sustainability is 15% higher now than before joining Union St, increasing from 6.6 to 7.6.

48 (84% of respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that becoming a member of Union St has been good for their business.

“Union St has been great for my business. I get more done and it’s nice to chat to other freelancers from time to time.”

How can we increase our impact for members?

“Union St has been an incredible addition to my professional life and the sustainability of our organisation. It provides a central location, a great working environment and a chance to network with other people with a similar mission.”

While members gave overwhelmingly positive scores when measuring the impact of Union St on their wellbeing and productivity, we know there is more we can do. Union St has developed our offer to members significantly over the past three years and will continue to seek members' input.

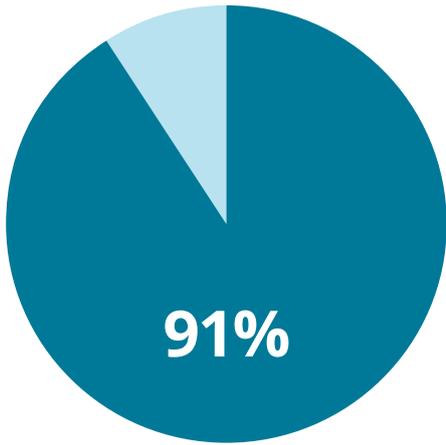
In our social impact snapshot survey we asked members about the single biggest thing we could do to improve their experience as a Union St member. The most common request was to increase space for private phone and video calls.

We're assessing all of the feedback members gave. Many of the improvements to Union St come as a result of member requests and involvement, and two working groups operate regularly, involving members who want to participate in decision-making and development of our facilities and activities.

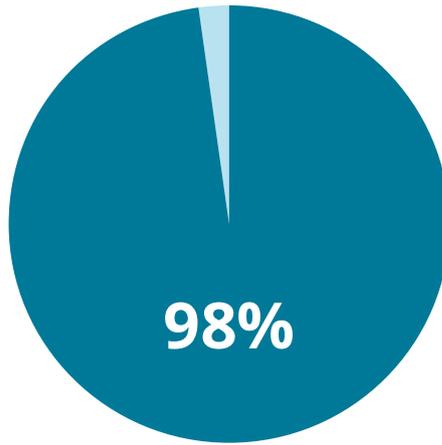
Value for money has always been core to Union St's offer, and the spaces within our building work as a pathway, with members of the public able to use our downstairs café and meeting space free of charge. With superfast wifi, power sockets and a welcoming environment this area offers all of the benefits that isolated freelancers can gain from working in cafes, whilst introducing them to the space.

Our co-working floor operates with a free two-week trial so potential members can experience how working from Union St can benefit them. Tiered pricing offers great value, with costs dependent on amount of use required and either a minimal commitment or a discounted rate for people wanting to sign up for a year or more.

Our membership fees are as low as we can make them whilst maintaining financial sustainability and are comparable to or much lower than co-working spaces in other cities, or to alternative provision in Sheffield (though there is no directly equivalent provision).



91% of co-working members say membership is good value.

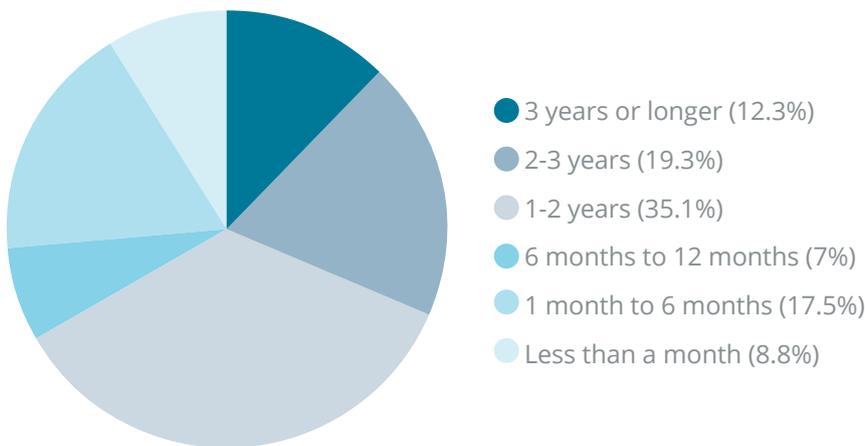


98% members enjoy working alongside other independent people at Union St.

“Union St is a great co-working space. I love the flexibility it offers in its packages and also through the design of the space.”

“It provides a unique sense of being part of a professional community. It’s quiet and sociable at the same time.”

Union St is attracting more new members, and retaining existing members. We analysed how long survey respondents have been a member of Union St:



33% of respondents have been co-working members for a year or less. The figures reflect how Union St co-working launched with a small group of early-adopters, attracting more new members in our 2nd and 3rd year.



What else do co-working members say about Union St?

“As the only person in my company who is based in Sheffield, being at Union St makes a big difference to my daily life, by allowing me to be around other people and enjoy social interaction. The ten minutes cycle into town every day are good for my health, and help me to keep my home and work life separate. Sheffield is a city of entrepreneurs and people who are keen to make a difference – having Union St is great for giving them an affordable and well-designed place to work out of.”

“Great place for remote workers to get out of the house! Although I work in a different field to lots of the more creative/entrepreneurial members, it’s great to be around them. Love the social aspect, good replacement for the office environment I gave up when going remote!”

“Since joining Union St as a fledgling business over a year ago, I’ve met lots of like-minded people that I wouldn’t have otherwise. It has (so far) provided an environment that inspires hard work while simultaneously encouraging collaboration and friendships. I’m grateful for that, because as a freelancer it’s not easy to come by somewhere as genuine.”

“As a sole-trader Union St has been great for my morale and head space. I go mad working from home too long, so it’s great for my soul to get that work/life divide. Plus, it’s right in the heart of the city, I’m more productive, and I’ve have made some great friends who also keep me on my toes work-wise!”



“Co-working at Union St is a big bonus for me and my business. I get a great sense of community, collaboration and connection through my involvement with Union St. This was something that was sorely lacking when I worked from home and struggled to find the working relationships that are very important to me. It’s great to work in a place with diverse, stimulating, friendly people. Keep up the great (co-)work!”

“Sheffield is a city of entrepreneurs and people who are keen to make a difference – having Union St is great for giving them an affordable and well-designed place to work out of.”

“Union St has helped me build my Sheffield network having moved back here after 18 years in London. Much of the work I do is client facing, so it’s great to have Union St colleagues I can share the joys and challenges of freelance work with in a friendly, creative and inspiring space.”

“Having a central workspace and social meeting point for the third sector has greatly increased my capacity to collaborate with others and thus improve our social impact.”

“Places like Union St are essential for the creation, nurturing and retention of small businesses in Sheffield.”

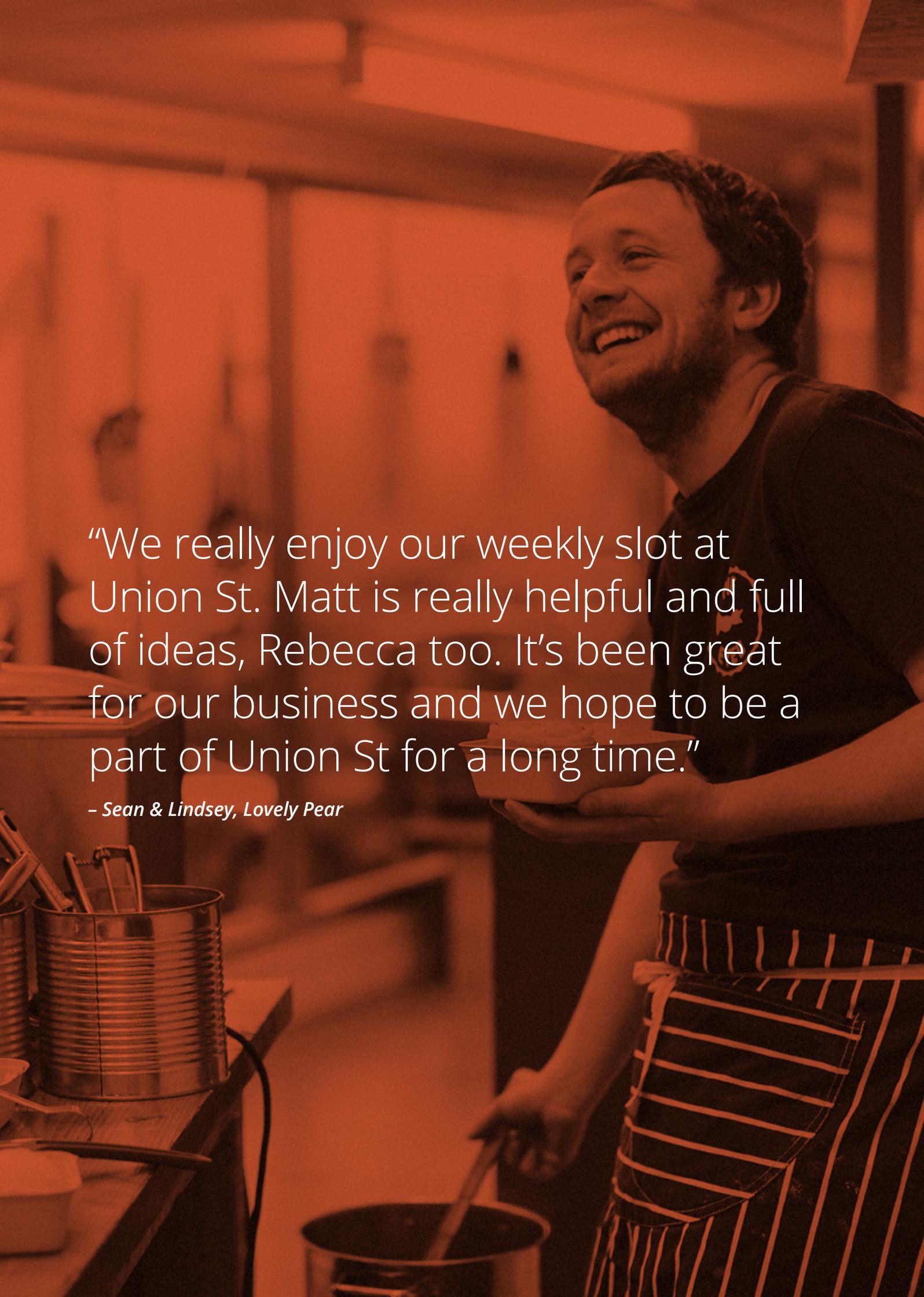
“Union St is a wonderfully welcoming and sociable space. It is a great place to work and helps me to be productive.”

“Working at Union St helps me structure my work time and get more done.”

“I love the care and thought that Union St puts into making sure that everything is done in an ethical and socially responsible way.”





A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a dark t-shirt and a striped apron, is smiling broadly while holding a white bowl. He is in a kitchen setting, with a metal pot on a stove in front of him. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and kitchen equipment. The entire image has a warm, orange-red color cast.

“We really enjoy our weekly slot at Union St. Matt is really helpful and full of ideas, Rebecca too. It’s been great for our business and we hope to be a part of Union St for a long time.”

- Sean & Lindsey, Lovely Pear

Our impact supporting independent and local food traders

Space for independent food businesses has been an integral part of Union St since our launch.

Many of the food pop-ups at Union St have received rave reviews in local media with customers queuing out of the door.

A number of our traders have gone on to offer supper and breakfast clubs, outside catering, or after testing and refining their menus, have taken their own larger premises elsewhere.

The quality, diversity, creativity and value of the food available at Union St attracts increasing numbers of passers-by. Other members of the public make Union St a destination for lunchtime meetings. And while our co-working members have access to kitchen facilities in the co-working space, they tell us they love the food here too.

We asked our current food traders about their experience running a food pop-up at Union St.

Respondents told us that since selling food from Union St, they have:

- Registered as a business
Yes: 100%
- Tested and validated their menu
Yes: 100%
- Generated new opportunities
Yes: 100%
- Collaborated with other food vendors here
Yes: 33%
- Increased weekly takings (revenue)
Yes: 100%
- Secured bookings for catering and events that they can attribute to Union St
Yes: 100%

Union St helps food vendors develop successful businesses.

Moreover, the space is not only for new start-up food traders: many established chefs including high profile Masterchef contestants have brought food to Sheffield via Union St.

100%

of traders in our August 2018 impact snapshot told us they have secured bookings for catering and events that they can attribute to Union St.

How traders benefit from Union St

33%

agree and

67%

strongly agree that running a pop-up has been a good business decision.

“Really good opportunity to test your food and business at Union St.”

“A very friendly and supportive working environment when you want to start a new business.”

Pop-up cafes give budding entrepreneurs and established chefs alike a fantastic opportunity to test ideas. From concepts to menu items, pricing, brand and even the name of their business, they can experiment, refine and validate, to rapidly understand the potential market for their food.

The chance to meet and interact with customers in Union St – which has established itself as a food destination – means food traders can test the water without the enormous overheads of taking on traditional premises.

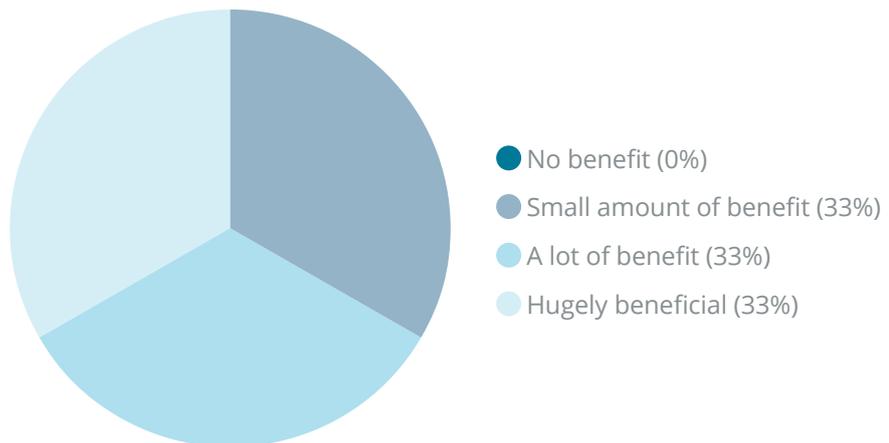
Many traders also encourage Union St customers to sign up to their mailing lists, follow them on social media and come to other locations they offer food.

Our highly visible and convenient city-centre location and the consistent efforts we have made, over a long period of time, to market the pop-ups to the public give new traders a kick-start.

Food vendors say Union St’s location is a huge benefit, with 100% agreeing it is a great place to run an independent food business, and 100% saying the position and visibility to walk-in customers benefits them.

The trade from co-working members – who pass our café on their way in and out on Union St is also meaningful for food vendors.

When asked, ‘Please rate how much you have benefited from selling your food to Union St co-working members’



Developing sustainable, confident local food businesses

Union St has helped to revitalize Sheffield's independent city-centre food scene.

Pop-ups serve Taiwanese food, freshly prepared wraps, Korean soul food, proper pies with mash, peas and gravy, pastries, filled rolls, fresh salads and cakes, soups, noodles, an enormous variety of vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free and soya-free main courses and snacks, hot and cold drinks and great coffee.

Our position means reviewers from Sheffield's newspapers, magazines and food and drink websites can easily find a new pop-up to write about, giving our traders an excellent opportunity for media exposure.

For many traders Union St has also been a springboard. One young entrepreneur was signposted here through The Prince's Trust. His business now continues to serve food here and has grown an outside catering business, taking on over 80 bookings in 2018.

Food vendors at Union St have worked together, sharing advice, ideas and experience. Some have accessed professional marketing and PR support and advice from co-working members.

In our impact snapshot we asked existing traders how confident they were about their business' future sustainability before coming to Union St and how confident they are now. This is what they told us:

Before you ran your food pop-up at Union St, how confident were you about your business' future sustainability?

Mean score: 7 (out of 10)

How confident are you now about your business' future sustainability?

Mean score: 8.7 (out of 10)

The mean score food pop-ups give for their confidence in their business' future sustainability is 24% higher now than before joining Union St, increasing from 7 to 8.7.

100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that running a pop up at Union St has been a good business decision.

We'll continue to support our independent food traders, working with them to develop their capacity and promote their menus.

Our unique food offer – varied, healthy food available at extremely cost-effective rates – is great for Sheffields too.

“Union St is lovely place to work. Everyone is really friendly and welcoming. The co-working space upstairs is great and it's really handy to have coffee and food as well as the coffee shop downstairs to meet with friends or business colleagues and grab lunch.”

“Union St has a daily rotation of pop-up cafes open to the public, offering something different and delicious every weekday at a completely reasonable price.”

*– Jacqueline Chell in
Our Favourite Places¹*

¹<https://www.ourfaveplaces.co.uk/where-to-go/union-st/>

The impact of our supply chain

Each £1 we spend is worth:



£1.76 to Sheffield's economy if we buy from a local supplier.



£0.36 to Sheffield's economy if we buy from outside Sheffield.

By buying from businesses, social enterprises and organisations based in Sheffield, our spending supports further social impact.

Purchasing from social enterprises supports other businesses who reinvest their profits for social aims. It supports their impact and sustainability.

Buying locally means more money circulates in Sheffield's economy. Research into the local multiplier effect has found every £1 spent with a local supplier to be worth £1.76 to a local economy, and only 36 pence if it is spent out of the local area: £1 spent locally is worth almost 400% more to the local economy¹.

Since launching Union St we have consciously bought goods and services from local and social sector suppliers.

For example, in 2017 we commissioned a cleaning service for the building. Union St was one of the first organisations in the city to sign up to office cleaning from Just Works, a social enterprise which 'supports people with complex issues to recover, overcome barriers and transition into supported work.'

Since then, Just Works has secured contracts with other locations in Sheffield. In a recent radio interview Just Works employee James described the positive impact that Just Works has had on his life, and his own journey from facing challenges including homelessness and addiction to securing a paid Operations Manager role.



Every £1 spent with a local supplier is worth almost

400%

more to Sheffield's economy.

¹About LM3, LM3 Online. <https://www.lm3online.com/about>

Other social enterprises and local businesses in our supply chain include:

- Our Cow Molly supply us with local free range milk
- Origin Broadband provide our superfast WiFi
- Resolve IT help us to resolve any IT issues
- We have regular advertising in Now Then Magazine, a free independent arts and culture magazine (ran by Opus Independents, itself a social enterprise)
- We have switched our electricity supply recently to Ecotricity
- Ollie Allan, UK's Young Joiner of the Year 2017, made furniture for Union St
- We subscribe to *Positive News* magazine, published by a community benefit society to produce constructive, quality, independent and trustworthy journalism about progress and possibility
- Our tea, soap and toilet rolls are supplied by local workers' co-op Lembas
- We buy and serve locally roasted, award-winning Darkwoods coffee

- Our pastries, croissants and chocolate brownies come from Forge Bakehouse and vegan cupcakes from Lovely Pear
- And many other local businesses and social enterprises

Whenever possible and appropriate, we have sourced services or commissioned Union St members to run workshops or events, further assisting their sustainability and supporting their businesses.

We will continue to build relationships with social sector and local suppliers, seeking high quality providers who share Union St's values.

Some larger social enterprises measure their expenditure on suppliers in areas of high deprivation local to them. To date, we've not measured this.

In the future we intend to map the exact proportions of our expenditure on social sector and local suppliers, and in areas of deprivation.

We know that directing our expenditure to local suppliers and social enterprises, and to mission-driven organisations outside of Sheffield, has considerably extended our impact. It makes a direct contribution to the local economy and to the success of many values-driven businesses.

ecotricity



resolve.
we are it





Our impact: events for Sheffield

Public events listed on Union St's Facebook page:



From an adult learning café to yoga in the evenings and mornings, via the beautiful rhythms of the West African djembe drum, life drawing, Spanish classes, food growing workshops and meet-ups for coders, there's something for everyone at Union St.

An extensive programme includes free and low-cost events, meetups, public and member-only events, workshops, training, taster sessions, bike repairs and clothes swaps.

Union St has also been used for launches, political speeches and TV appearances; theatre and dance rehearsals and many more regular and one-off events. Many of Sheffield's nationally-unique Festival of Debate events are held here too.

As part of our own commitment to generating positive impact, we have switched ticketing platforms away from Eventbrite and use the social purpose ticketing platform Tickets for Good to process bookings for events.

There have already been 20% more events held at Union St in 2018 than 2017, and our position, ethos, community and excellent value offer organisers a unique combination and a low-cost, low-risk route to run an event in a professional city centre venue.

That translates into increased accessibility, giving Sheffielders the chance to attend free and low cost, or very high value for money, events in a convenient location.

Union St makes a specific commitment to offer 'support for event organisers' as part of our social impact.

Support can include introductory free space hire, then flexible hire costs that increase as an event series become more established.

It also gives access to facilities including our projector, screen and flipcharts, wifi and flexible layout options, plus help with marketing and special rates for catering (supporting our pop-up food providers).

Thanks to this package, a growing number of individuals and organisations in Sheffield have the confidence to test ideas and put on a fascinating range of events.

Some of the events held at Union St in 2018 include:

African Drumming Evening classes	Pop Pilates
Anxiety and Stress Workshop	Self Care Sunday
Applying for ACE Project Grants	SheFest 2018: Introduction to Squarespace
Be remarkable: A creative's guide to working less and earning more	Sheffield Adult Learning Cafe
CCD Conference	Taster Yoga Classes
Common Thread Clothes Exchange	The Organizer: Film screening & live Q&A with Wade Rathke
Craft Club & Repair Cafe	The Personal Is Still Political: A Facilitated Dialogue
Creative confidence: How to do work you love and get paid what you're worth	Training: Introduction to Community Organising
D.I.Y Screen Printing	Training: Video Editing For Social Media Campaigns
Endless Love Creative - Life Drawing	Vegan Breakfast Club
Festival of Debate	WAVE your bookkeeping nightmares goodbye
Food Growing Workshop	
Get Your Act Together! - Productivity Workshop	
Girl Gang Sheffield: Speed Mate-ing	
Girls with Drills: Making an Ottoman	
Give it a Crack	
How you & your business can access the media in a crowded market	
Insightly – Build lifelong customer relationships	
Introduction to RP Accent Workshop	

"Social events, chats around the kettle and regular yoga have been great for my wellbeing."

"Having access to affordable spaces has been really useful for hosting meetings and training."

"It's been great, as a complete new arrival in the city, to have a space that 'plugs me in' to some of the best things going on in Sheffield."

What partners and stakeholders say about our impact

Union St could not and would not be thriving without the relationships we've built.

We are grateful to our co-working members, our independent food retailers, event organisers and members of the public who all support Union St every day in so many ways.

And we thank the extensive range of stakeholders from across Sheffield's public, private, education, voluntary, community and social sectors who have and continue to support Union St.

"Union St is one of those unique resources in Sheffield that we should all be very proud of – it's so much more than a very convenient place to work and eat! It manages to create that special fusion of different people, activities, ideas and cultures within which inspiration and opportunity take shape.

"It is a base for everything from pop up cafés to pilates, independent businesses to investors, and it manages to achieve this with an individuality and warmth of character that you don't get in most city centre offices.

"As a result, Union St now plays a seminal role in supporting start-ups and entrepreneurship (in all its many forms), in our city, and long may it continue!"

– Morgan Killick, Managing Director, Level Up Solutions Ltd and Business Growth Advisor, Business Sheffield

"I've been running monthly digital skills workshops at Union St since the beginning of the year which have resulted in a good number of enquiries for both individual coaching and organisational productivity projects. Being part of the community at Union St has given me plenty of opportunities to make new connections and develop meaningful relationships."

– Rachel Ferla, Digital Skills Consultant, Organise Chaos Ltd

"I always enjoy a trip down to Union St. The vibe Matt and the team have developed down there is amazing and the look is something I appreciate, being the exact kind of stuff we make at Strip the Willow. The casual but functional rustic feeling brings out the creative in every meeting, be it Social Enterprise Social, Sheffield Housing Conversation, SEN meetings, maker sessions or just a casual coffee or delicious snack in the cafe area.

"The work that takes place down there – and the networking connections that inevitably happen when so many creative people share a space – have probably made a huge contribution to the blossoming state of social enterprise in the city – now an official SEUK Social Enterprise Place."

– Jon Johnson, Strip the Willow, REACH Homes and the National Federation for Affordable Building

Press coverage: Union St's impact in the media

We're grateful for the fantastic media coverage Union St has received across a range of media. Most of the coverage has been generated after journalists heard about our mission and the impact we create and approached us. Our food vendors have also had positive reviews in our local press.

Union St has been featured positively in media including:

Now Then

The Sheffield Star

The Sheffield Telegraph

Sheffield Live radio and television

BBC Radio Sheffield

BBC Look North

Our Favourite Places

The Sunday Times

Modern Work Magazine

Creative Boom Magazine

BQ Magazine

Pioneers Post

and other publications and media.

Good media coverage of Union St helps to inform and engage people so they know what to find at Union St – from co-working space to food and events – and why we exist, communicating our impact and supporting our food traders.

We've always been responsive to media enquiries, and have previously supported our pop-ups with access to communications and public relations mentoring.

Our Meet the Journalists event, organised in collaboration with Enterprise Nation, enabled participants to meet journalists from The Sunday Times and The Financial Times, plus directors of two local PR agencies, picking speakers' brains about what journalists are looking for in a story or pitch and how to engage the media.

Alongside working with traditional media we maintain an active presence on social media. Our short 'Union St TV' has been viewed nearly 2000 times. Union St has over 3600 followers on Twitter, over 2300 on Instagram and over 3000 on Facebook. Social media has proven to be a highly effective and powerful route to promote events at Union St and support our food vendors.

"An airy, exciting space right in the heart of Sheffield"

– Modern Work Magazine

"An affordable co-working space with an emphasis on sharing skills and resources"

– The Sunday Times

Union St's Social Impact Snapshot Scorecard

93%	Co-working members reporting increased productivity since working from Union St.	91%	Members who believe Union St is good value for money.
40%	Increase in members' wellbeing and work life balance since joining Union St.	100%	Food traders who have secured bookings for catering and events that they can attribute to Union St.
7.9	Mean score members give about their wellbeing and worklife balance.	100%	Food traders who have increased weekly takings since selling food from Union St.
94%	Members who agree or strongly agree that becoming a member has been good for their health and wellbeing.	100%	Food traders who say running a pop up at Union St has been a good business decision.
15%	Increase in members' confidence in their business' future sustainability since joining Union St.	8.7	Mean confidence of food traders about their business' future sustainability.
7.6	Mean confidence of co-workers about their business' future sustainability.	66	Public events listed on Union St's Facebook page to date this year.
68%	Members who have generated new opportunities since working from Union St.	>50%	Local businesses and social enterprises in our supply chain.
84%	Members who say that becoming a member of Union St has been good for their business.		

Methodology

In order to capture this snapshot of our impact, we worked with independent social enterprise consultant Jamie Veitch. Jamie is a member of Social Enterprise UK and Social Value UK (the impact measurement organisation) and a veteran of many impact reports.

Jamie worked with Union St, not only to create a replicable snapshot survey for members and vendors, but to build a framework to measure and compare future impact. We will expand the range of impacts we measure, to capture meaningful and robust data about our environmental impact,

and in future reports we intend to share further information about our economic impact alongside our social impacts. We'll also continue to review our data collection methods, measurement timetable and survey questions to develop the accuracy and insights we capture.

We're proud to communicate this snapshot of social impacts, showing the incredibly positive outcomes – for Sheffield and Sheffields – which Union St is responsible for.

“I had been working remotely for a number of years before joining Union St. I can honestly say it had a humongous impact on my mental wellbeing; I've built a plethora of meaningful relationships with other members that I value very strongly and have made a material difference to my quality of life.”





ARE YOU PASSIONATE
ABOUT COFFEE,
PEOPLE &
GOOD CAUSES

WE ARE HIRING
A TRAINEE
BARISTA

WWW.UNION-ST.ORG





About Union St

A central hub of co-working, street food and public events, founded as an independent social enterprise where our income is re-invested for the common good, bringing a previously empty city centre building back into life and supporting the types of activities our city centre needs.

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"There is a real collective energy and positive buzz about the place which feels different to any other coworking place I've been to."

"Union St is a wonderfully welcoming and sociable space. It is a great place to work and helps me to be productive."

"Places like Union St are essential for the creation, nurturing and retention of small businesses in Sheffield."

