



YELLOW SUBMARINE

Grant helped social enterprise reopen and begin its recovery from COVID lockdown.

Oxfordshire charity Yellow Submarine believes people with learning difficulties and Autism deserve to live life to the full! It runs social clubs, activity days, residential respite breaks and sheltered workplace training schemes to build confidence and enable independence. When the COVID lockdown suddenly hit in March 2020, all its operations had to change.

The charity's two social enterprise cafes, in Witney and Oxford, had to close. Popular coffee and snack destinations, they house its flagship workplace training schemes for people with learning disabilities, as well as showcasing the charity's mission to promote their employment.

SERVICE DISRUPTED

Both cafes employ trainees with learning disabilities and enjoy a strong local following. Every year around 90,000 customers visit and, by receiving great coffee, delicious snacks and excellent service, and leave with a different perception of 'disability'. The cafés are popular because of the quality of their product, not just their social enterprise.

"We are incredibly proud of the way our cafés deliver our mission – but they have also become an important revenue stream for Yellow Submarine" explained Kate Sankey, Co-Director, "Prior to COVID they had grown to generate up to a third of the charity's income, so reopening was a priority."



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



OXLEP BUSINESS SUPPORTS RECOVERY

Yellow Submarine successfully applied to OxLEP's COVID-19 Business Resilience Fund and was delighted to receive support so it could re-open its Oxford café safely. One member of staff was brought back from furlough to prepare, and funds were also used to equip the space to comply with COVID restrictions. Thanks to this support, the charity re-opened its Oxford café on July 8th, after 3 months of closure.

A POSITIVE IMPACT

Loyal customers soon returned and new ones found the café too. One local business committed to buying lunches for its staff every day, boosting trade at a difficult time.

"Corporate relationships are important to us because they can generate donations and provide volunteers to help us in different ways."

"Our in-house traineeship programmes had to stop with the lockdown, removing an important stepping-stone to employment and independence" Kate explains. "Since reopening the café, even as restrictions varied through our COVID journey, we have innovated and



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adapted to find new ways to continue our teaching and social interaction projects - whether in person one to one, in small groups or remotely. The reopening of our Oxford café was a fantastic first step, a vitally important beacon to our community, and we were so grateful for OxLEP's support."



For more information about the work of Yellow Submarine and its cafes in Witney and Oxford, visit yellowsubmarine.org.uk

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Do you need support for your business to recover from COVID, get ready to grow, manage innovation, secure help, and support for your ambition?
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