

Foreword from our CEOs

Julie Hawker and Kate Doodson

Looking back on 2019 there is a great deal to celebrate and recognise as key achievements. For Staff and Board, the year proved to be another excellent one in terms of social impact and this report aims to provide you with a clear view on the evidence of that impact.

It's also a year in which the whole Cosmic team (staff, directors and members) came together to review our current position and achievements as a back-drop to the years ahead and what we will now aspire to deliver as we progress. Key to these changes we want to put at the heart of our new plans will be a match of even higher social impact at the same time as reducing our negative environmental impact.

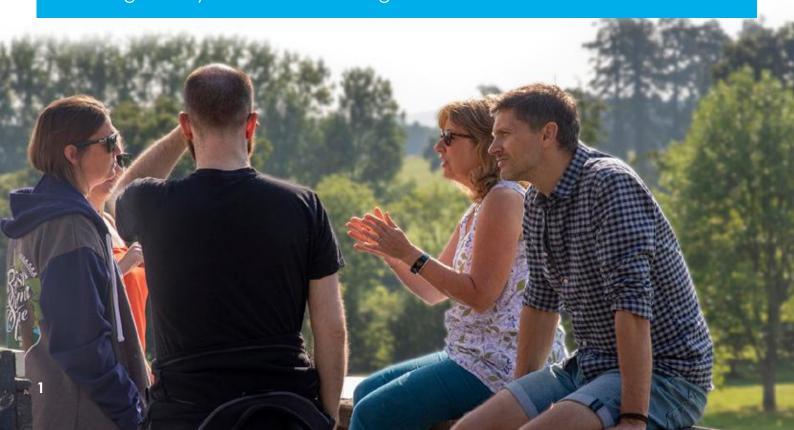
Cosmic has developed and delivered highly effective services, support and skills to the South West region, and is held in high regard by regional and national leaders of business, government and charities. This is a tribute to the hard work of all concerned, but it's also an excellent platform from which we should challenge ourselves to do more and go further.

The statistics and stories set out below can provide real insight and evidence of our work during 2019, and are illustrative of how we approach the social impact aims of our business. Cosmic's ethos and team commitment to our work as a social enterprise is key to the successful outcomes of people we support. Team Cosmic has stepped up to the challenge in fine style!



Cosmic Facts:

- Based in East Devon and operating across the South West and beyond.
- 38 Staff in 2019
- Running for 24 years... and counting



About Cosmic

Cosmic's vision is to inspire people to achieve success in the Digital world. Digital Inclusion is at the heart of all we do.

In a world where success relies on the ability to use digital technologies effectively, it is increasingly important that everyone has the support, skills and motivation to make the most of these resources.

This can be as true for the leaders of business as it is for individuals seeking new employment, or for communities facing their own challenges.

For leaders, being Digital means making bigger and better decisions about future plans for impact, growth and productivity. Whereas, for people looking to progress their career or get on the job ladder, it can be the key to success.

For people of all ages whose physical, mental or social situation has left them vulnerable or isolated, it can be the life-line and social glue that they need to progress.

Cosmic provides an innovative range of services and support to help people identify their Digital need and to progress with their ambitions. We do this in a uniquely kind, friendly and inspiring way. Our business is led and delivered by highly skilled practitioners who have years of experience and the proven ability to tackle your Digital challenges. We support people and businesses to grow their confidence and trust in technology, ensuring they do so in a safe and responsible way, whilst understanding the importance of privacy and security.

The advantages to be gained in Digital rely on having the right motivation, support and training delivered by a trusted and ethical partner.

Cosmic is that perfect partner. Digital, smart, ethical.



Stories in Action

To deliver our vision and to tackle the issue of Digital exclusion, Cosmic provide a unique range of digital and professional services:

Digital Skills: We support people, businesses and communities to grow their confidence and trust in technology, giving them the skills to succeed. Our trainers inspire leaders and individuals to make the most of Digital resources, encouraging them to take advantage of technology in their daily lives.

Website Development: We design and develop highquality, stylish websites for businesses, charities, social enterprises, individuals and schools.

IT Technical Support: Our engineers provide much needed IT support to schools, care homes, community centres, charities and small businesses.

made through case studies and insights into the world of our beneficiaries. There are too many stories to tell, but we hope you find this small selection interesting.

Over the next few pages read about the stories of some of the people we have

worked with in the last year. We want to share with you the social impact that we have



David's Story

David had spent years working as a decorator, but an injury in his arm meant that he needed to look for a new career path. This was a daunting prospect, but David came across our **Positive People** project in Somerset and decided to sign up. When he first joined **Positive People**, David lacked confidence and drive; he was struggling with a big physical change in how he could work. One of his main focuses was on his physical health, so **Positive People** provided him with a local gym membership. This gave him the opportunity to build up strength in his arm and improve his physical and mental wellbeing.

His other focus was on improving his digital skills. David began working with **Cosmic's** Digital Trainers, Clive and Chloe, to help build his confidence and teach him new digital skills. His main experience with Digital was on his mobile phone and tablet, and he was keen to learn more about computers. In his training sessions, he used both his tablet and computer alongside one another, allowing him to utilise the knowledge he already had. This has allowed him to develop a range of transferable digital skills.

David progressed steadily and he is now literate in the basic skills needed for personal internet use, this includes sending emails, finding information online, updating his Universal Credit account and accessing online

training. Through their sessions, **Cosmic** were also able to introduce David to the public computers at his local library, allowing him to use a computer more regularly. David struggled with his literacy, the **Positive People** Project were able to help him attend Functional Skills Literacy classes with Somerset Skills and Learning. His growing confidence in reading and writing helped him hugely in building confidence and retaining his digital skills. In their digital sessions together, Chloe began to notice that David would write more and needed less support from her on writing tasks.

Throughout his journey, David has been exploring the different employment opportunities he could take, to replace his work as a decorator. Although David isn't ready to work yet, he has a focus on what may be on its way in the future.

"I've found Positive People really satisfying, because they don't judge you, they just let you get on with it. I wanted to get my confidence back really, and it has come back. I'd definitely recommend it, one hundred percent."

With an online training course under his belt and another along the way, David is leaving **Positive People** with the right tools to keep him moving forward. We really do wish him all the best.

Positive People Somerset 2019:



Worked with 220 individuals



Delivered over 1000 hours of 1:1 tailored support



51% found employment or continued learning

A scene from YouTube showing David's volunteering work.



#TNLComPundESF #PositivePeople
Benefits of Volunteering - Positive People Somerset

68 views • Dec 17, 2019

Khaled's Story

For over three years now the **Positive People** project has sought to help a broad range of people across Devon and Somerset to gain new skills and confidence. A range of partners have been working together to support people of working age, from all backgrounds and abilities, to gain employment and training opportunities. **Cosmic's** role has been to focus on the Digital skills element: providing training in the use of hardware and software, building trust and confidence in technology. Without the skills and access to technology, vulnerable and isolated individuals can struggle to reach essential public services and may struggle to find employment.

In 2019, our team in Devon met a young couple in need of help: Khaled and Dalal; refugees from Syria, relocated in Exeter. They were forced to flee their country when war threatened their lives and destroyed everything around them. In Syria, Khaled was studying History at university. One of his goals in the UK was to re-enrol in university, and **Positive People** were contacted to provide help along the way.

The couple met with the project team and planned how they would improve their English language and computer skills. They both received training from **Cosmic's** Digital Trainers to build their confidence in using technology. This enabled them to develop important life skills such as creating a CV on Microsoft Word, writing and sending emails, searching for work online, applying for jobs and connecting digitally with others.

With our help, Khaled could begin looking at his dream of going back to university and building a career. In addition, Khaled and Dalal have made the most of their new-found love of Facebook, using it to connect them with others in the local community. Khaled has dedicated a huge amount of time to helping other people around him.

In June 2019 Positive People joined Khaled and Dalal at the **International Celebration** – an event they had



initiated and organised within the local community. The event saw over 200 people join together to celebrate diversity in Devon. Khaled explained, "When I came to this country the people of Exeter welcomed me. I want to bring peace to the community and I want to say thank you. Next year will be even bigger!".

Besides organising this incredible event, Khaled is also involved in an extensive amount of volunteer work. Through this, he has embedded himself in the local culture to improve his language, building relationships in the community.

Khaled and Dalal have also published a book, along with a collection of other refugees. The book, 'Human Crossings: 9 stories about refugees' shares their amazing story in depth and gives a real account of their lives in Syria, and the search for refuge. We're proud to be part of that journey. Be sure to look out for the book in the shops.

















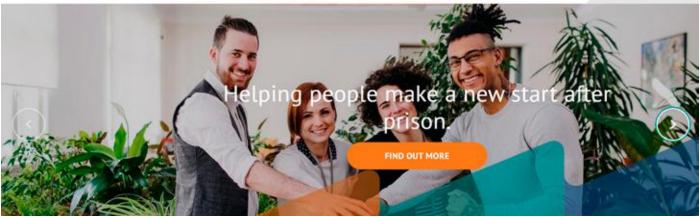












South West Community Chaplaincy

South West Community Chaplaincy (SWCC) are a Charity who work with adults in prison. They provide support in the run up to their release from prison, as well as in the crucial first days, weeks and months back in the community.

Their work takes place across Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset where they work with men and women of all ages. SWCC help people overcome the challenges they face so they can make a fresh start and build a positive future for themselves and rebuild their lives in the community.

The Charity is run by 4 core members of staff, the Community Chaplains, and around 45 volunteer mentors. As the Charity grew, they realised they needed a more efficient way to provide support and resources for the volunteers, as well as an updated website that they could proudly show to potential donators. They secured a grant so they could build a new website and began looking into potential suppliers.

Cosmic, along with two other companies, were looked at in this process. SWCC chose **Cosmic** as they felt we really understood their needs. They wanted a new website that was modern and progressive, as well as a space for volunteers to access resources and support.

Cosmic worked closely with Cathy Jerrard and her colleagues to inform the structure, think about the user journeys and provide solutions to copywriting, SEO advice and image sourcing. We worked closely together at every stage and helped SWCC to understand the processes. We also assisted in migrating the organisation email infrastructure to Office 365 and offered advice and guidance along the way.

The resulting website and organisational improvements have meant SWCC can now confidently show off their website, and the updated content has allowed for a more user-friendly experience for anyone researching the Charity.

The introduction of a 'Volunteer Portal' on the website also provides them with the connection to the volunteers that they needed. As volunteers are spread far and wide across the South West it can be difficult to provide the support in person, however with the new Portal it's allowed them to stay in contact much easier.

The work SWCC does to support prison leavers is an important middle step between prison and getting back into the community, a better website has allowed for an improved provision for their beneficiaries. We're proud to have supported such an important organisation.



Healthwatch Torbay

Healthwatch Torbay are a registered Charity based in Paignton. Their mission is to bring the voice and influence of local people to the development and delivery of local healthcare services. From Doctors and Dentists, to Care homes and Adult Social Care, they aim to be a consumer champion. By collecting anonymous feedback from consumers, they can monitor the data for issues and push for change when it's needed.

Funded by the local council, Healthwatch Torbay are led by the public: they don't speak on behalf of the community, they just pass on the messages. As well as their office in Paignton Library, they also have an online portal where local people can give feedback on their healthcare. This allows everyone to give their honest opinions in the way they feel most comfortable with. Healthwatch charities exist so the community can have a say in how they receive their healthcare, allowing local people to provide both positive and negative feedback on the care they've received.

Healthwatch Torbay have worked with **Cosmic** for many years; beginning in 2013, when **Cosmic** made them a website. This was followed by several years of digital skills training, IT Support and the continued hosting of their current website. As their retained IT support provider, **Cosmic** help the charity with a broad range of IT services; including supporting the purchase and installation of new equipment and providing the access to our readily available Support Desk when issues occur. Most recently **Cosmic** has provided Healthwatch Torbay with some more specialist training.

Healthwatch groups in the region are in the process of working closer in partnership with each other, meaning that Healthwatch Torbay need to collaborate more



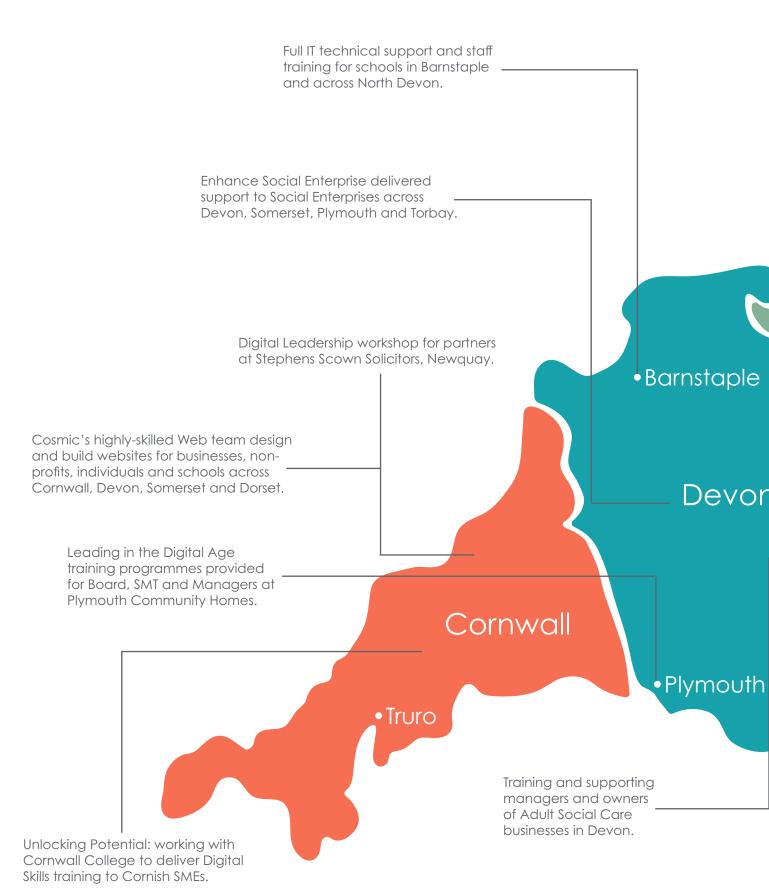
efficiently with the other teams in the South West to share information, data and knowledge. This means that they need to improve their remote working abilities, rather than spend time and money on long distance travel to meetings. Healthwatch Torbay approached Cosmic for some Microsoft Teams training with Cosmic's Head of Digital Solutions, Paul Turner. Together they completed a series of workshops outlining the basics of Microsoft Teams within their organisation: from simple messaging, to video calls and hosting online meetings. These new skills will not only help with communication to other Healthwatch groups, it will also allow them to communicate more efficiently within the Charity.

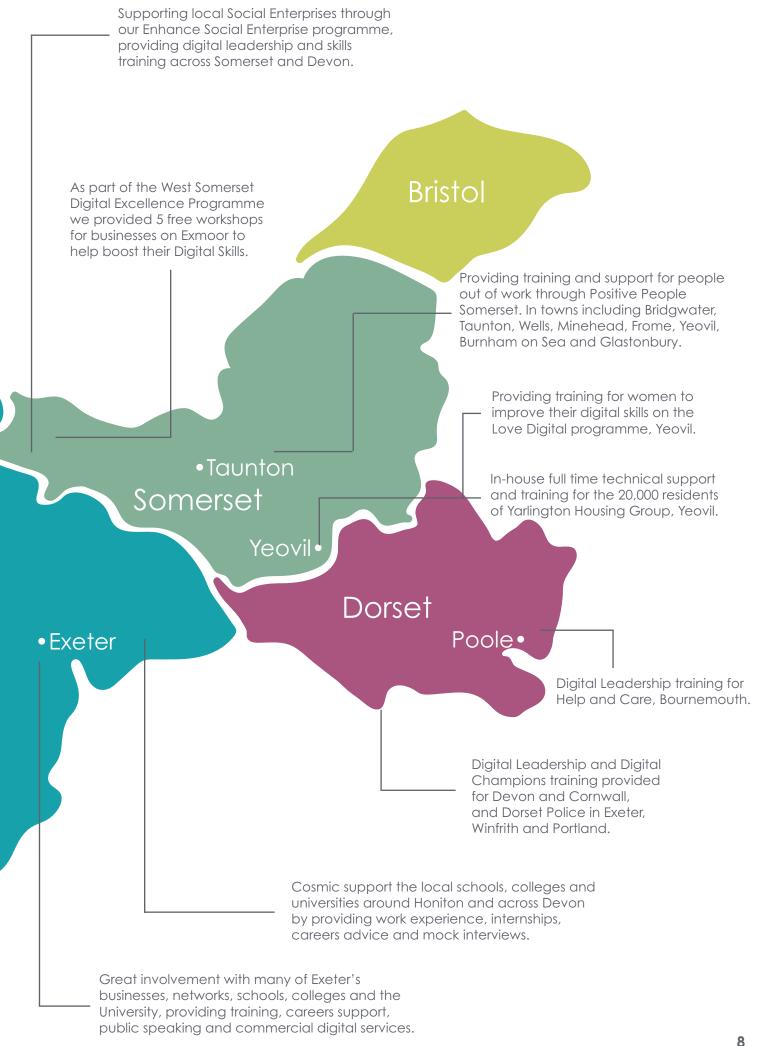
In the future, Healthwatch Torbay predict further growth across the South West, meaning the extra training on remote working will be even more useful. We're proud to work with such a meaningful organisation that looks out for the interests of our communities!



Where have we been in 2019?

Cosmic is based in Honiton, East Devon, and although a huge amount of our work takes place locally, we also cover the whole of the South West of the UK, and we are frequently involved in national projects too. This map gives just a few examples of where we've got to in the last year.







Newton Abbot CIC

Newton Abbot Community Interest Company (Newton Abbot CIC) are a social enterprise that seeks to improve the quality of life for all those living or working in Newton Abbot. The CIC's main activities fall into three broad areas: the direct delivery of projects, enabling and supporting other community organisations and activities, and lobbying for change and improvements within the town and surrounding area.

Newton Abbot CIC took on the management of the Buckland Centre, a building in the heart of the community; without their intervention it would no longer be here – so keeping this valuable community hub open was important to their mission. The Buckland Centre is a work in progress, but it provides a useful space for many vital services: social clubs, fitness classes, a hall for rent and a base for Newton Abbot's Children's Centre.

Newton Abbot CIC first came across **Cosmic** nine years ago whilst looking for someone to host their website and email servers. Over the years they've had various involvements with **Cosmic**, from training to IT support, but in 2018 Emily Farrell, their Business and Community Development Manager, came across our **Enhance Social Enterprise** programme and decided to sign up.

The course offered a valuable insight into Digital Leadership, something that they had little experience with as a small organisation. It also gave Emily and colleagues a chance to meet other Social Enterprises who do similar work and face similar challenges. Along with this, they knew that they had no Social Media presence, and completing this course would not only give a useful insight into successful Digital Marketing, but would also make sure they devoted time to fixing the issues they were having.

The Enhance Social Enterprise course provided them with a massive amount of knowledge and insight, as well as practical solutions to problems. The course opened their eyes to issues they were having, and made sure they devoted the thinking space to problem-solving. During the course they wrote up a Digital Marketing Strategy, a lot of which has been put into place since the end of the programme. Also, they now have a new website, combined with the Buckland Centre to make events and booking much easier to find. In order to boost their Social Media presence, they have created three Facebook pages: one for the youth club, one for the CIC and one for the Buckland Centre. These pages are now run by a new Social Media Manager - a job role they created as a result of the course.

Enhance Social Enterprise has allowed them to think more Digitally. The website is now regularly updated, and their Social Media is kept up-to-date with interesting posts and news. Newton Abbot CIC still have more plans for the future though, such as introducing an online booking system to their website. However, for now, they have made incredible progress thanks to the course. We are happy to have helped such a key organisation!

Enhance Social Enterprise 2019:



132 Social Enterprises were supported



62 workshops were delivered



Russell's Story

Russell first came across **Cosmic** two years ago when he was advised by the Yeovil Job Centre to attend our weekly drop-in sessions. At first, he was rather apprehensive, he admitted that he was shy and lacked much enthusiasm. But he soon got chatting to other learners and started to grow in confidence.

Having never really used a computer before, **Cosmic** spent dedicated time with Russell at each session to support him in picking up the basics. We initially started with training on how to use Google and then moved on to job-searching sites to support his hunt for work.

Russell was told about the six-week computer course **Cosmic** run through our partnership with **Yarlington Housing Group**, and how he would receive a brand-new laptop for free if he attended the full course. He signed up immediately.

Russell began to come out of his shell. The sixweek course covers all the basics of using a laptop: what each key does, how to stay safe online, Google and searching the internet, using the webcam, emailing and loads more.

Before he came along to the drop-in and enrolled in the course, Russell says he wasn't doing much with his life. He felt stuck in a rut. The training and the support he received from **Cosmic** has changed his outlook on life, and his confidence has grown exponentially. He no longer feels isolated from society; and his social life has improved drastically now he has access to the online world. Becoming more Digital has made him more outgoing, and he no longer gets nervous when meeting new people - both online and in person.

Yarlington Housing Group 2019:



175 drop-in sessions



Delivered 133 one-to-ones



18 workshops delivered



124 new people worked with

"The training and support has opened my eyes completely. It gave me the kick I needed to get out and meet people. I've not looked back since".

Russell thanked **Cosmic** for being so welcoming and supportive, and creating a relaxed environment that allowed him to learn. Since the course, he has set up his own small gardening business, and proudly popped into a drop-in session recently to show everyone his new business cards. He now volunteers with a number of charities each week, putting his passion for gardening to good use with a number of community garden schemes in Yeovil.

In addition to **Cosmic**, Russell has been working with **Inspired to Achieve** at **Yarlington** which has enabled him to set up his fledgling business.

"Thanks for all the help you have given in more ways than one. I can't thank you enough for everything; everything's been going great."

We wish Russell the best of luck with his new business venture, and we can't wait to see what he does next!



Plymouth Music Zone

In 2019 the Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) worked with the Office for Civil Society to commission a number of digital leadership projects around the UK. The aim was to provide charities and similar organisations with innovative skills training for their leadership teams. **Cosmic** were successful in receiving funding, allowing us to develop our **Charities In the Digital Age** programme (CIDA).

In the first quarter of 2019 **Cosmic** worked with 10 leading regional charities, including **Age UK**, **Exeter Leukaemia Fund** and **Devon Air Ambulance**, providing executive level training to their senior leadership teams and trustees. Each charity put forward 10 members of the leadership team, attending 3 full days of training (per charity) and focussing on a number of real-time projects and challenges. **Cosmic's trainers** guided the 100 learners through a number of modules, encouraging the charities to focus on their Digital vision and strategy, whilst exploring how technology can benefit their staff, volunteers, processes, operations and ultimately, their beneficiaries.

One of those charities was **Plymouth Music Zone** (PMZ): an award-winning charity that believes passionately in the power of music to reach out and help transform the lives of some of the most vulnerable children, young people and adults across Plymouth and beyond. Making use of their music education centre and high-tech facilities, PMZ work with people and music to help change lives for the better. They now support over 1000 disadvantaged children, young people and vulnerable adults with over 50 weekly activities delivered by up to 25 music leaders.

PMZ enthusiastically signed up to the CIDA digital leadership programme, with ten of their senior leadership team attending the course. CEO Debbie Geraghty reflects on the training they received and the developments made over the last year: "We were very clear from the outset that we wanted as many of the PMZ team as possible to take part in the training. We wanted people from all levels of the organisation to go through a process together as we felt 'buy in' would be key to any successful future implementation. Creating a Digital



Strategy together was the original aim but in fact it gave us so much more."

"The 3 days of the course were comprehensive; yet the trainer was still able to flex to our own needs and level of understanding to ensure it was continually engaging."

A year on, we caught up with Debbie to find out how they are moving forward with the lessons learned: "We wish to continue to strengthen our remote working practices to allow us to keep being flexible when required. We still need to spend time understanding our 'customer journeys' and how we could use technology to make those more 'frictionless'. Indeed, the word 'frictionless' became the most commonly used word following the digital training."

"We are now looking at how we can use digital technologies to reach some of the most isolated participants. We are already using technology within our music sessions to increase access for many groups. We want to explore how people can have a digital window on our world as either a resource in itself or as a first step to coming to see us."

It was certainly a fun experience working with PMZ! We wish them every success for the future.



Lisa's Story

Formerly an Assistant Head of a large secondary school in Somerset, Lisa Merryweather-Millard is the co-founder of Rather Nice Design, a design studio based in Frome, Somerset. She is also Editor-in-Chief of **The Little Things** magazine; a content-led bi-monthly magazine "for people who happen to be parents". The magazine covers topics relevant to parents without focusing entirely on the children. Each issue is full of useful information, interesting and thought-provoking articles and helpful hacks to help parents survive the rollercoaster of family life. Lisa is also the founder of FamilyPA, a comprehensive, all-in-one digital platform and App to help busy parents find, book and pay for school holiday childcare and out-of-school activities, as well as other family admin. An ambitious, working parent herself, Lisa's passion for supporting parents and families is clear.

Lisa first came into contact with **Cosmic** when she was recommended to us by Business West. "I was in need of some User Experience consultancy and also desperate for a sounding board to bounce ideas off of".

"My first meeting with **Cosmic** was with Matt Ballard who helped us to explore our value proposition in more detail". Since 2017 Matt has been providing Digital Diagnostic support as part of the Heart of the South West LEP's **Growth Support Programme**. This ERDF funded programme has helped hundreds of businesses with a range of business support services, including gaining access to Matt's wisdom around digital marketing, website design and Search Engine Optimisation.

"Matt challenged our current thinking and asked questions we had not yet thought to ask ourselves. Despite running a design studio myself - and providing creative consultancy to clients - it was virtually impossible for me to 'see the wood through the trees' in our new business venture. Matt was invaluable in helping us identify and address our blind-spots".

In conversation with Matt, Lisa realised that she needed to explore cyber-security and GDPR in much more detail, which led to her working with Kate Doodson (Cosmic Joint CEO) to gain more advice and guidance. Like many businesses, Lisa's enterprises are exposed to both the hazards of cyber-crime, as well as the legislations and regulations of UK data laws. Running a business principally online heightens this vulnerability and responsibility. **Cosmic** take the issue of Cyber Security and Data Privacy very seriously, and over many years we have supported customers and beneficiaries in understanding the many complexities and solutions.

"Kate's knowledge, experience and enthusiasm really helped us to fully understand the potential of our products and how to plan adequately for our future success. This helped us to think more deeply about all aspects of our business from technology and infrastructure to marketing and PR. Working with Cosmic really has been instrumental in terms of working out our next steps."

The Growth Support Programme has been extremely successful in supporting many businesses like Lisa's. With her ambition to support parents and families, to grow the new digital service, FamilyPA, and spread the reach of The Little Things magazine, it's clear Lisa will be one to watch. We are pleased that we have been able to offer a little help on her exciting journey.



Our Partners

Thank you to all our partners and supporters

In the delivery, design, funding and administration of all our projects, Cosmic work closely, and rely upon, the first-class support of our partners. These relationships come in all shapes and sizes, but every single one of them is crucial to the ongoing success of our business. We would like to thank all of them for their contributions. Many of them are represented on this page, but there are many others that we would also like to acknowledge – we wish we could include them all.





































Cosmic in the Community

Our staff understand the role that they can play in contributing to the wider community, both economically and socially. Many of the Cosmic team take on additional roles outside of the workplace, volunteering to support other businesses, networks, organisations, charities and schools. Of particular note, Cosmic's CEOs, Julie Hawker and Kate Doodson, take on Board, Trustee and advisory roles with the following bodies: South West Business Council, Heart of the South West Digital Skills Partnership, The Bank of England, Exeter Chamber of Commerce, Exeter University, Plymouth Marjon University, Heart of Devon & Exeter Skills Board, Tech South West, South West Cyber Security Cluster, Colyton Grammar, and Devon Air Ambulance.

Furthermore, as a **Cornerstone Employer**, Cosmic proudly support the career development of students in our region, offering placements, internships and advice to students from the following establishments in 2019: Honiton Community College, Sidmouth College, The King's School Ottery, Exeter College, Exeter University, Uffculme Scool and Woodroffe School.



What's Next

Thoughts from our Chairman, Mark Cotton

Cosmic has continued to evolve and grow in 2019, adapting and improving the way we deliver impact through our services and inspiring success in the digital world.

It doesn't stop there, looking ahead we are preparing to deliver our new strategy for 2021-2023, as we seek to mature our services and cement our status as the goto provider of Digital Inclusion Support for businesses, communities and individuals. There is always more to be done and new ways of working, ensuring that we achieve our aims and objectives.

As we review our long-term aims, we are also taking time to reflect on the work delivered during the current iteration of our strategy. It's been an amazing period of growth for Cosmic, confirming our belief that we can offer true value and genuine impact in all our areas of operation. Like any business, there are failures we will learn from; but overall, we are humbled by the strength and depth of our successes.

We continue to challenge and question the way in which we seek to deliver, measure and communicate our social impact. As time moves on, we have become increasingly aware that Cosmic is capable of delivering impact in all aspects of its services and products - not just through funded projects. But we must not become complacent in this fact. We are taking this time to relook at our Theory of Change model and Impact Measurement Framework.

We believe that we can enhance and improve how we support communities, businesses and individuals, creating lasting and meaningful impact. Our vision, to inspire people to achieve success in the digital world, remains the same - but we will continue to adapt and improve how we do this, particularly in relation to our environmental impact.

There are always new and exciting developments and more projects in the pipeline at Cosmic. Some funded projects can take a long time to come to fruition, but the wait is always worth it. Keep an eye on our channels to hear about new opportunities for support coming soon! Away from the delivery of projects, our Website team, IT Tech engineers and Consultants continue to support businesses and organisations across the South West. Each team is growing and developing, and our reach and customer support continues to expand.

Cosmic want to lead the way in digital skills and digital transformation across the South West. Our core services, consultancy, training and project delivery will push us towards our objectives and ensure that we continue to deliver tangible and meaningful impact and support digital inclusion.

