

Craft SCOTLAND



COMPASS

COMPASS: EMERGING MAKER PROGRAMME
IMPACT REPORT 2025: KEY FINDINGS

Guiding Sustainable Craft Practices



“I base all my business decisions around my core values, which has helped me not get distracted by other things that aren’t going to serve my business in the long run.”

COMPASS Participant

Findings show that participation in Craft Scotland’s flagship programme COMPASS has had a positive impact on makers, their practice and the viability of their craft business.

Learn more about our COMPASS project and discover key findings from our recent research with CG Research.

Craft Scotland aims to support the sustainability of craft careers. COMPASS is Craft Scotland’s learning and development programme delivering tailored support for the craft sector.

The COMPASS: Emerging Maker Programme focuses on developing craft talent and equipping individuals with the necessary skills to create a sustainable craft practice. Drawing on knowledge from industry experts and established peers, the programme takes a holistic approach, exploring values and self-development topics alongside business subjects such as finance and marketing.



The programme was developed to address a gap in sector support for makers’ business development, identified by Craft Scotland through consultation with the sector.

We could see there was a strong need for access to tailored information and guidance for craft businesses, most of whom operate as sole traders. We also wanted to ensure that focussed individual support was in place for each participant to help not only their business development but also their wellbeing as we felt this would have greater, more sustained impact across craft careers. Launched in 2018, the programme has now welcomed five cohorts, and the results speak



developing supportive and lasting relationships with cohort peers.

More recently we have begun to work with Cockpit in London who provide mentoring for COMPASS participants and open up access to new professional networks. Jo Scott, Head of Programmes (2019 - 2024) said:

“We have been incredibly lucky to work with partners and funders like the William Grant Foundation, Hospitalfield and Cockpit, and we are very grateful for their support. Without the support from William Grant Foundation at the earliest stages, we would not have been able to deliver the programme.

Their financial support has been crucial to its success, enabling us to provide a fully

for themselves: 100% of participants reported that COMPASS positively impacted their work as makers, with 46% stating it had a significant positive effect.

Partnerships have been vital to the success of the programme. One crucial decision was to work with Avior, a consultancy run by Elaine Furnivall Chartered Occupational Psychologist for businesses, which provides tools and guidance that enable small businesses to achieve their potential. The William Grant Foundation committed three

years of funding early on which enabled us to implement our plan fully, and subsequently continued their support with an additional three years.

We also established a partnership with Hospitalfield who have hosted the five-day residency and follow-up residential each year, both of which are central to the programme.

Time away from the daily demands of running a business allows participants space for reflection and planning as well as



“The residency was very useful in giving me some time to think what I really wanted for my practice. It focussed me and gave me the permission to go with my heart.”

COMPASS Participant

subsidised opportunity for makers. They are not only invested financially, but they are also invested in the craft sector and what we hope to achieve through the programme.

Our partnership with Cockpit's Business Incubation Team has been a great addition to the programme. Their understanding of the UK craft landscape provides a sound platform for the fantastic mentoring support that they provide for makers. And the Victorian Arts & Crafts house of Hospitalfield provides a perfect creative backdrop for the residential aspects of the programme."

From our evaluation of the last six years of COMPASS: Emerging Maker Programme, the team can evidence that the key outcomes defined at the start of the programme have been achieved. From the start we recognised that the peer-to-peer relationships developed within each cohort would be an important aspect of the programme.



We endeavoured to select participants we thought would work well together, and facilitated an environment where they could provide support and encouragement to each other.

For the cohort to have a sustained impact, it was essential that participants kept in touch and this has been a very successful aspect of the programme. 100% of makers have remained in touch with some or all of their cohort, and 70% identified making connections with their peers as one of the top three impacts from COMPASS.

Business development and resilience remain at the heart of the programme, and makers have seen significant progress across different aspects of their businesses.

Learning sessions focussed on different aspects such as finance, marketing or building brand awareness have helped them to plan and adapt. In-depth exploration of values underpinning their craft business using tools such as the Business Model Canvas has built confidence and helped with decision-making.

Half of participants agree that the skills learned through COMPASS have helped them to cope in times of business challenge and half that they have strategies to call on to avoid burnout. Kerstie Barr, Programme Coordinator said:

"Being a maker can be lonely. People need people and one of the strengths of the COMPASS programme is its focus on makers as people within a supportive cohort.

The cohort model has enabled makers to forge deep and lasting connections with their peers, sharing skills and experiences and forming



"At the point that I was at it was the perfect thing that I needed to give me the confidence and the tools to move on to the next stage. I think it's been massive. I will always be grateful for the support. I've recommended it to other people, and I'll continue to recommend it. I hope Craft Scotland can continue to run it."

COMPASS Participant



friendships that sustain them through periods of development, doubt or insecurity. They raise each other up and their shared confidence soars.”

A unique feature from the earliest planning stages of the programme was a focus on wellbeing with makers benefitting from individual support throughout. The five-day residency has been key to this, enabling makers to take time away from their studios and work together in the beautiful setting of Hospitalfield.

We can see clear value in our wellbeing approach as most makers agreed they could see wider benefits including a growth in their confidence that arose from the programme - this has led to ambitious new directions in their creative practice and businesses.

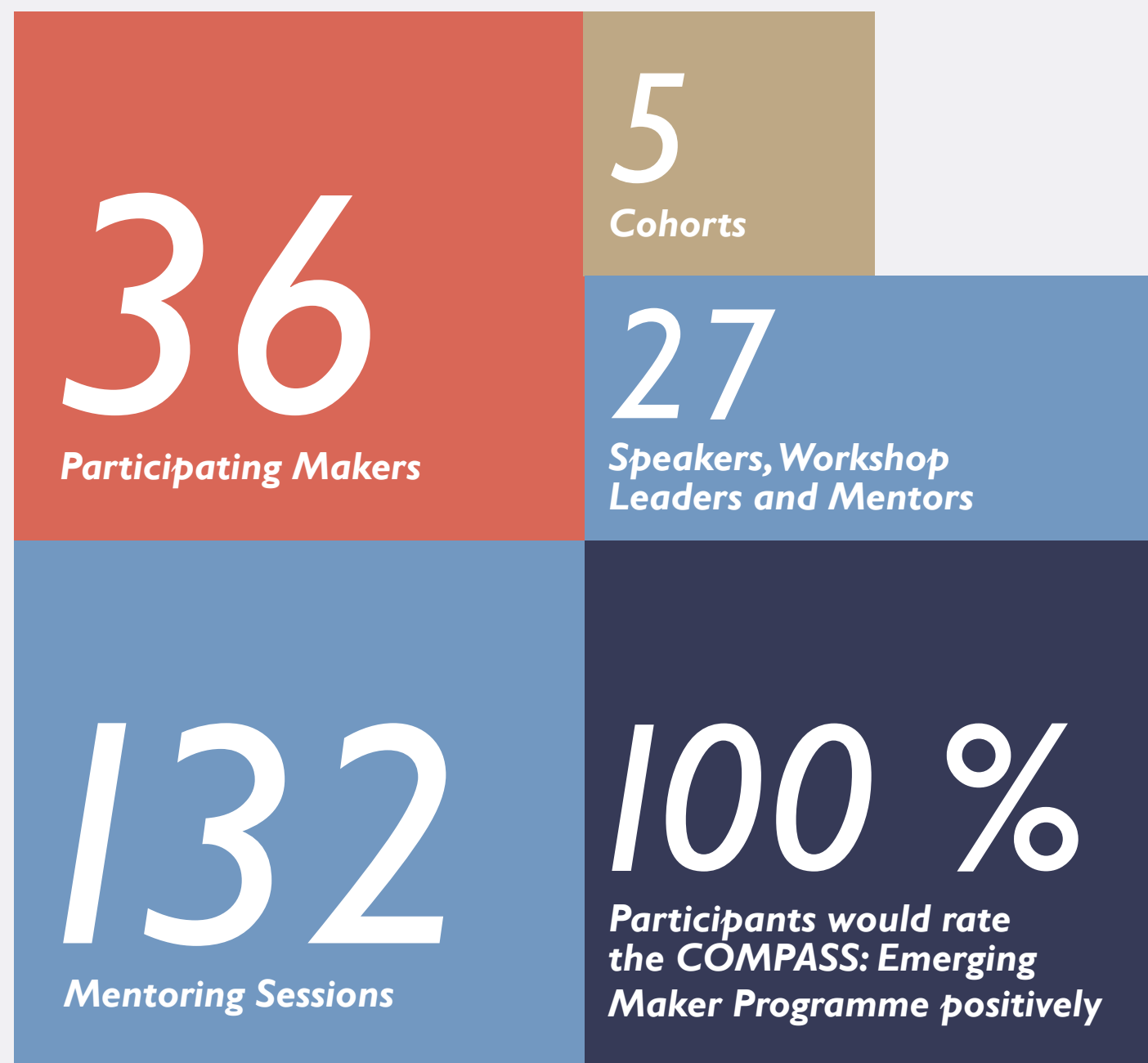
Thank you to all our participants, workshop leaders, mentors, partners and funders who have made COMPASS such a success and contributed to a thriving and sustainable craft sector.

The journey of the COMPASS programme continues. We are currently building on its achievements and extending access to the guidance and knowledge it shared through our free digital learning platform COMPASS: Online and future projects. We look forward to the next chapter.



Irene Kernan
Director, Craft Scotland

Key Statistics



Research Methodology



Craft Scotland commissioned CG Research to evaluate the first five cohorts of the COMPASS: Emerging Maker Programme. The research had two approaches:

Surveys

An online survey for all COMPASS participants which explored their participation in COMPASS and mapped those to the intended outcomes of the programme.

The survey ran from November 2023 until January 2024.

The survey was sent to 36 COMPASS participants with 28 responses (78%).



Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with eight participants.

The aim of the interviews was to gain a deeper perspective of the impact of COMPASS by looking at individual experiences.

The interviews also examined how makers' practices had developed since their participation and explored to what extent the programme had influenced this.



Navigating Business Opportunities and Challenges

COMPASS is concerned with the factors that impact business sustainability.

Half of participants agree that the skills learned through COMPASS have helped them to cope in times of business challenge and that they have strategies to call on to avoid burnout.

Having a workload that is achievable and takes you in the right direction is a factor in sustainability. Participants were able to reflect on increased confidence in both saying yes and no where appropriate:

79% agree that as a result of COMPASS, they are more confident in saying 'no' in their business.

77% agree that as a result of COMPASS, they have the confidence to go for opportunities out of their comfort zone.

Values-Led Businesses Improve Decision-Making

The identification of their over-arching business values had a significant impact on many participants. They reported tangible benefits that they are now better able to assess opportunities, and have a greater focus on the direction and goals of their business. This is both financial (will this opportunity be profitable?) but also relates to direction of travel and brand (will this take me closer to where I want to go?).

82% of COMPASS participants agree that understanding their values that underpin their practice helps them make better business decisions.



Connecting with Audiences

From an exploration of values, pricing and priorities, participants felt they had a clearer perception of their practice which made communication with a wide variety of audiences easier.

Half of COMPASS participants understand their customer base and how to reach them and 68% agree that their customer base is growing which shows an impact in terms of business viability.

75% of makers agreed that, as a result of COMPASS, they are more confident in communicating with customers.

Wider Networks Encourage Business Growth

Through COMPASS mentoring and networking events, makers built professional contacts to support their businesses over the longer term, including direct financial or developmental benefits.

Over a quarter of participants identify having a wider professional network as one of the top three impacts of COMPASS.



Business Viability

Participants reflected that their perceptions of their practice had changed following COMPASS with an increased business focus, most tangibly seen in their work and pricing.

The direct impact of COMPASS is evidenced by 54% of participants altering their product pricing and/or a third having altered their product range.

71% agree that they think of themselves as a business owner (as well as a maker) following COMPASS.

54% of participants agreed that as a result of COMPASS, they can see their business lasting over the long term.

Meet the COMPASS: Emerging Maker Cohorts



2021

Jennifer Alford (Ceramics, Edinburgh), Sally Cuthbert (Jewellery, Edinburgh), Gillian Finlay (Silversmithing & Goldsmithing, Edinburgh), Hazel Frost (Ceramics, Edinburgh), Sarah Rogers (Silversmithing & Goldsmithing, Dumfries & Galloway), Emily Smit-Dicks (Textiles, Glasgow), Zephyr Liddell (Textiles/Fibre, Glasgow)



2019

Rebecca Devine (Jewellery, Glasgow)
Claire Henry (Ceramics, Glasgow)
Beth Lamont (Jewellery, Edinburgh)
Sarah Paramor (Basketmaking, Highlands)
Jennifer Smith (Ceramics, Glasgow)
Cecilia Stamp (Jewellery & Silversmithing, Glasgow)
Natalie J Wood (Ceramics, Edinburgh)



2020

Eve Campbell (Textiles & Ceramics, Tighnabruaich)
Fiona Hall (Textiles, Aberdeen)
Honor Dalrymple (Furniture, Edinburgh)
Roslyn Leitch (Jewellery, Markinch)
Emma Louise Wilson (Silversmithing, Aberdeen)
Ailsa Ritchie (Jewellery, Glasgow)
Gillian Stewart (Bookbinding, Glasgow)



2022

Celia Wood (Ceramics, Edinburgh)
Hannah Sabapathy (Jewellery, Dundee)
Ishbel Mackenzie (Jewellery, Glasgow)
Jane Harrison (Jewellery, Glasgow)
Kelly Espindola (Leather, Irvine)
Leanh La (Jewellery, Glasgow)
Lexie Macleod (Ceramics, Black Isle)
Ruth Elizabeth Jones (Ceramics, Dumfries)



2023

April Hay (Textiles, Glasgow)
Ruth Mae Martin (Ceramics & Glass, Glasgow)
Anna MacDonald (Ceramics, Glasgow)
Helena Robson (Furniture, Edinburgh)
Charlott Rodgers (Glass, Glasgow)
Karlyn Sutherland (Glass, Highlands)
Iona Turner (Jewellery, Moray)

Thank You

“Understanding the challenges other makers faced helped me to crystallise the challenges I faced and gave me a much broader outlook on the world of the maker”

COMPASS participant

Project Team (across 2018 - 2024)

Jo Scott (Project Lead), Kerstie Barr, Kristian Smith, Veronique AA Lapeyre, Irene Kernan, Mayanne Soret, Lou Davies, Kelsey Johnston, Elaine Findlay.

Key Contributor

Elaine Furnivall (Psychologist, Avior Consulting)

Mentoring

Dave Jarrold (Lasting Impact), David Crump (Cockpit)

Workshop Leaders & Speakers

Alan Thomas Dibble (Maker & Creative Director, Green Thomas)
 Alasdair McGill (Co-founder, Ashton McGill)
 Angus Ross (Furniture maker & Founder, Angus Ross)
 Bryony Knox (Silversmith)
 Cara Guthrie (Ceramic artist)
 Cherith Harrison (Textile designer & Managing Director, Cherith Harrison)
 Dave Jarrold (Coach & Trainer, Lasting Impact)
 David Crump (Head of Business Incubation, Cockpit)
 Denise Strohsahl (SME Marketing Consultant)
 Disa Allsopp (Goldsmith)
 Ewen Fleming (Partner & Financial Services Advisory, Johnston Carmichael)
 Frances Priest (Ceramic artist)
 Heather McDermott (Jeweller)
 Jonny Mowat (Designer)
 Jono Smart (Ceramic artist)
 Kirsty Thomas (Designer/maker & Founder, Tom Pigeon)
 Laura Spring (Textile designer & Founder, Laura Spring)
 Malaika Carr (Jeweller & Founder, Chalk)
 Mandy Bagot (Accountant & Business Advisor)
 Marion Parola (Maker & Co-founder, Bespoke Atelier)
 Owen O’Leary (Founder, Oh Really PR)
 Sophie Amono (Founder, sTUFFs)
 Veronique AA Lapeyre (Head of Communications & Digital, Craft Scotland)

Funders

William Grant Foundation, Creative Scotland,
 The William Syson Foundation, Scottish Potters Association

**WILLIAM GRANT
 FOUNDATION**



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About Craft Scotland

Supporting Makers, Promoting Craft

Craft Scotland is the national development agency for craft. We put makers at the heart of all we do, championing diverse and high-quality contemporary craft.

We help people learn about, appreciate and buy craft, promoting the contribution of craft to Scotland's cultural, economic and social well-being.

Through our exhibitions and events programmes, digital platforms and strategic partnerships, we provide leadership for the sector.

We create opportunities for makers to develop their creative and business practice, and to exhibit and sell work in Scotland and beyond.

Craft Scotland is a registered Scottish Charity no. SC 039491, and a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland no. SC 270245.

Contact

Craft Scotland, Studio 6, Castle Mills,
2 Gilmore Park, Edinburgh EH3 9FN

www.craftscotland.org
hello@craftscotland.org

+44 (0)131 357 3288

Support Us

Support Craft Scotland, the national development agency for Scottish contemporary craft.

By backing Craft Scotland, you are not just supporting a charity, you are uplifting the talented makers and craft curators who enrich Scotland's cultural and civic landscape.

Find out more about how Craft Scotland works with trusts, donors, sponsors and foundations by emailing our Director, Irene Kernan: irene@craftscotland.org.

Learn more about [Craft Scotland's impactful projects](#) across the years that have been made possible through grants.

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