

2025 ANNUAL OUTCOMES REPORT



Developing Young People.
Creating Opportunities.
Opening The Lens On The Youth Perspective.

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FOREWORD

Welcome to our 2025 Annual Report.



At our annual January team training day this year, we declared our 'North Star value' for 2025 was **Impact**. Having spent the last 12 years consistently shaping our projects, people, processes, and culture, we have been committed to ensuring we are delivering to the best of our ability. Therefore, this year it was important for us to be able to identify and demonstrate the impact this has helped us have in the lives of our participants, through working with our partners and through our programmes.



As an organisation, we believe it is extremely important that our past informs our present and sets us on course for our future progression. So, with that in mind, we spent some time considering what has worked well and not so well for us and set our sights on making changes to improve our impact; and what an impactful year it has been.

This year we have supported more than 200 young people through our programmes and services, whilst witnessing record testimonies in their achievements and our numbers. We took our holiday programmes on the road, doubling our half term and summer programme reach, hosted the Youth Employment UK National Census Youth Forum, and held our first Pledge 10 Marketplace employability event.

In September, we celebrated officially becoming an accredited centre and are now working towards launching two accredited courses in 2026. November also brought further cause for celebration, after we were announced as winners of the '**Excellence in Creative Impact Award**' at the 2025 Social Economy Awards hosted by ISE Birmingham and the West Midlands Combined Authority.



Like most things in life though, whilst there have been great moments, there have also been challenging ones. Moments that have caused the need for deeper reflection and refinement to support our outputs and the wellbeing of our team. As always, we are considering and planning for how we will continue the meaningful work we're doing and the impact we're making in the face of rising costs, changing policies, and ever-shifting funding cuts.

We have also experienced some significant changes in our Governance board as this year we said a heartfelt goodbye to Stuart Bates and Jacqueline Anderson-Lloyd after the completion of 7- and 10-year tenures with our organisation. While they will certainly be missed, we appreciate everything they have contributed and look forward to collaborating with them in a new capacity in the future.

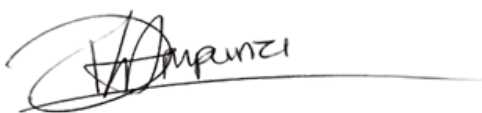
As I sit in the duality of Founder and CEO of Open Lens Media, I can say that I have had several moments this year where I have sat in a real place of gratitude for the wonderful team I'm privileged to work with day in and day out. Their genuine care and concern for the participants we support and partners we work with is admirable and regardless of the highs and the lows, they remain consistent. Behind every statistic, achievement, and success there has been a team committed to improving how we work together to bring about opportunities for our beneficiaries. One demonstration of this was our first Pledge 10 Marketplace event this year. We worked diligently to bring together partners and participants to secure tangible employment opportunities to support our young people on their journey into meaningful employment.



The event was an enormous success, attended by many of our partners and provided an opportunity for us to announce our BIG goal of supporting 1000 young people into employment, education, and training by 2030. This will be no easy feat but with great supporters, we believe it is possible. I want to say a heartfelt thank you to our funders **Lloyds Bank Foundation** and **The National Lottery Community Fund** for their support across this year. Their investment in our organisation has helped to develop our infrastructure and the provisional offer of our services to wider communities across the region.

In closing, I also want to express my gratitude to our team, partners, and supporters for the commitment, care, and belief you have shown throughout this year. Leading Open Lens Media through this next chapter continues to be one of my greatest honours, and I am continually encouraged by the dedication of those who stand with us in service of our young people. This year's challenges refined us, its successes strengthened us, and together we have created a foundation for even greater impact in the year ahead. With renewed energy, clarity of purpose, and a shared determination to keep pushing for meaningful change, I look forward to seeing what we will achieve together in 2026 as we continue **'Developing young people. Creating opportunities. Opening the lens on the youth perspective.'**

Thank you,



Daina Anderson Mpunzi
Founder & CEO



ABOUT OPEN LENS MEDIA

Open Lens Media is a Development, Engagement and Employability Social Enterprise. We utilise creative approaches in Media and Digital Technology to provide employability, educational, engagement, training and community consultation services to young people and youth focused agencies.

We specialise in working directly with children, young people and young adults between the ages of 11-16, 17-24, and 25-35 stemming from disenfranchised and low socio-economic backgrounds.



Our Social Mission

Our Social Mission is to contribute to the development of a more equitable society where young people and young adults have equal access to progressive opportunities in employment, education, and training regardless of their socio-economic background.

We strive to ensure that young people and young adults from disenfranchised backgrounds are well equipped with the tools and skills they need to reach their goals and fulfil their aspirations in order to lay hold of a brighter future.



Our Aim

Our aim is to support our beneficiaries in developing essential personal and professional skills that help them transition sustainably into further education, employment, training, or entrepreneurship.

Our Values

Safety

Ensuring every person we work with feels safe and supported.

Social Action

Adding value to communities through impactful work and measurable change.

Cultural Engagement

Understanding the importance of cultural differences and community intersectionality.

Respect

Respecting the diverse viewpoints, backgrounds, and cultures of individuals in contributing to what we do.

People

Continually nurturing a better organisational culture, employee satisfaction, motivation, and engagement.

Our Services

Educational Courses



Curriculum enhancing programmes designed to encourage educational engagement and youth engagement.

School Holiday Programmes



Social Action focused, youth-led programmes designed to build confidence and leadership skills.

Employment Services



Providing help to further personal and professional goals alongside developing transferable skills to boost youth employability.

Training & Consultancy



Bespoke consultancy for local authorities and youth-focused agencies.

Community Engagement Services



Support for statutory bodies to form relationships with communities.

SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR



2025 Key Stats



4

youth centres worked at this year

7

new Pledge 10 partners in 2025



1950+

people we have worked with to date



200+

participants upskilled in 2025



6

Projects & Programmes delivered this year



100%

of participants reported increased confidence after completing Pathways



2025 PROJECTS

Pathways Employability Programme

As we reach the end of our second year of funding for the Pathways Programme, we are proud to reflect on an exceptional year of growth, impact, and meaningful progress for the young people we support. With one year of delivery remaining, the programme continues to demonstrate the vital role it plays in helping young people across the West Midlands overcome barriers and move closer to education, training or employment.



This year, we have worked with a significant number of young people, each bringing their own challenges, ambitions, and personal journeys. Through a combination of tailored facilitation and 1-to-1 coaching, participants have accessed holistic support, enabling them not only to build employability skills, but also to strengthen confidence, communication, resilience, and other essential soft skills. This blended approach has enriched the programme, ensuring that young people feel both encouraged and empowered.

Many participants have progressed into education, training or employment, achieving incredible outcomes that reflect their commitment and potential. For those still on their journey, we have witnessed substantial steps forward, with young people making meaningful progress toward future opportunities.

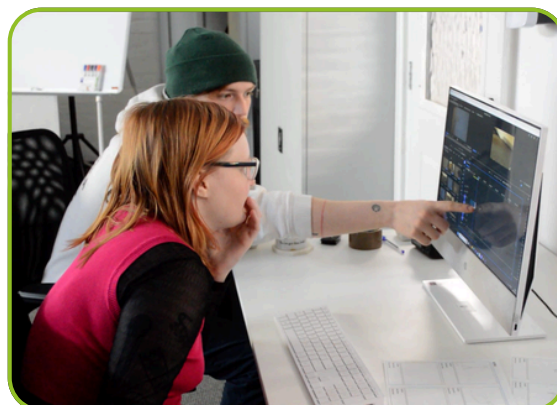
We are proud to continue receiving outstanding feedback from our participants, who consistently highlight the positive impact of our personalised, supportive approach. Referral agencies and partner organisations have also recognised the value of the Pathways Programme, praising our dedication and noting the continued need for our services within the local area.

With one year of funding remaining, we look forward to building on this momentum, strengthening partnerships, supporting more young people, and continuing to deliver a programme that creates real, lasting change.

“

The support I got was absolutely amazing, everyone was so kind, supportive and always available to help. Not only did I manage to figure out what I wanted to do but also given tools and assistance to help with this in a major way -
Antonio B

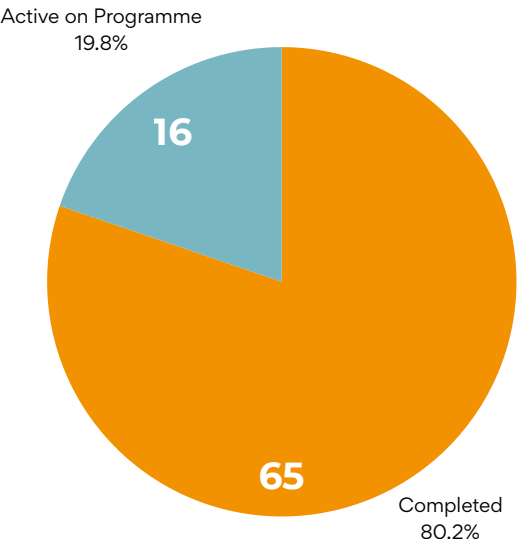
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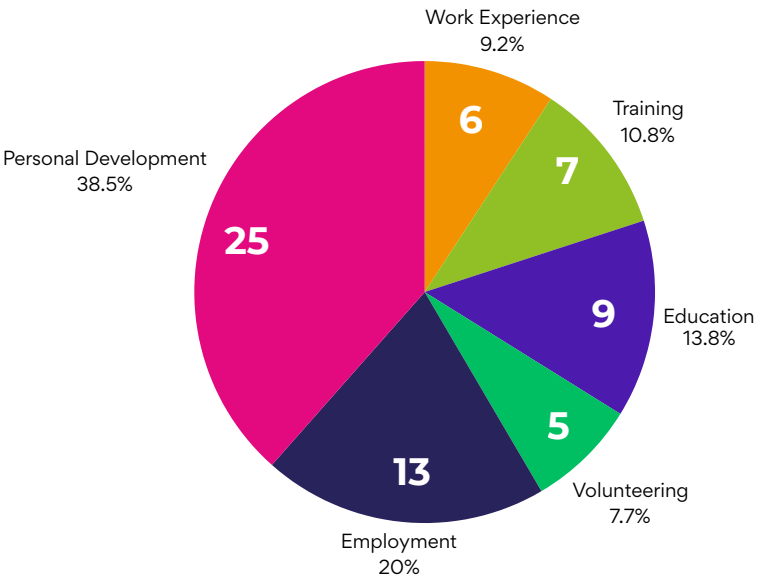
To date, the Pathways Employability Programme has supported 81 young people across the West Midlands.

These figures highlight the diverse and meaningful progress made by our participants, whether through immediate progression into education, work or training, or through crucial personal development milestones that lay the foundations for long-term success.

Completion Numbers



Completion Outcomes



“For someone new to the country, communication and self-confidence are the very first difficulty to tackle, and Open Lens Media totally covered that safe space to talk and develop these skills -
Mohammad K.”

“This experience has been truly transformative, equipping me with the skills I need to succeed in my career -
Abdul R.”



*All data is correct as of 05/12/2025.

Lights, Camera, Action

In July, we were commissioned by Walsall Council to deliver a new NEET (not in education, employment, training) engagement initiative as part of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Fund. Chosen for our creative and youth-centred approach, we launched the Lights, Camera, Action (LCA) Project, an innovative media-led programme designed to support NEET young people aged 18-21 living in Walsall.



The LCA Project is an 8-week programme that uses creative media as a tool for engagement, confidence building, and skills development. Through activities such as video production, podcasting, and digital content creation, participants take part in structured workshops that blend practical media training with essential soft skills including communication, teamwork, presentations, and planning. Each cohort works collaboratively to produce a final creative output, such as a short documentary or podcast, focusing on real issues that matter to them.

We successfully completed our first cohort this year, with participants achieving strong personal and progression outcomes. We have since launched our second cohort, with a third planned before the end of March. Alongside the group sessions, all participants receive access to our in-house Coaching and Employability services, providing tailored 1-to-1 support to help them move into education, employment, or further training.

Walsall Council is piloting this programme across a range of providers and we are proud to be selected to deliver it, demonstrating trust in our distinctive creative methodology and proven ability to engage young people who are often hardest to reach.



Summer Roadshow

This year, we were delighted to receive a further year of funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to deliver our Summer Roadshow. Building on the success of last year, the programme came back bigger and better, reaching over 90 young people across the summer holidays.

The renewed funding enabled us to expand our offer, delivering a wider range of creative and media-focused activities designed to inspire, entertain, and provide meaningful learning opportunities. Throughout August, our team visited The Way Youth Zone (Wolverhampton), The Lighthouse Young People's Centre (Birmingham), Brickhouse Lane (Rowley), and Youth Connect (Walsall) to engage young people from across the Black Country and Birmingham.



Participants took part in an exciting mix of sessions including media quizzes, film scene recreation, presenting and interview challenges, creative storytelling, and hands-on camera and directing workshops. These activities were designed not only to spark creativity, but also to develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, confidence-building, and technical media abilities.

The enthusiasm and engagement shown by the young people this year demonstrated the ongoing need for accessible, inspiring creative opportunities. We are incredibly proud of the impact the Summer Roadshow continues to make and grateful to The National Lottery Community Fund for supporting another successful year of delivery.



Making Our Mark - Creative Black Country Workshops

As part of our partnership with Creative Black Country and the Making Our Mark project, Open Lens Media delivered two Digital Skills workshops designed to support local community groups in sharing their heritage projects. The sessions focused on building participants' confidence in using Social Media and digital tools to promote their projects, showcase their work, and celebrate the rich heritage of Walsall's diverse communities. Across the two workshops, participants learned how to plan engaging digital content, apply simple storytelling techniques, and create visuals using their mobile phones and platforms like Canva.

The workshops were tailored for groups who may have limited digital experience, ensuring the sessions were practical, accessible, and directly linked to their heritage-focused work. Participants had the opportunity to develop their own pieces of content, receive guided feedback, and leave with clear next steps for applying their new skills to their projects.

The feedback that we gained from participants was very positive; from the feedback forms completed after the two sessions, all respondents rated 5 out of 5 for the question "How useful were the workshops?". The positive response and the high quality of content produced during the sessions show that the training was beneficial and relevant to the organisations.

We are also excited to be delivering sessions to two additional cohorts early next year, ensuring that more community groups across Walsall have the opportunity to build their digital skills and share the stories that matter most to them.

Thank you to Creative Black Country for funding this project.



Work Experience placement

In June, we had the pleasure of welcoming Sky for a week-long work experience placement. She spent the week shadowing our Digital Content Creator & Marketer, Rima, and was set a creative challenge to produce a short Social Media video that captured the essence of Open Lens Media - our people, our mission, and our impact.

Sky fully immersed herself in the experience, getting hands-on with camera work, interview techniques, video editing, blog writing, and more. She approached every task with great energy and a willingness to learn, quickly developing her skills as the week went on. Her final video was confidently presented to the team, showcasing both her technical ability and her creativity. Sky was even involved in recording a voice-over for a Pledge 10 promotional video!



We're so proud of what Sky achieved during her time with us and wish her all the very best in her future endeavours. She left a real impression, and we hope her experience at Open Lens Media inspires her as she continues on her creative journey, alongside her new-found interest in video editing!

[Watch Sky's testimonial here.](#)



A MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM

Chloe – Project Manager

This year, I am incredibly proud of the impact we have made, particularly through our Pathways Programme, where we have supported young people to achieve outcomes both big and small. Every milestone, whether it's a breakthrough in confidence or a step closer to education, employment, or training, has reinforced the importance of the work we do.

We have faced more challenges this year, but with growth comes learning, and I am immensely proud of how the team has risen to each moment.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the next chapter. The launch of our accreditation programmes will mean that young people will leave us not only with a completion certificate, but with a recognised NCFE award, something that will further strengthen their progression opportunities. I'm also looking forward to establishing our youth steering group and expanding our work around youth voice, ensuring that young people continue to shape and influence everything we do.

Here's to another year of growth, collaboration and meaningful impact.





Taran – Lead Facilitator

Throughout my time working at OLM this year, one of the best experiences was being able to offer the young people high-quality work placements. In February, I led a work experience day which involved taking a group of our participants from Walsall to Birmingham Open Media (BOM) for an afternoon. During this time, the group had the chance to operate equipment such as Green Screens, 3D Printers and Motion Capture Suits in a fully accessible digital workshop environment.

It was great to see the group interacting with practitioners and taking the opportunity to explore state of the art technology. The outcomes from this placement include some of the young people taking up bootcamp opportunities with BOM in order to continue upskilling their digital knowledge and move closer to the industry of their choice.

It has been a fantastic experience working with our young people throughout this year and witnessing their progress from joining the programme and in many cases, securing their desired outcome by the finish point.

Furthermore, the introduction of joint sessions and events outside of the typical sessions such as networking days have strengthened the offering of the Pathways Programme allowing participants to meet like-minded people and enrich their overall experience.



Rima – Digital Content Creator & Marketer



2025 has been one of my most meaningful years at Open Lens Media. Some of my proudest moments from this year include hosting Sky, a work experience student, for a week-long placement and creating and conducting online digital workshops for the Creative Black Country 'Making Our Mark' project. I also enjoyed taking part in our July Staff Training Week and the full Team Training day in January, both of which helped me brush up on my skills, deepen my understanding of how our programmes impact local young people, and helped improve the bonds between the whole team.

As a content creator, I have the privilege of working directly with the team and our participants to capture the sessions, record the participants' growth journeys, and see the connections made between facilitators and their participants first-hand; these aspects have made my role so rewarding.

I am now preparing to leave Open Lens Media after over four years, and I am feeling incredibly grateful. This organisation has shaped me both personally and professionally, giving me opportunities that have stretched my creativity, confidence, and self-belief. I will miss collaborating with the team, helping the participants on their journeys, and all of the projects that have made my time here so special, but I'm leaving with gratitude, excitement for the future, and a real sense of impact.

Open Lens Media will always be an important part of my life.



Tahlana – Employability & Development Coach

Over the past year at OLM, I have truly valued my role as both a mentor and a Pledge 10 Lead. A key highlight was delivering the first all-female Pathways cohort with Damaris at Aaina Hub. Seeing the group grow in confidence and develop new skills throughout the programme was incredibly rewarding. The change from those first sessions to how they eventually carried themselves and supported each other was wonderful to see.

Each 1-to-1 mentoring session has also been meaningful in its own way. Our participants face a wide range of challenges and barriers to employment, and being able to listen, support, and help them navigate their next steps is something I deeply appreciate. Walking alongside them as they move forward in their chosen paths has been one of the most fulfilling parts of my year.

I have particularly enjoyed the opportunities for professional development this year, especially during staff training week and through contributing to events such as LCA delivery - experiences that allowed me to collaborate with colleagues and refine my mentoring practice.

Being part of an incredible team has made all of this even more special - our collective dedication truly shone through when we won an award at the Social Economy Awards.

Looking ahead to 2026, I hope OLM continues to expand its reach and impact, providing more young people with creative opportunities and meaningful support. Overall, working here remains inspiring because of the enthusiasm and potential of the young people we support, and I feel proud to be part of a team that makes a real difference in their lives.



Emmanuella – Administration Assistant

2025 has been nothing short of an impactful year. As always, both the January and Summer Training Days helped me keep our goals at the forefront of my mind, reminding me that I'm part of a much bigger picture.

Hosting Sky for her work experience placement was a real highlight. Seeing the work she produced showed that young people can inspire and also indirectly support other young people - it felt meaningful knowing that OLM will forever be part of her learning journey.

One of my proudest moments this year was coordinating the filming with Open Lens Productions for Lloyds' 100 Years Anniversary. It felt special to contribute to something with such a long history, and it gave me hope that one day OLM and OLP can reach that level of legacy and impact too.



Attending Job Fairs, Expos, and Sign-Up sessions at The Link meant that I was able to meet young people who were ready to take steps towards developing their skills and future opportunities - knowing that I could support them on that journey was and is a continuous proud moment as I am also able to see the participants go on to complete and graduate from the programmes which is as rewarding.

My hopes for 2026 are that OLM continues to make a meaningful impact in people's lives and grows in new directions, stepping into spaces we've never been before. Winning the Social Creative Impact Award was definitely a testament to the great work we're doing, and I'm excited to see how much further we can go. Gooo Teammm!



Damaris – Programme Delivery Facilitator



This year of 2025 has had many pivotal moments from finishing my first cohort of young people on the Pathways Programme in the early part of the year to facilitating sessions for OLM's first all-female Pathways cohort at Aaina Community Hub, and towards the end of the year, co-leading the LCA project with more exciting things to come. This has shown me that I am more than capable of doing the work that I do, that there is purpose in every person's life that I touch and everyone's story deserves to be heard.

One of my proudest moments was seeing our participants come to the Pledge 10 networking event we hosted at The Table in Walsall. Not only did they connect with organisations, but they connected with each other either in conversation or over social media. This was a beautiful moment, making this event come to life with all the planning the team did and making the participants feel seen and known in the space.

I have really enjoyed working with young people and young adults in this capacity of 1-2-1s on the Pathways Programme because I have been able to connect with them, empower them and challenge them to critically think about their approach to life and situations which creates a mindset shift. I've always said that you serve the people you once were and in each individual I have worked with, I have seen an aspect of myself in them, which I believe needs to be nurtured and developed to see change.

For 2026, I hope that we, as OLM, continue to be recognised for the impact that we have made in Walsall by seeing our young people and young adults progress and setting them on the right path.



Rakeem – Programme Delivery Facilitator

I am now ending the year reaching my 6 months milestone working at Open Lens Media! There are a variety of words to describe my experience, some of which include: impactful, heart-warming, demanding, influential, and fulfilling.

Starting my journey here with the Summer Roadshow sessions was an invaluable experience that I will always look back on & smile. It allowed me to work interactively with groups of young people and children across Birmingham & Walsall, allowing me to come up with ideas and plan sessions with creativity. I have also really enjoyed having an impact with the Pathways Programme. I love being able to help and these are young people who deserve to be given a chance at succeeding, despite the societal restrictions and economic barriers that have mostly prevented them from doing so. I have seen so much value with the LCA project and have particularly enjoyed working with young people who have experienced the care system. My personal experiences from a foster carer family have helped me to positively impact young people beyond the complicated system that is there to support them.

I have been welcomed into a great team filled with belly laughs, chats, appreciation for one another, and support.



PLEDGE 10



Coming into 2025, our intention for Pledge 10 was to build on the early partnership foundations established in previous years, such as our initial work with Brit Asia TV, and make meaningful progress toward our target of collaborating with 10 local organisations to provide high-quality work-experience opportunities for our young people.

This year has been extremely successful, with seven local organisations signing up to Pledge 10, representing a significant step forward. As a team, we divided our focus across the Creative and Universal sectors, which allowed us to approach companies with greater clarity and strategy. In addition, the funnel map designed by Daina and Rima has been a major turning point in helping us liaise directly and more efficiently with organisational contacts, and this will be a key approach we continue using going forward.

Across both Creative and Universal strands of Pledge 10, we have secured partnerships with Aaina Community Hub, Avalon Insights, RicNic, Red Lens, One Walsall, One Love Community, and The Table. Reflecting on the progress made this year, we are both excited to move beyond the initial partnership stage and begin delivering impactful, valuable placements for our participants as we move into next year.



Looking back at the Pledge 10 event, we both feel it was a standout moment for partners and participants to connect, resulting in a truly successful day. It was a pleasure to host such a diverse range of companies, including those already committed to the initiative as well as new organisations who were able to witness our local community impact first-hand. We see this event as an important launchpad for young people from our programmes, providing them with their first steps into real working environments through upskilling within local organisations. By connecting passionate, enthusiastic young people with partners who value fresh talent, we can help bridge the regional skills gap and improve participants' paths toward employability, which embodies the core aim of Pledge 10: creating meaningful opportunities for the next generation.

A YEAR ONLINE

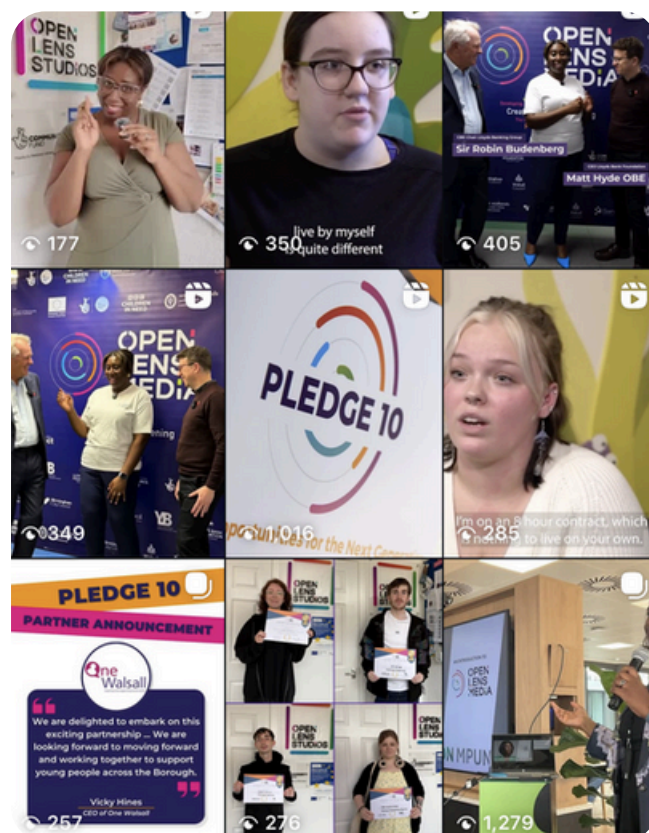
This year, our online presence continued to play a significant role in how we communicate, connect, and celebrate our work. Across our website and the Social Media platforms that we use, we've focused on sharing real stories and engaging with our community. Our platforms have been an important space for presenting our achievements, promoting opportunities, and strengthening relationships with organisations across the area.

One key focus this year was the online campaign for Pledge 10, where we used LinkedIn, Instagram, and email marketing to reach local organisations and highlight the value of becoming a Pledge 10 partner. This targeted online approach heavily contributed to several new partners joining the initiative, which shows the effect of our strategic digital communications. Alongside this, LinkedIn and X remained important platforms for connecting with local stakeholders and sharing updates from our programmes and projects.

We also used our platforms to showcase the successes of our participants. Instagram and LinkedIn were especially useful for sharing behind-the-scenes moments, session highlights, and live posts/Stories from the events we've hosted or attended; this helped to give our audiences a more personal view into our work.

Our website continued to act as a central point for information, regularly updated with new projects and includes referral forms for both young people and professionals to make the referral process smoother. YouTube played a vital function in premiering our 'It Takes a Village' documentary during National Care Leavers' Month in November. Mailchimp was also important in hosting our monthly newsletters for partners and participants, helping to keep our networks informed and engaged.

Across every platform, our online presence continued to grow in reach, followers, and most importantly, in impact; we look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.



HOPES FOR 2026

The year ahead offers new possibilities, and our hope for 2026 is to refine, strengthen, and grow in ways that honour our mission.

We aim to improve our systems and processes so that our delivery becomes even more effective and aligned with the needs of our young people. We also hope to nurture a positive and collaborative culture of leadership within our team, where each person feels supported and empowered to lead confidently.

With new services in development and a renewed focus on securing contracts and finance for our existing programmes, we are preparing for a year of purposeful and steady growth. One of our key hopes is to recruit a Business Manager who can help us stabilise our operations and build the organisational capacity we need, as well as welcome new Board Directors who will strengthen our governance and help drive our mission forward at a strategic level.

All of these priorities reflect our wider aspiration to become a fully sustainable and impactful social enterprise that provides valuable and needed services throughout the region.

Open Lens Media CIC.







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