

# FREELANCEHER 100

## COHORT 2 IMPACT REPORT

Empowering female entrepreneurs  
across the North West and beyond

June 2022



Home of Skills & Technology



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It is fast and furious but it is a revelation to have a start-up community that is accessible and raring to go, enabling better business and real innovation.

**Jenny Barnes**

**Founder of Ivity**

”

# FOREWORD

Diversity, accessibility and inclusion are at the core of everything we do. We are an enabler, not just of productivity, but of prosperity for all - we may be about technology but the benefits we bring are all about people.



**Mo Isap**

**CEO of IN4 Group and  
Founder of FreelanceHER 100**



*“When you educate a woman you educate a NATION” - thank you FreelanceHER for doing just that.”*

**Mary Adeleye**

**Founder and CEO at Litreelly Finance**



*“FreelanceHER 100 provides a safe space for female entrepreneurs to learn, network and build their businesses from some of the best leaders in their field.”*

**Janine McDonald**

**Founder at Clear the Clutter Now**

# ABOUT

## FREELANCEHER 100

FreelanceHER 100 is a 12-week business accelerator for women working to launch and grow sustainable businesses in digital, creative, media and technology sectors across the UK. It's a safe place to test their ideas, innovate and grow their businesses.

We empower female freelancers to be strong leaders, to create powerful enterprises, and to influence and shape the world through their companies. We recognise and maximise

the exceptional strengths that are unique to the female entrepreneur through a bespoke curriculum and group mentoring - putting the community at our core.

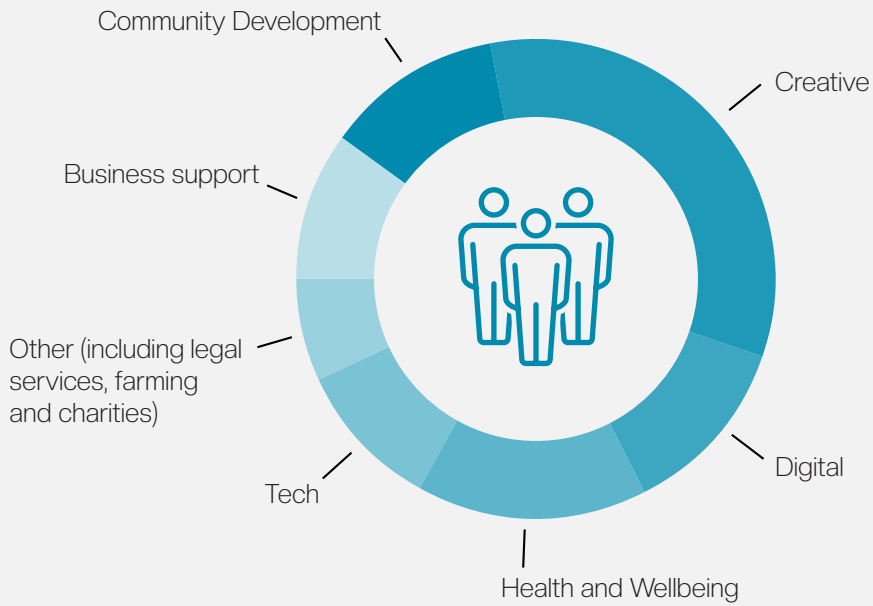
### How it worked

- **Weekly workshops** on topics relevant to the female entrepreneur, delivered via Zoom. These were held twice over the course of a day to give attendees flexibility based on their schedules
- **Lunch and learns** to deep dive into expert domains, such as winning contracts through tendering, sustainability and intellectual property
- **Speaker events** from inspiring and specialist speakers, such as former Olympian Abigail Irozuru, growth management specialist Sara Simeone, and members of the Northern Power Women network
- **Networking and social events** in our social space at HOST

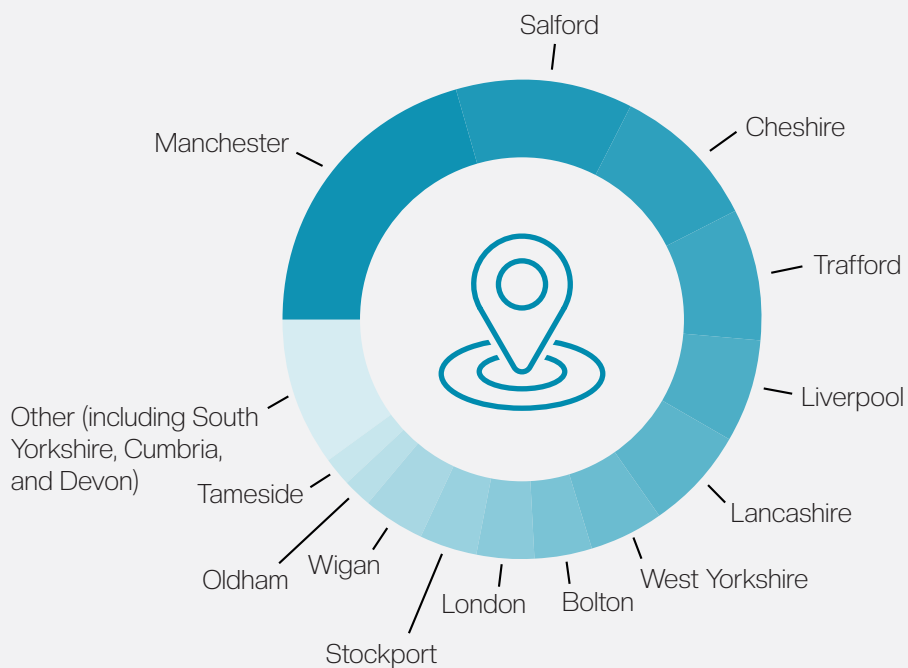




## Our community came from a range of sectors



## They came from across Greater Manchester and beyond

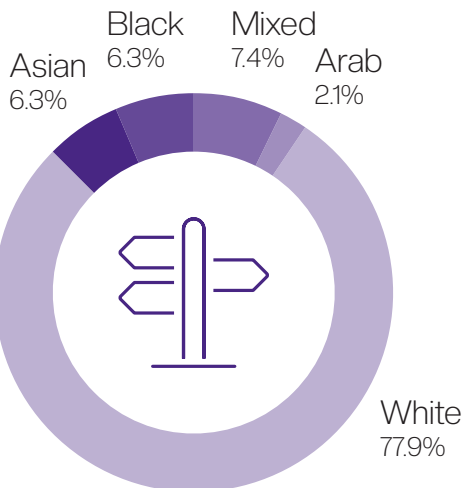


# DIVERSITY

## ACROSS OUR COMMUNITY

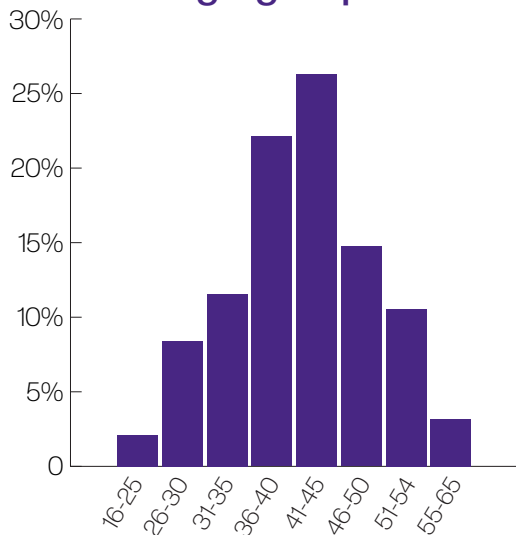
Diversity is important because we live in an ever-growing global society. As leaders, we understand and appreciate that cultural differences and diverse backgrounds build the best teams.

### Ethnic Diversity

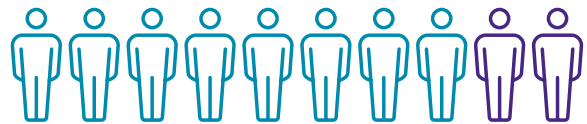


23% of our cohort consider themselves to be from an ethnic minority group

### Age groups



7.4% have a disability

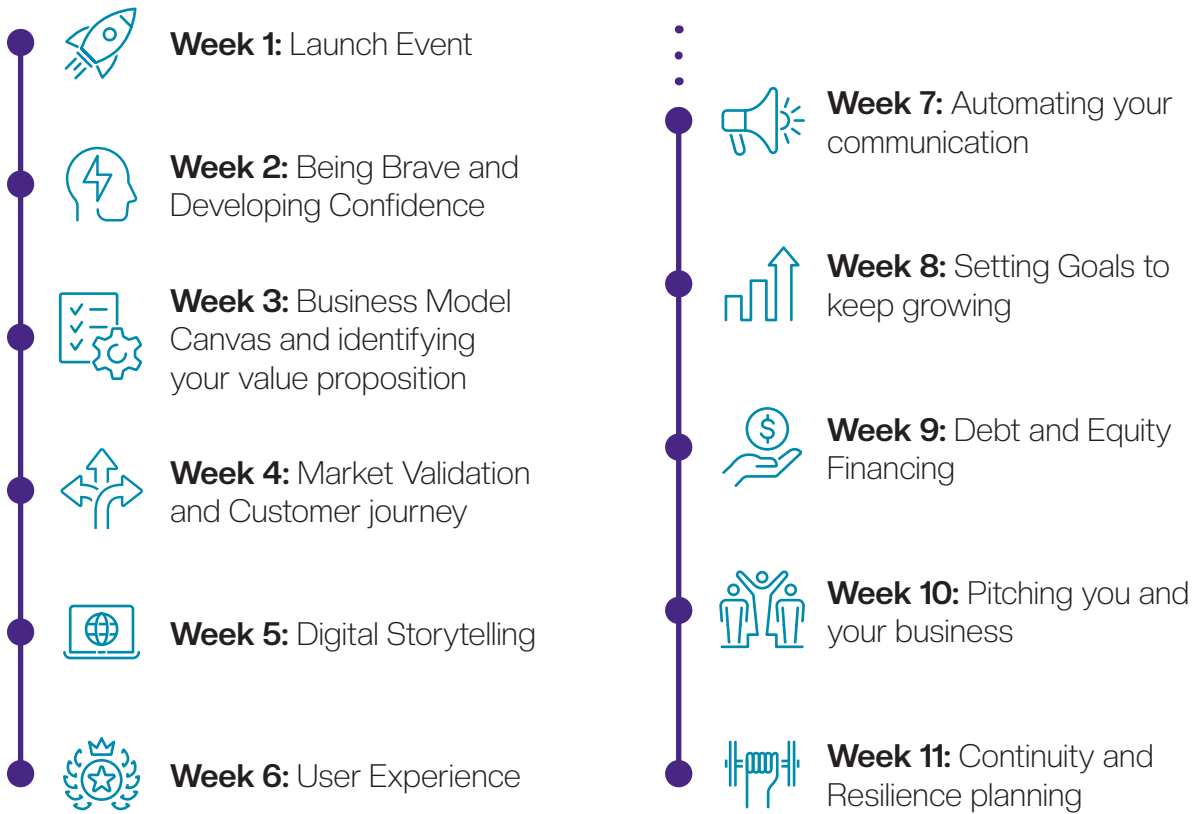


79% have a degree level education

# A TIMELINE OF DELIVERY

The programme syllabus summarised below introduced a new topic each week for 12 weeks through interactive workshops, with inspiring and experienced speakers.

This was complimented by the virtual community the programme created, alongside marketing and communications to celebrate successes and the participants involved.



These workshops made up the core pillars of delivery for each week, and were complemented by our lunch and learns, speaker sessions and socials. Our FreelanceHER sessions were delivered by either the IN4 team, or by one of our partners, without whom the programme would not have been possible. This includes:



# HOW FREELANCEHER CREATED A COMMUNITY

Our cohort of women came from across the UK, from all walks of life, with varied experience, backgrounds and perspectives.

Curriculum design took this into account, delivering workshops, that provided participants with the right skills they needed to accelerate their growth, but also included aspects on confidence, neurodiversity, and the entrepreneur's journey.

As part of the programme, our cohort all took part in group mentoring sessions, led by leading female small-business owners and freelance mentors. The feedback from participants was unanimous that the group mentoring sessions were incredibly valuable, and were what set this programme apart.



“FreelanceHER gives mentors the opportunity to nurture future talent and watch them blossom in confidence”

**Dot McCarthy**

**FreelanceHER mentor | Farmer, Cronkshaw Fold Farm**



“I know I will be inspired by each of those on the programme as I mentor and see them develop their gifts, talents and ideas to establish businesses that will provide much-needed solutions to positively impact their world and have a ripple effect greater than they can imagine!”

**Abigail Irozuru**

**FreelanceHER mentor | Tuition Agency Director  
& Olympic Athlete, Manchester Tutors**



# CASE STUDY

## ALLISON ANGEL

In her 30s, Allison appeared to have it all. She was married with two children and co-founder of one of Manchester's fastest growing letting agencies. Yet, burnout from work and motherhood coupled with the devastation of a "brutal divorce" took their toll and Allison felt like she had hit rock bottom.

When the pandemic struck, Allison, like many other business owners, was ineligible for financial assistance from the government and could not access grants, furlough or business rates relief.

With sheer determination and resourcefulness, she managed to keep herself and the business afloat. The hard work paid off when an incredible opportunity arose to sell the company, and she took it.

Within a few months, Allison qualified as a personal stylist, saying farewell to two decades in the estate agency business and focussing instead on her love for clothes and personal style. Allison rebuilt her life and is now the founder of Years Of Style - a company that helps women look and feel the best they have ever felt in the clothes they wear. Looking back, Allison now fondly says that everything she went through was an incredible journey of self-awareness and restoration of her self-esteem, which uniquely equipped her to empower women who need support at pivotal times in their lives.

As a mentor for FreelanceHER 100, Allison supported and inspired 100 women from



Years Of Style

across the UK to launch and grow successful businesses. Sharing her first-hand business experience through our peer-to-peer mentoring she helped participants to access the skills and confidence to pursue their ambitions.

"When women have someone who believes in them; their power, their authentic self and their unique gifts and talents, anything is possible. It's an absolute honour to have been chosen as a mentor for FreelanceHER 100 and I can't wait to start sowing into the UK's next generation of female led awesomeness," she said at the beginning of the programme.

As a previous HOST accelerator programme member, Allison benefitted from joining a diverse and inclusive community of entrepreneurs from all walks of life. Speaking about her time on the programme, Allison said: "I'm so thankful for the support, knowledge, expertise and connection from this programme. I am seen and championed as an entrepreneur. Years Of Style is in its infancy but has solid foundations from which to grow. It's all turned out well in the end."

# PARTICIPANT PROFILES AND STORIES



**Jennifer Pennington**  
Founder of Seasons Wellbeing  
and Psychological Therapies

**Sector**  
Health and wellbeing | Mental Health

**Mission**  
To improve wellbeing for all and making it accessible for everyone through counselling and psychotherapy as a highly qualified therapist, and facilitating workshops online/creating an online psychology programme



"It felt like someone had thrown a pebble in the pond when I first started and every idea and challenge to accelerate my business came to the surface, which I found overwhelming at first. This is exactly what I needed to take the first step. After some workshops on goal setting and mentoring through FreelanceHER 100, I was able to prioritise what I needed to do and I moved forward much quicker than I would have ever done without the programme."



"The FreelanceHER 100 experience is both hugely empowering and pragmatically practical. Learning with like-minded individuals means the enthusiasm and passion stays high, and stoked, and it really feels like you are being given every reason to fly! There is some really valuable business support to be had as well. It's a shame it's come to an end."



**Chi-chi Ekweozor**  
Founder of Attendist

**Sector**  
Digital | AI business platform

**Mission**  
To integrate with existing event and marketing tools to help busy marketers identify leads from events and measure return on investment (ROI) with just one click.



**Mafunda Lucia Ndongala**  
Founder of SACO Superfoods

**Sector**  
Digital | Marketplace

**Mission**  
To positively impact consumers' health and wellbeing, while empowering small-scale producers in West Africa, by ethically sourcing natural and high quality ingredients from the Ivory Coast.



"Running a business on your own can feel lonely sometimes. The FreelanceHER 100 programme has given me the opportunity to meet and network with other like-minded business women who share similar challenges. I particularly valued the mentoring sessions and for that I would definitely recommend the programme"

“

“A brilliant way to chat and meet other like-minded women. It has left me feeling a lot more supported and empowered. A must do programme for those wanting to expand their network and learn a few things along the way.”



**Nicole Fearon**  
Founder of Happy Martins

**Sector**  
Tech | Community 'marketplace'

**Mission**  
To create a trusted digital space for interaction between providers - who share information on who they are, what's happening and where - and users, who can find activities, jobs and volunteering opportunities within easy reach of where they live.

“

“FreelanceHER 100 is a very complete accelerator programme that covers a broad range of business topics. You become part of a great community where you feel supported and that you can contribute to as well. There is always a positive, cheerful atmosphere created by the HOST team.”



**Catherine Makin Khan**  
Founder of Makin Studios

**Sector**  
Creative | Design

**Mission**  
To encompass and intertwine identity, communication and space, blending practicality and personality, to create design that unlocks the potential of a brand. Design made practical. Design made personal. Design made for you.

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“I set an audacious goal at the beginning of the programme. Through the mentorship and connections, I am really close to achieving it. Being surrounded by people pushing themselves and achieving their ambitions is a fantastic motivation. I encourage anyone who can to join the programme.”

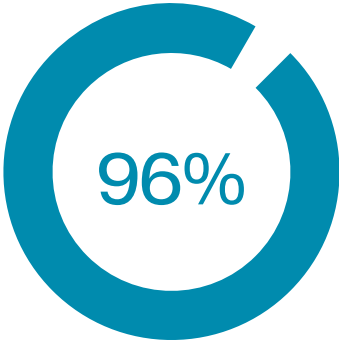


**Ulku Ferah Yelbasi**  
Founder of Su Business Consultancy

**Sector**  
Business support | Translation Services and Consultancy

**Mission**  
To provide bilingual consultancy for the development of British-Turkish business collaborations, alongside helping SMEs and start up companies build and operate thriving businesses by working collaboratively to analyse their challenges and execute improvement plans.

# FEEDBACK AND REVIEW



96% of FreelanceHERs didn't think they would have received better business support elsewhere

100% of FreelanceHERs felt the programme positively impacted them and their business



When asked 'on a scale of 1-10 how likely would you recommend the FreelanceHER 100 programme to a friend or colleague?' our cohort gave an average answer of 9.6

## Increase in core enterprise skills



**18.5%**

increase in confidence



**19.2%**

increase in networking

# THE FUTURE

## OF FREELANCEHER 100

Since the conclusion of cohort 2, we have seen multiple FreelanceHERs join the community as members of HOST, participate in events, and take part in our other programmes.

HOST provides freelancers with not only access to start-up and scale-up support, but also access to the GM-wide innovation ecosystem to continue to grow their network and community. In addition to this, our second cohort will continue to connect and innovate through:



The FreelanceHER alumni community is connected via LinkedIn and WhatsApp. Some have already begun to do business together



Strong relationships with mentors, delivery partners and the management team. Some mentor groups have plans to meet up every quarter to check in on progress



Our online community tool, myHOST, which all of our cohort have guest access to. They can continue to access FreelanceHER materials for a further three months

### If you are looking to support or get involved

We are always looking to collaborate with new partners and sponsors! If you would like to help fund future iterations of FreelanceHER, please get in touch to discuss our partnership packages.

Our programmes are only as good as the content we deliver! If you are interested in delivering sessions or providing mentorship for future cohorts, please let us know.

We've already started looking for the next set of 100 fantastic freelancers. Contact us if you know anyone who would like to join!



# FreelanceHER 100

A safe place to test ideas  
and grow businesses



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