

## Press Release

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### *Major London universities announce initiative to support and scale up 14 ‘social venture’ businesses working to tackle key social challenges*

*London Social Ventures* will support social venture spinouts and startups dedicated to improving health, mental health, accessibility, sustainability and inclusivity in the capital.

**London, October 23, 2024** – London’s leading universities, businesses and civic organisations have joined forces to announce a programme to incubate and grow innovative social ventures - businesses that prioritize social impact over profit - with the aim of tackling some of the biggest challenges facing communities and individuals in capital.

Together they have formed *London Social Ventures*, an initiative led by Queen Mary University of London and University College London alongside 9 other London universities, that will provide critical funding, mentoring and a robust support network for university-led social ventures focused on addressing key issues such as sustainability, inclusivity, and mental health.

The first 14 social ventures to be supported by London Social Ventures’ *Advanced Support Programme* were announced today at the formal launch, marking the start of an ambitious effort to create a thriving and self-sustaining social venture ecosystem across the capital.

They include:

- Trimtots – setup by UCL academics an immersive healthy eating programme for families and young children which uses puppetry and interactive workshops to improve diet and help avoid obesity and its health complications.  
[www.trimtots.com](http://www.trimtots.com)
- Intotum – setup by a UAL graduate an adaptive everyday wear designed with and for the disabled community, their garments feature discreet, built-in functionalities that empower people whilst offering style, comfort and durability
- [rebox.eco®] – setup by a UAL graduate and aims to revolutionise e-commerce packaging with a concept that's as innovative as it is simple: remaking new boxes from old boxes.

See Editors Notes below for the full list of social ventures.

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Amir Rizwan, Director of London Social Ventures commented: "Social ventures are key to solving today's complex problems. But they can't thrive without early funding and the right partnerships. This is where London Social Ventures steps in. By bringing together London's universities, we're creating a robust, city-wide ecosystem that will support the next generation of social entrepreneurs."

### **The role of university research in tackling societal challenges**

Leading universities and their academics and students are playing an increasingly important role in developing research-based innovations and interventions aimed at tackling complex challenges faced by communities and individuals such as health, mental wellbeing, accessibility, sustainability and inclusivity.

The resulting social ventures are uniquely positioned to solve deep-rooted social issues by aligning business models with social impact, yet they face significant barriers, including limited access to pre-seed capital and a lack of infrastructure to support early growth.

Dr. Phil Clare, CEO of Queen Mary Innovation said: "Entrepreneurship allows researchers to implement innovative ideas in new ways—whether it's tackling air pollution, creating new medical technology for the NHS, or addressing inequality. However, without a support structure and capital, many promising ventures struggle to survive. London Social Ventures is set to change that."

Universities devote significant resources to supporting this process – including innovation and enterprise teams for student startups and technology transfer offices to assist academics on staff to commercialise their research by building spinout businesses.

Dr. Steven Schooling, Managing Director of UCL Business (UCLB) commented: "We are thrilled to be part of this groundbreaking initiative. UCLB has a long history of social venture success, and we look forward to working with our partners to offer the critical support these ventures need to grow."

### **About London Social Ventures (LSV)**

London Social Ventures seeks to solve deep-rooted social issues by backing social ventures founded by university researchers and students. The new initiative is led jointly by Queen Mary University of London and UCL Business – in partnership with major London universities, private partners and public bodies.

Social ventures are companies which generate social impact, rather than just profit, but are viable businesses (they don't rely on donations).

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University-born social ventures connect world-leading research with the wider impact economy. They have enormous potential to change lives yet struggle to raise early funding.

London Social Ventures will generate a critical mass of new social ventures big enough to raise a permanent self-sustaining fund that will back university social ventures emerging across the capital. This will start with a pilot of an initial cohort of fourteen social ventures from a range of London universities who are developing innovative ways of tackling social issues ranging from inclusivity, the environment, inclusive fashion and mental health.

The project was first announced in 2023, and formally launches on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2024. The initial funding is from Research England.

London Social Ventures is being initially funded through Research England across 2024-2025 and has brought together a diverse partnership including Barclays Eagle Labs, Sodexo, and the Mayor's Office.

London Social Ventures partner organizations include *Queen Mary's University London, University College London, London Metropolitan University, London Business School, King's College London, University of London, Goldsmiths University of London, University of the Arts London, London School of Economics, University of East London, City University, Barclays Eagle Labs, Sodexo, Central London Forwards, Royal Docks, Royal Albert Docks, London Borough of Newham and the Federation of Small Businesses.*

### **Long term goals**

The long-term goal of London Social Ventures is to develop a city-wide network capable of nurturing social ventures from idea to implementation, backed by partnerships with local authorities, NHS trusts, and corporate stakeholders. The initiative will also explore how this model can be scaled to benefit other regions in the UK, ensuring that the success seen in London can be replicated elsewhere.

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### **Notes to editors**

**Amir Rizwan, Dr Phil Clare and Dr Steven Schooling are available for interview.**

**For further information, please contact: Will Hanford-Spira, Innovation Communications Manager, Queen Mary Innovation Email: [w.hanford-spira@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:w.hanford-spira@qmul.ac.uk) or call: 07975 750 448**

The initial cohort of social Ventures announced to be supported by London Social Ventures is:

<b>1</b>	Carbon Cell	carboncell.co	Carbon Cell has developed a non-toxic, compostable foam material made from carbon-negative biochar with applications in packaging, the built environment, fabrication, marine foams, and more.
<b>2</b>	co-create		Co-Create specialises in corporate role-play, forum theatre, and design-sprint facilitation – an innovative, experiential learning environment for both individuals and businesses.
<b>3</b>	Dewey Clothing Ltd	deweyclothing.com	DEWEY is the world’s first extra petite fashion brand for people 5ft and under. DEWEY creates stylish and sustainable apparel, making fashion accessible to those often overlooked by other brands.
<b>4</b>	Diversity Data Hub		Data and insights to help employers attract, recruit and promote diverse talent by providing rigorous, independent, detailed data analysis and statistical modelling of recruitment and promotions processes to identify barriers for underrepresented groups.
<b>5</b>	EDRAF		EDRAF is a data analytics tool designed to predict creditworthiness and assess the impact of social lending. EDRAF incorporates both financial and socio-cultural data to provide a comprehensive assessment of financial risk.
<b>6</b>	Human Impact Pathway	Thehumanimpact pathway.web.app	The Pathway is a resource that helps companies and investors manage their social and environmental impacts, especially in fragile and crisis zones. It offers data, advice, and operational support to improve visibility into global supply chains and strengthen local stakeholder relationships.
<b>7</b>	Intotum	intotumfashion.com	Intotum makes adaptive clothing that blends style with function. Designed with and for the disabled community, their garments feature discreet, built-in functionalities, offering comfort, durability, and empowerment through everyday wear.
<b>8</b>	[rebox.eco®]	rebox.eco	[rebox.eco®] seeks to revolutionise e-commerce packaging with a concept that's as innovative as it is simple: remaking new boxes from old boxes.
<b>9</b>	RecycleLab Ltd	recycle-labs.com	RecycleLab is a resource management company specializing in the collection and recycling of single-use plastic from the science and healthcare industries.

<b>10</b>	Simba Technologies	<a href="http://simbatech.io">simbatech.io</a>	Simba make data collection & analytics possible for impact organizations (nonprofits, government entities) that work with distributed groups of stakeholders using WhatsApp and AI integrations.
<b>11</b>	Speek Health	<a href="http://lets-speek.com">lets-speek.com</a>	Speek Health provides support for carers whose children portray challenging and self-injurious behaviours. Through an app, they deliver specialised support for carers of neurodivergent as well as neurotypical children.
<b>12</b>	START Training	<a href="http://ucl.ac.uk/psychiatry/research/mental-health-older-people/projects/start">ucl.ac.uk/psychiatry/research/mental-health-older-people/projects/start</a>	START Training supports the NHS and other organisations to deliver START (STrAtegies for RelaTives), an evidence-based, clinically proven and cost-effective solution for family carers of people with dementia living at home.
<b>13</b>	Trimtots CIC	<a href="http://trimtots.com">trimtots.com</a>	Trimtots CIC delivers interventions to improve lifestyle behaviours and reduce the risk of obesity in preschool children.
<b>14</b>	Wellspring	<a href="http://wellspring.health">wellspring.health</a>	Wellspring Health is an online portal offering personalized reproductive health information.