



# Karen's Haven for COPD

Karen's Haven for COPD is a compassionate and supportive space for individuals living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and other life limiting conditions. Their mission is to empower local people with the knowledge and support needed to navigate life with COPD.

In May 2025, Emma Liston approached Action Together to find out more about setting up an organisation in honour of her Mum Karen who passed away from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Emma was a carer for her Mum during her illness and subsequent death. As a former nurse, Emma was equipped to deal with this but was surprised about the lack of support. She explained what she wanted the organisation's aims and activities to be. She already had the name 'Karen's Haven for COPD'.

Emma was unsure where to begin, and needed someone to brainstorm ideas with, sense check her thinking and help develop a clear action plan to turn her idea into a reality

## E26 Thematic Areas:

The organisation received support from our Community Development Worker to weigh up legal structures and governance for the group and recruit additional directors who shared the same passion for those living with life limited illness. Once Emma decided on a CIC structure, she has since been signposted to further to grow her social enterprise via the Our Business Programme

Karen's Haven for COPD attended the 8-week 'Social Accelerator Programme' social entrepreneurs, delivered by Mantle. The programme aimed to support new social entrepreneurs to enhance sustainability, diversify income streams, and develop robust business models.

Emma was keen to join the Accelerator Programme to develop her business, provide structure to her business plan, explore different blended funding models and to consider the market, potential challenges and considerations with local competition.

## Outcomes:

In 8 months, Karen's Haven for COPD has grown from an individual with an idea for her community based on her own lived experience caring for her mum with COPD, to a registered social enterprise with the building blocks in place to grow a sustainable community business promoting health and wellbeing across Tameside.

Emma Liston, Director of Karen's Haven for COPD chose to grow as a social enterprise to generate a sustainable income through a trade which will give her the freedom to grow her community business and provide the support to communities who face the greatest inequalities with a strong focus on prevention

The support through the accelerator programme has helped her to consider different trading options, understand the market and start to put together a business plan that will help her to grow the different elements of the business. They are hoping to develop a 75% income through trade, and 25% through grants and community fundraising.

They are looking to work with residential care homes to train their workforce to use breathing and relaxation techniques to support residents and reduce the number of ambulance call outs. Longer term they hope to create a respite centre to reduce hospital readmissions for those living with COPD conditions and provide a space for people to receive holistic support, as well as respite for carers.

They are exploring opportunities with local schools and colleges, using Emma's skills as an NLP practitioner to deliver seminars and education workshops to build confidence and reduce limiting beliefs among young people, to change their behaviour and make healthier life choices e.g (reducing drinking, smoking, vaping).

Grant funding will help to deliver regular community support sessions to educate and support people living with COPD and their carers .



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## Insights and Lessons:

- 1-2-1 person centred approach, listening to the passion and ideas an individual has for a cause that is deeply personal, and helping them turn this into something positive that will help others with similar experiences is crucial in our work as Community Development Workers.
- Taking the time to explore different legal structures, and gathering the support from others who will grow the organisation with Emma has been an important step in this process.
- Connection with other "like minded" individuals who care about the health and wellbeing of our communities in Tameside and having the peer support to develop and test ideas
- Specialist programme of support, led by successful Social Entrepreneurs who have shared their expertise and insight to grow a Social Enterprise and a sustainable income through trade

## Reflections:

*"I am at the very beginning of the 'limited company' world and only previously worked as a sole trader so this area is brand new and somewhat daunting. I found the sessions (Accelerator programme) very insightful, it has helped to make strategies clearer for me and understand the direction I want to go in to and I would love the opportunity for further support"*

**Link:** <https://www.karens-haven-for-copd.org/>

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