In February 2020, Sir Michael Marmot, director of the UCL Institute of Health Equity, issued a landmark report which found that, for the first time in over 100 years, life expectancy in England is stalling, and for the most deprived women in society, has reversed:

“Poverty has a grip on our nation’s health - it limits the options families have available to live a healthy life. Government health policies that focus on individual behaviours are not effective. Something has gone badly wrong.”

 Sadly, as it has unfolded over the months since the report was published, the Covid-19 pandemic has done more to cement these pre-existing inequalities. 65% of UK families in the bottom earning bracket possess savings of just £0 - £1,500, and twice as many private tenants are now in rent arrears.

At the same time, social pressure for change is growing. Now innovative, inclusive and action-oriented solutions to tackle social and environmental inequality feel more urgent and more possible than before. This is your invitation to reimagine our collective future and show others a path into how the world should be.

At Year Here we think that an entrepreneurial approach is one of the best ways to build that alternative future; amplifying unheard voices, designing platforms that redistribute power, challenging the systems that for so long have worked for the few not the many, and using business as a means to achieve this. Join us to build something fast and learn in the process.

At Year Here your journey starts with insight - this is central to our philosophy for building effective and impactful startups. Whether you’re based in a GP surgery tackling health inequality, working with vulnerable young people who’ve been excluded from mainstream education, or unpicking the complex nuances of the housing crisis, we work with services users and delivery organisations on the frontline to build the understanding required to create effective solutions.

It takes a bold and creative approach to design and test interventions that work. We give you a rigorous social innovation curriculum, practical business skills, entrepreneurial leadership development and a diverse network of experts to do just this.

Across the frontline placement, impact consulting project and venture lab phases, you’ll innovate in different contexts to build something that matters, with the aim of joining our startup portfolio of over 40 award-winning ventures.

We need more energetic, curious, tenacious and compassionate professionals to join our growing movement. There is no one better placed to do this – you’re just the person to lead the change. We can’t wait to meet you.

Anna Markland, Fellowship Director
More than a fifth of the UK’s population live on incomes below the poverty line, with wealth continuing to be unequally divided. 40% of Londoners do not meeting an acceptable standard of living. A study has also found that the UK’s six richest people control as much wealth as the poorest 13 million, and the gap has been widened with the Covid crisis.

People’s life chances are systematically diminished by poverty. Poorer people can expect to live fewer years in good health and their housing situation will be far more precarious. Poor children, or those who grow up in care, will fare much worse at school.

Inequality demands innovation

The state and the market have failed to tackle this inequality and the social problems associated with it.

Government’s often short-termist policy-making struggles to tackle the root causes and its inability to move nimbly means we miss opportunities.

When politics fails us, when some of the biggest protests of our lifetimes don’t result in the change we hope for and when the charitable business model increasingly leaves well-intentioned organisations stuck, it seems that our traditional vehicles for social change have become ineffective.

We have to find new ways to tackle complex problems.

Meanwhile in the private sector, exciting developments in tech and design are not yet being used to their full potential. Opportunities to respond to social challenges with ingenuity are emerging all the time.

Solving social problems starts with understanding them

Sadly, not enough efforts to solve social issues come from deep understanding of how problems manifest. Too many policies and programmes fail because they don’t respond to people’s needs, motivations, and complex contexts effectively.

It’s not about sitting in an ivory tower, designing policies and solutions for people. We believe that progressive change comes from the insight gained when working one-to-one with people. It’s only when you spend time in a homelessness hostel, a community centre or a Pupil Referral Unit that you really get to grips with the architecture of a problem and the lived experience of those who find themselves in difficulty.

Whether it’s the clumsy callousness of benefit traps for people living in temporary housing or the difficult experience of visiting an elderly parent in a care home, understanding and feeling these experiences is a critical first step for anyone moved to try their hand at leading social change.

Starting something could be your best shot at impact

Entrepreneurship offers people – who have the risk-appetite to go for it – an opportunity to act quickly without the constraints that come with working in large institutions.

And while entrepreneurship is a high-risk path to choose, with no guarantee of success, it can be a profoundly developmental experience for the entrepreneur, preparing them for their next big project.
The thread running through your experience as a Fellow is one of five social issues. Most Fellows go on to develop projects and ventures in a similar field.

Issues we tackle

Educational Inequality
The link between low family income and poor educational attainment in the UK is greater than in almost any other developed country.

This impacts career prospects and future earnings: over the course of a lifetime, a graduate from a Russell Group university will earn on average £371,000 more than someone who left school with fewer than 5 good GCSEs.

Educational Inequality Fellows work in schools across London and go on to establish ventures like Career Accelerator, a work experience programme helping school students from under-represented backgrounds prepare for careers in the growing tech industry.

The Housing Crisis
Homelessness is on the rise. In England, more than 81,000 households are homeless and each year over 4,000 people end up sleeping rough. Many homeless people are spending years in so-called ‘temporary’ accommodation – in part due to the sheer lack of affordable homes.

Placed in homeless hostels and supported accommodation services, our Housing Crisis Fellows work on innovations that help people move on from temporary accommodation and into independent living.

One such venture, Fat Macy’s, is a restaurant that trains homeless young people to run supper clubs, with profits raising a deposit for their first flat.

Community Resilience
Without the right resources, the most neglected of Britain’s council estates can be places of unemployment, social isolation, apathy and low levels of civic participation. They can also be places where unfair attitudes to neighbouring migrants and refugees threaten community cohesion.

Community Resilience Fellows are placed in centres and employability projects in the heart of these communities. They lead innovations that help diverse neighbours come together, gain skills and improve their local areas.

Ventures in this field include Juta, who work with migrant women at the St Hilda’s East community centre to give them an income by making upcycled shoes.

Health + Wellness
Since the NHS was founded in 1948, life expectancies have grown and the health service today is grappling with an ageing population that increasingly lives with chronic conditions like diabetes, arthritis and dementia.

Dealing with that shift – and the huge mismatch between tightening budgets and increasing demand – requires imaginative and radical redesign.

Our Health and Wellness Fellows start the course in health centres, elderly care homes and community-based health charities where they lead ventures like Appt, an innovative software system developed to make appointments easier to book for hard to reach communities.

Vulnerable Youth
Fewer than 1% of Britain’s children are in care, but they make up over half of the children in secure training centres and almost two-fifths of children in young offender institutions. Whether or not they are in the care system, vulnerable young people who are excluded from mainstream education often face mental health issues and unemployment in later life.

After spending time in Pupil Referral Units, youth justice initiatives and services for young people in care, our Vulnerable Youth Fellows establish ventures like Element. Culminating in public exhibitions, this arts-based venture provides confidence building programmes for young people leaving care.
Life Shocks

‘Life Shocks’ are major life events which can have a deep and detrimental impact on our wellbeing and financial resilience.

These events include personal shocks like bereavement, new caring responsibilities, serious illness, separation or divorce, and job loss. And they also include wide scale and prolonged events that affect entire communities, such as climate change, economic recession and the pandemic. For the most vulnerable, such life shocks can quickly escalate into a crisis.

Even before the pandemic, the UK had begun to transition to a Green Economy and needed to think about the impact this would have on workers, citizens and communities.

And now Covid has meant life shocks are inevitable for thousands of people in Britain — whilst also exposing how many households and support systems are ill-prepared:

A record 314,000 people were made redundant in the third quarter of 2020, with young people and ethnic minorities the hardest hit by job losses.

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 700,000 households are already in rent arrears, and 350,000 are at risk of eviction.

According to analysis by The Investing and Saving Alliance, 2/3 of people aged 50 to 65 in the UK were already under-saving for retirement.

Food banks across the country are stretched like never before and are not designed to meet long-term needs.

Universal Credit doesn’t offer sufficient income to ensure financial resilience.

Year Here has launched a new partnership with Royal London to do more to reduce the likelihood and impact of Life Shocks. Our Life Shocks Fellows will gain deep insight into a broad range of life shocks. You could be placed with organisations such as Camden Carers, Migrateful and Turn2Us, and there will also be new opportunities to learn about structural shocks, led by the Just Transition to a green economy. Throughout the 10 months, there will be support to turn your frontline insight into a related Life Shocks venture.
Overview

We take a different approach to social innovation and venture development.

It combines frontline service with access to an expert network, skills training and the platform to create your own ventures.

Your major projects start with the Insight Assignment, an opportunity to bring together your understanding of the system you are placed within and the insight you’ve gathered on the ground.

Next is the Innovation Project. After spending a few weeks on placement, you’ll build on the insight you’ve gathered to design and deliver an initiative to enhance the impact of your host organisation.

Then, you’ll work in groups on a Consulting Project, where you’ll respond to a brief set by a real client – from local authorities to national charities – to undertake service design, community engagement or social enterprise development projects.

Finally, you’ll develop a Social Venture, working alone or in groups to come up with a new product or service with a sustainable business model. You’ll also be presented with the opportunity to join our Venture Incubator to develop your idea further.

In a year’s time, we expect you to leave us with a promising startup venture idea, some seed funding and client relationships – or a great job with another social enterprise startup.
Our Fellows

When they join us, our Fellows bring an incredibly diverse set of skills, and an average of 8 years’ professional experience to the programme.

Selection Criteria

Whether your background is in technology, science, finance, or the arts, we’re looking for Fellows who are frustrated about how society isn’t working for everyone. Determined to reject apathy and cynicism, they instead channel their energy into social action, innovation and entrepreneurship. We look for these qualities:

Diversity

Difference, whether it’s in our cultural background or our political beliefs, gives us all opportunities to challenge our own assumptions and take on new perspectives. Given the nature of our work – stepping out of our own experience to understand the lives of others – diversity isn’t just a ‘nice to have’, it’s essential.

While representation of women, People of Colour, LGBTQ+ folks and people from low income backgrounds is higher within the Fellowship than national averages*, we know there is still work to do. We actively encourage applications from underrepresented and marginalised communities.

Entrepreneurial track record

You don’t have to have started a business but you’ll need to demonstrate your natural bias towards action.

Professional skill set

You should have a solid grounding in fundamental professional skills built up over at least 2 years in work.

Learning mindset

We’re looking for curiosity, open-mindedness and a sense of possibility about personal and societal growth.

Passion for social justice

You should be thoughtful about society’s issues, critical about what works and fired up about change.

Hunger for impact

You don’t pass up opportunities. You are seriously driven and hungry for growth, learning and impact.

Diversity

66% of our Fellows are white while 34% are Black, Asian or a Minority Ethnicity

13.5% qualified for Free School Meals

73% of our Fellows are women, 25% are men and 2% are non binary

21% of our Fellows are members of the LGBTQ+ community, 79% are heterosexual

*National averages are 20% BAME population amongst 25-29 year olds, 13.6% of pupils receive Free School Meals, and 2% of the population identify as LGBTQ+. 

SHAYANE LACEY (2017/18), FELLOW AND TEAM MEMBER
Our Ventures

Our Fellows have founded 42 social ventures that have collectively generated over £5.33m in revenue and reached over 15,000 service users – from gang members and homeless teens to isolated older people and refugee women.

These ventures are businesses with a purpose, attacking thorny social issues from different angles. Some use employment to empower – like *Juta*, who run social impact craft experiences delivered by marginalised women.

Others are drawing on the power of tech to create social change – like *Tranquiliti*, co-founded by George Metcalfe and Aaron John, a digital service to support both schools and students to understand and improve mental wellbeing.

And others offer small fixes within broken systems – like *Settle*, a social enterprise that offers targeted one-to-one support to vulnerable young people moving into their first flat in order to break the pernicious cycle of youth homelessness.

Backed by funders UnLtd, Beyond Business, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Bethnal Green Ventures among others, these social enterprises have been recognised with four Forbes 30 Under 30 listings, the Next Billion EdTech prize at the Global Education and Skills Forum, and the Social Enterprise of the Year Award at the 2018 Centre for Social Justice Awards.

They've also been widely featured in the press – including TechCrunch, Pioneer’s Post, the Guardian, Dazed, International Business Times and Vogue.
Learning philosophy

Our approach is quite unlike traditional educational practices. To make the most of this course, Fellows need to embrace our learning philosophy.

**Learning is most powerful outside the classroom**

Most traditional higher educational experiences take a purely didactic approach: an all-knowing teacher imparts their wisdom to the ignorant students.

We think the most powerful learning experiences happen in the real world, not in a lecture hall or seminar room. This isn’t radical, it’s called experiential learning and it’s based on the research of educationalists like David Kolb and John Dewey.

Real-world projects will challenge and test you, and occasionally you’ll fail. But your efforts will be rewarded with a transformative and developmental 10 months.

**Be the engineer of your own education**

We believe that a learning experience only really works if you help guide it proactively.

In experiential pedagogies, responsibility for the learning lies with the learner not the teacher. Unless you are actively engaged in the learning process – asking questions, having the courage to try out new approaches and seeking feedback from others – you’ll slip behind.

Our Fellows take responsibility for their own learning. And we take responsibility for creating the best conditions for that learning to happen.

**Remember that it’s not just about you**

Working with some of the most marginalised people in the country comes with a responsibility to put your own ego, needs and preferences aside for someone else’s.

We’re trying to make society better with people who face huge barriers to success in life, who have suffered serious injustices or who struggle to get by day-to-day.

We encourage our Fellows to keep this perspective throughout the programme, even when they are pushed to the edges of their own comfort zones.
Experiential

Year Here is about experiential learning: learning by doing rather than being stuck in a lecture hall. We believe that real-world learning, where failure isn’t just a poor grade, can be messy and frustrating but is ultimately more powerful than traditional education.

Self-directed

The world is changing so rapidly that the skills you’ll need for tomorrow are not being taught anywhere today. The best thing you can do is to learn how to teach yourself anything. We push Fellows to be entrepreneurial about the way they teach themselves new skills and approaches.

Led by practitioners

Our faculty are not academics. They are practitioners who run businesses, design policy and work directly with communities. We think this keeps the course cutting edge and gives you access to a network of relevant collaborators and opportunity-brokers.

Out of the classroom

The course takes you all over the capital. Our learning sessions have taken place everywhere from the Cabinet Office to Makerversity’s Lab and from a homeless shelter in Crouch End to Google.

Collaborative

We believe that a peer group can be a powerful tool for personal growth. It gives you a sounding board for new ideas, a source of well-intentioned honest feedback and a safe environment for personal reflection.

Holistic

We believe that social change involves intellect, compassion and a propensity for action – the head, the heart and the hands respectively. These are all critical pieces of the puzzle and Year Here gives attention to each.
Social Innovation Skills
DESIGN, ENTERPRISE, IMPACT

Traditionally, design’s relevance to business was seen as limited to ‘posters and toasters’ – graphic design and product development. These days, the design approach is being adopted to reimagine service experiences and social programmes. Design methods and principles are woven throughout the course.

Building your enterprise toolkit is crucial if you are to launch a venture at the end of the programme. We help Fellows understand and critique various social business models and develop their own according to the lean startup methodology.

Ultimately Year Here is all about maximising your potential for social impact. By learning how to develop impact strategies, exploring how we can measure impact rigorously, and interrogating dozens of impact models, we examine what changing society for the better really means in practice.

Business Toolkit
LEADING TEAMS, PROJECT MANAGEMENT, FACILITATION, STORYTELLING

Fellows join us from a variety of commercial backgrounds and Year Here gives them an opportunity to finesse their business acumen. These key professional skills are crucial enablers of any successful social change endeavours.

We cover everything from designing and nurturing high performing teams to developing the consulting skillset, as well as facilitation, project management and writing for social change.

Leadership Development
ENQUIRY, COMPASSION, HUSTLE, IMAGINATION, AUTODIDACTICISM, CURIOSITY

At the heart of the Year Here learning journey is your leadership development as an entrepreneur. This might sound less tangible than financial modelling or prototyping but we believe it is the most fundamental cornerstone of your capacity to drive change.

We’ll push you to develop an enquiring mind, a bias towards action, and entrepreneurial resilience. Our pastoral support team will be there to develop your leadership skills alongside you, every step of the programme.

To get the most out of design, the social sector should move beyond the mindless use of design tools to embody the principles of design thinking – having empathy for the people you’re trying to help, trying something with real users rather than thinking about it in an ivory tower, running tests, and iterating solutions.

Jack Graham, Year Here’s Founder, speaking at the Royal College of Art
Leadership Development

To be effective social leaders we need to know who we are, what we care about, and what we are capable of.

Leadership Development sessions give you the tools to discover your best self, building the character strengths needed for a lifetime of social action.

We’ll dive into the theory of behavioural science and use diverse learning approaches to inculcate these 6 qualities:

- **Enquiry**
  We facilitate personal reflection as an essential part of the learning process. Reflective practice involves asking yourself challenging questions and getting comfortable with constructive feedback.

- **Compassion**
  Compassion starts with empathy. We’ll push you to listen harder and deeper than ever before – from the head, heart and gut. You’ll tell other people’s stories and learn to empathise with lives that are far different to your own.

- **Autodidacticism**
  We’ll fire up our imaginations by exploring creative approaches to social change from around the world, from boxing gyms in Brazilian favelas to theatre companies with homeless actors in London. In Augusto Boal’s words “It is forbidden to walk over the grass. It is not forbidden to fly over the grass.”

- **Curiosity**
  Curiosity starts with the question ‘Why?’ This should be resonating in your mind throughout the course as you seek to understand how social issues come to be and how we might be able to tackle them. We encourage you to examine underlying assumptions and challenge received wisdom.

- **Hustle**
  We want you to leave with the courage to aim high, the resourcefulness to make a lot happen with a little, and the perseverance to see your efforts through. As a leader, we will expect you to take the bold decisions that don’t always result in the easiest or most conventional course of action.

- **Imagination**
  We’ll push you to observe the world around you with insatiable curiosity and to take yourself out of your comfort zone to explore unfamiliar fields – from macroeconomics to how to write a great email campaign.
Social Innovation Skills

On every placement, project or bootcamp we encourage you to engage intellectually with these three fields, gathering the expertise and mindset you need to launch great social projects.

**Design**

We use ‘design thinking’ methods to help you explore and interrogate people’s experiences, motivations and challenges; to generate ideas to better meet people’s needs; and to iterate and refine services.

Working with partner organisations like the Design Council and Snook – and our own Head of Design Aviv Katz – Fellows learn methods like user journey mapping, rapid idea generation, and service design prototyping.

**Enterprise**

Fellows learn about a range of leading social business models and pick up the tools to develop their own, building financial models to test their assumptions about income and expenditure. Fellows also explore the key building blocks of business like strategy, legal structures, financing, product development, sales, marketing and operations.

Throughout the course, you meet founders who have set up their own businesses and social enterprises for candid accounts of entrepreneurship.

**Impact**

We share strategic tools for thinking about and measuring social impact like Theory of Change. Fellows understand more about the sector they are operating in and interrogate specific social issues to understand the scale and nature of the problem, the policy landscape and market opportunities for new initiatives.

We also explore new frontiers like tech for good and open data methods to root out the best opportunities for innovation and impact.
Team

Our team, some of whom are featured on the right, bring together some of the best and brightest minds in social innovation. You’ll recognise them delivering sessions, or working hard behind the scenes. They’ll be around for the duration of the programme and after you graduate for a coffee and a chat.

Coaching

Throughout the programme you’ll benefit from phase-specific coaching helping you develop your ideas.

Coaching sessions support you as you innovate on the frontline, make useful introductions within the sector, enhance your consulting project impact, develop your venture, grow your entrepreneurial resilience and find your leadership development path.

Aviv specialises in service design, research and creative facilitation of public service innovation.


Laura is a teacher, who has spent 10 years working as a pastoral leader in various specialist educational and psychiatric healthcare provisions in London.

Anna is the Fellowship Director.

Aviv Katz
Head of Design

Nish
Varatharajan
Head of Consulting

Laura
Bradford
Pastoral Lead

Anna
Markland
Fellowship Director

Andre Johnsen
Programme Producer

Josh Falconer-Roberts
Head of Operations

Nishan previously led on integrating human-centred and systems-centred social intervention design at YLab innovation consultancy.

He holds an MPhil in Political Thought and Intellectual History from the University of Cambridge.
Our faculty members include founders of social enterprises and charities, senior policy-makers, designers, impact investors and philanthropists.

Specialists

Our faculty comprises over 80 leaders in social innovation across the worlds of government, business, design and charity.

Lauren Currie OBE
Founder of Upfront and CEO of Stride

John Cremer
Founder of improvisation troupe, The Maydays.

Nick Nielsen
Director of social change agency Osca, and UN advisor.

Jess Steele OBE
Community activist and community organising expert.

Daianna Karaian
Founder and CEO of Thoughtful.

Lemm Sissay MBE
Poet & Chancellor, University of Manchester.

Caroline Mason
Chief Executive, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Kajal Odedra
Executive Director, Change.org UK.

Lady Edwina Grosvenor
Prison philanthropist.

Andre Banks
Co-founder of All Out.

Speakers

Alongside our faculty of trainers, facilitators and mentors, we benefit from hearing from a wide range of guest speakers throughout the course.

Kieron Boyle
Health + Wellness
Kieron is the CEO of the Guys and St Thomas’ Charity and former head of Social Investment at the Cabinet Office.

Kathy Mohan
Housing Crisis
Chief Executive of Housing Justice, Kathy Mohan, has decades of experience in the homelessness sector.

Catherine Greig
Community Resilience
Founder and director of make:good, engaging with communities to make positive change.

Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang
Vulnerable Youth
Founder and director of Lighthouse, a pioneering model of children’s homes.

Innovation Panellists

Panels made up of entrepreneurs and domain experts help Fellows dive deep into the specific social issue they are exploring.
Programme

Year Here gives you opportunity after opportunity to try your hand at building something that matters – whether it’s a new training workshop, a grassroots community project, or a global tech venture.

In the first few months of the programme, you’ll be placed in a frontline organisation and challenged to lead an innovation project. Next you’ll play the role of consultant on a social innovation brief set by a real client. Finally, you’ll develop a social venture idea from scratch – prototyping it in the real world and pitching it to fellow entrepreneurs.

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WILD CAMP
Your Frontline Placement may well be the most challenging part of the course, as you spend 5 months getting to grips with the delivery of critical social services and making a contribution in some of the most unequal corners of London.

Straight after Kickoff Bootcamp, you’ll be placed on your own or in pairs with a host organisation, for example stepping into the shoes of a homelessness support worker or an assistant in a Pupil Referral Unit. You’ll have a supervisor to give you direction and provide feedback. It is here that you will develop your Innovation Project.

Throughout the frontline phase, the whole cohort gets together every fortnight for Fireside Friday, an intimate session designed to help the cohort process their frontline experiences, develop methods and tools for innovation, share insights and gain a deep understanding of the social issue areas and market opportunities.
You'll have the opportunity to innovate within your placement. We'll challenge you to find an issue to fix in a creative way that has an impact beyond your time, and enables you to gain deep insight for possible venture ideas.

Insight Assignment

Your Insight Assignment is a chance to investigate the issues you try to tackle in your placement. Fellows explore the national picture, the key problem drivers, examples of innovation in the area and perspectives from experts you’ve met along the way. You’ll also conduct a written or filmed interview, in order to gain insights for your innovation project.

Innovation Project

You will be set a prototyping assignment to put into practice your design skills before deciding what innovation you want to take forward. With your Innovation Project you develop and execute an idea that improves outcomes for the people you work with in your placement. Many Innovation Projects inspire venture ideas, like Fat Macy’s, which began as a supper club led by the residents of the YMCA North London.

A DOCUMENTARY FILM INNOVATION PROJECT AT THE YMCA NORTH LONDON (SAM BOYD, 2015 FELLOW)
Consulting Project

Your consulting project will give you the chance to do rigorous impact work for real clients. You’ll get an insight into the interface between government, business and society – and a chance to flex your creative, strategic and design muscles to deliver system change.

For 8 weeks, Year Here turns into a social impact design agency. Working in small teams coached by our senior team, the Fellows produce tangible outputs for clients including local authorities, social enterprises and charities.

You’ll use a wide range of community engagement methods, strategy consulting approaches and service design tools. You’ll work closely with senior staff and receive guidance from our partners Bain & Company and Snook.

Every fortnight, we get together for Agency Fridays – our opportunity for a ‘show and tell’. The Consulting Project is a chance to innovate and design for impact in a new context.

It’s a very different mode to Frontline and many Year Here ventures, including Supply Change and SquareCircle, were founded as a direct result of this phase.
The final phase of Year Here is your chance to try your hand at building solutions based on the insight you have gained from the frontline and consulting phases. We'll push you to develop ideas that are high-impact, commercially viable and scalable.

In the Venture Lab, Fellows work in small teams over eight weeks to develop a new social enterprise idea and prototype it with real users.

Every week involves a social business training session focusing on a different topic – theoretical and practical – that supports the development of your venture: prototyping, financial modelling and branding among others. These sessions are led by our venture faculty and partner organisations such as Boston Consulting Group. You'll also pitch your idea at venture crits and get rigorous feedback from established social entrepreneurs.
Bootcamps

Exhausting but exhilarating, our four bootcamps will put you through your paces and help you develop the skills and knowledge you need to build great solutions to society’s problems.

Kickoff Bootcamp

Kickoff Bootcamp is part welcome, part initiation. This action-packed week involves live social innovation briefs, specialist training to prepare you for your frontline placement, goal-setting and a handful of evening events around London to get to know the other Fellows.

Innovation Bootcamp

This is where you continue to develop your toolkit for action. You’ll learn about moving from insight gathering to coming up with ideas and prototyping new services. We’ll challenge you to turbocharge your Innovation Project ideas.

Consulting Kickoff

The Consulting Kickoff is where you’ll start work for a real client to deliver a project. Be it community consultation, service prototyping or social impact strategy development – we will challenge you to hone your impact skills fast in a new context. You will learn how to research, manage and influence clients and enable systematic change within organisations.

Venture Lab Kickoff

As we enter the Venture Lab, we’ll get you set up to design and develop your own social venture. We’ll explore different methods, markets and approaches, discover some of the best social action initiatives around the world and build on an idea to take forward and prototype during the venturing phase.
Community

Across the whole course, you’ll work with a mentor and an alumni buddy.

Alongside Wildcamp, our personal development retreat and events like the Launch, Off the Record & GradFest, we’ll also get together regularly to unwind and reconnect.

Leadership Development

Mentor
You will be allocated a mentor, a leader in the field of social innovation, with whom you’ll meet five times during the course. Fellows use their mentoring time to get advice and critique on their projects and to make useful professional connections.

Buddy
Each Fellow has a buddy, one of Year Here’s alumni, to catch up with and get advice from.

Events

Launch
Each programme kicks off with a formal launch event to welcome the new Fellows into the family, introduce them to their mentors and placement hosts, and celebrate the completion of Kickoff Bootcamp.

Off The Record
Our annual speaker series sees Fellows interview some of the most interesting innovators in the country who will share stories of social entrepreneurship, activism and impact – totally off the record. No photos. No tweeting.

Previous speakers to have braved the Off The Record hot seat include:
- Kajal Odedra
  UK Director of Change.org
- Ruth Ibegbuna
  Founder and CEO of Reclaim
- Emmanuel Akpan-Inwanga
  Founder of Lighthouse
- Sarah Drummond
  Co-founder and CEO of Snook

Networking
Year Here is intense but we make our own fun along the way with regular socials. You’ll have lots of opportunities to attend social innovation events and get to know other Fellows, faculty and alumni.

Wildcamp
Towards the end of the programme we’ll escape to the countryside for Wildcamp, our personal development retreat. Fellows take the lead in curating activities on Wildcamp with the ethos being about having space and time to reflect on what will have been an intense, transformative year.

GradFest
Year Here culminates with GradFest, our graduation showcase, where Fellows present their work to friends and family, industry leaders and the Year Here faculty. Fellows select their valedictorian to represent them as we round out the year with a celebration of everyone’s achievements.
Venture Incubation

Because building a venture that has national impact takes serious commitment and perseverance, we continue to back you long after you graduate from the programme.

The Incubator

At the end of the programme, Fellows will be invited to apply to join our Incubator and venture community in exchange for a small stake in their businesses. We take on social enterprise ideas that have been prototyped in the Venture Lab, have a viable business model and real potential for scale.

The Incubator kicks off with Crowdbacker, our live crowdfunding event run in partnership with The Funding Network and NatWest. Amounts raised are variable – from £5,000 to £10,000 per venture. Ventures also benefit from free desk space in our studio, intensive business support from our faculty and partners such as ForwardPMX, DLA Piper and BNY Mellon, and introductions to investors, funders and clients.

The Accelerator

Over 2021 and 2022, Year Here is launching a new programme that aims to build on our Incubator and supercharge the odds of the UK’s most promising social startups reaching serious scale and achieving widespread social impact.

The Accelerator will provide ventures with a rigorous scale-up support programme, connections to customers and partners, and opportunity to equity investment. More information will be available later in the year.

Venture Network

Ventures that participate in our Incubator also join our venture network, which includes award-winning social businesses like Chatterbox, Appt and Birdsong.

On an ongoing basis, our alumni entrepreneurs benefit from exclusive events, introductions to clients and investors, online resources, and marketing support to promote their services.
Costs + Funding

Year Here is totally unlike other social innovation courses. Rather than spending a year in a lecture hall, and paying £10,000 for the privilege, we challenge you to learn by doing, with no tuition fee to pay.

Our Fellows work on real social impact projects with clients who pay us to be involved. That means we don’t need to charge you a tuition fee.

But while there may be no fee, a year without a salary is undeniably tough.

Even though Year Here is a full time commitment, most Fellows work alongside the programme in their evenings, weekends and holidays – as designers, tutors or journalists, for example. Some also receive a bursary to pay their living expenses.

Funding

We offer a small number of means-tested bursaries of up to £5,000 each year. These are funded by donations from our advisors, faculty members, and wider network.

To be awarded a bursary, you will need to submit evidence of any means-tested financial assistance you have received in the past.

Side hustles

Most Fellows work alongside the programme. We can signpost and in some cases introduce Fellows to great opportunities to make a side income.

We also occasionally offer our Fellows ad hoc freelance work – as photographers, graphic designers, or to help us recruit the next generation of Fellows.

Accommodation

Our connection with social enterprise Dot Dot Dot means we are able to introduce Fellows to their team and help house some of them as property guardians. Fellows stay in a home that would otherwise be empty for a guardianship fee, which is much cheaper than rent.

We prioritise applicants who demonstrate genuine need for support.

Keeping costs down

Your daily travel costs will be covered during the frontline placement and consulting project phase – plus you’ll benefit from 30% off public transport costs in your free time too, thanks to our partnership with Transport for London.

Your lunch costs will also be covered during the frontline placement phase.

"Year Here is unconventional as it has no lecture halls, no teachers and no fee – because Fellows create value for external institutions who cover the costs of the programme." 

Geoff Mulgan, 
Professor of Social Innovation, University College London

LAURA BOYLE, CO-FOUNDER OF SQUARE CIRCLE AT HER FRONTLINE PLACEMENT WITH HOMELESS ACTION
Beyond Year Here

Year Here isn’t just about the time that you’re on the programme. It’s about building a much bigger and longer-term movement for change in Britain. Once a Fellow, always a Fellow.

Graduation

Year Here is proudly unaccredited. We don’t believe that a piece of paper can ever fully reflect the learning and achievement that we hope you’ll have gained during the course.

However, to join our alumni and benefit from all that entails, it is important that our Fellows uphold high standards. To graduate from Year Here you will need to participate fully throughout the programme, and document and present your major projects.

Alumni Community

Graduation isn’t the end. Our alumni remain central members of the Year Here family. After the programme, cohorts meet up regularly with each other, the team and other alumni.

As one of our alumni, you’ll get access to an online jobs board for some of the best roles in social innovation and we’ll provide you with professional references. Plus, the Year Here team will always be available for a coffee and a chat.

We also invite our alumni to become buddies for our new Fellows, share their stories as part of future programmes and attend events like Off the Record, GradFest and Crowdbacker.

AFOLABI ADEKAIYAOJA AT LONDON FIELDS YH SOCIAL (2017/18 FELLOW) IN BARNET
Our Alumni

Our 100+ alumni include CEOs and activists, service designers and journalists, innovation consultants and social workers. Together they’re a small but growing force for good in British society.

Mursal Hedayat

Mursal is the CEO and founder of Chatterbox, a social enterprise that trains refugees as foreign language tutors and connects them with students and professionals across the UK.

Chatterbox has received backing from Bethnal Green Ventures and Nesta, and won the inaugural ‘Next Billion’ Edtech Prize from by The Varkey Foundation to recognise the most innovative technology. Mursal has been named as an Emerging Innovator by Ashoka, and featured on Forbes UK’s list of 30 Under 30.

Josh Babarinde

Josh founded Cracked It, a smartphone repair business that gave young people an entrepreneurial route away from gang crime, and was awarded the 2018 Social Enterprise of the Year.

After the Brexit vote, Josh’s call for an independent office to monitor political campaigns was backed by over 160,000 and he became a founding convenor of More United.

Now pursuing a career in politics, he is also a trustee of the Shackleton Foundation and The Funding Network, and a judge for Nesta and The Observer’s New Radicals competition.

Sophie Slater

Teenage model turned ethical fashion entrepreneur Sophie worked with vulnerable women during Year Here and saw how cuts were posing an existential crisis to the charities that supported them.

In response she co-founded Birdsong, a fashion brand that connects women from worker to wearer and ploughs money back into the women’s groups.

She has been interviewed by Dazed, written for The Guardian on ethical fashion and feminism and served as a jury member for D&AD.

97% in employment or full time education 3 months after graduation

30% are working for another social startup 1 year after graduation

88% are running a social enterprise 1 year after graduation
There is no shortage of problems to solve and they are right on our doorstep: our education system is failing our young people, our government is purposefully causing harm to our most vulnerable and we send the old people we love into concrete boxes to sit in front of a television as they grow old.

None of this is okay. These are our problems to tackle. If you want to learn how, join Year Here.

Lauren Currie OBE, Founder of #UpFront
A year to test and build solutions to some of society’s toughest problems.