



Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

ADEPT President's Awards 2022

Entry form

Award category:	Category 3: Shaping places for people
Title:	Increase VS
Entrant:	Interreg France Channel England - Norfolk County Council
Main contact name:	Sallyann STEPHEN
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Partner/s (if applicable):	Optivo, Clarion Housing Group, Abri, University of East Anglia, Impact Network, Logirep, Archipel Habitat, Neotoa, We Ker, Pas de Calais Habitat
Headline summary (150 characters, c. 20-25 words) Cross-border project Increase VS supported by Norfolk County Council helps social housing residents set up their own micro-businesses or return to employment.	

Please note we need **at least one supporting image** per award submission.
Supporting images should be attached separately as jpg or png files.

Please paste links to any supporting video evidence here

Link 1	https://youtu.be/2IKor2DaxcU
Link 2	https://www.linkedin.com/posts/clementineflack_last-september-robert-horne-and-i-went-to-activity-6925767261404209153-pmFx/



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500-word project outline (please ensure you do not exceed the word count and address all the judges' criteria – for more info see [here](#))

Since 2014, Norfolk County Council is the Managing Authority of the EU-funded Interreg France Channel England Programme. The Programme fosters economic development in the south of the UK and north of France by funding innovative projects which have a sustainable cross-border benefit in the area.

Among the projects funded by the NCC-led Programme, **Increase VS** takes an ambitious approach since 2018 by helping social housing residents set up their own micro-businesses or achieve other forms of employment.

Typically, social housing residents face higher than average unemployment with 53% of residents in the UK unemployed or economically inactive, compared with the 30% national average.

Project Increase VS tackles this problem by working closely with housing associations in 38 neighbourhoods in the UK and France to deliver one-to-one training sessions for residents. It is the first large-scale micro-enterprise training programme tailored specifically for social housing residents and communities. During the training, participants learn all the necessary skills to launch their own businesses, including how to trial and market test business ideas and how to manage their finances through micro-loans, with opportunities to improve their digital skills as well.

In addition to this, many housing associations within the project have carried out training and counselling sessions in the UK and France helping bridge the gap to employment for residents, often in community premises.

The sessions swiftly moved online during the first lockdown in 2020, with the project investing equipment, data, infrastructure and new partnerships for excluded or less confident participants, helping soften the impact of Covid-19 on social housing residents.

In 2021, resilience modules were set up in both the UK and France helping unemployed or self-employed residents bounce back after Covid-19.



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Another concrete impact of project Increase VS is the development of innovative spaces within the community premises, improving residents' engagement, business survival rates and support to community investment activities. The latest achievement in that regard is the inauguration, earlier this year, of a community coworking space by one of the project's housing associations in Rouen, Normandy.

The project also relies on a scheme developed to train community ambassadors in each of the 38 neighbourhoods to engage, support and create community network groups. These ambassadors provide on-going support to micro-entrepreneurs and continue to engage future participants, ensuring the long-lasting legacy of the project.

By late 2021, project Increase VS had engaged with a total of 6,400 residents, of which 3,200 had completed their training. The project aims to create up to 1,200 new businesses and helping a further 2,000 people into employment.