



February-March 2026

# Start Strong

Helping Local People Turn Ideas Into Impact

# About Allia

Allia is a UK-based organisation that has supported thousands of social enterprises, ethical businesses, and charities to grow and amplify their impact. Through its Future Business Centres, venture support programmes, and impact finance services, Allia has been a leading force in creating positive change for people, places, and the planet.

Over the past 25 years, Allia has:

- Supported over 4,000 entrepreneurs and ventures
- Advised on and arranged over £4 billion in impact finance
- Created hubs for innovation and collaboration in Cambridge, Peterborough, Nottingham and London

Allia designs and delivers award-winning programmes that help early-stage founders start, grow, and scale businesses that tackle key social and environmental challenges – from poverty and inequality to climate action and wellbeing.

## What is Allia's Tipping Point Strategy?

Tipping Point Strategy is a bold national vision of Allia to double the percentage of social impact businesses in the UK from 10% to 20% by 2030. This strategy seeks to unlock a systemic shift where social enterprises become the norm, not the niche, across industries and communities.

Key pillars of this strategy include:

- Scaling Allia's Start, Grow, and Accelerate programmes to 25+ cities and towns
- Partnering with local authorities, corporates, universities, impact-driven organisations
- Driving collective action and investment in place-based impact ecosystems



# Programme Overview



**Start Strong** is Allia's flagship pre-startup support programme, designed to help individuals with entrepreneurial ambition turn their ideas into reality.

Many participants join us with no prior business experience, and through the programme they gain the tools, confidence and support to launch a viable business or social enterprise.

With successful rollouts in London such as Hackney and Tower Hamlets, we are now expanding to Islington & Camden as part of our wider London growth.

## Why It Matters?

Supporting early-stage founders particularly from underrepresented communities in Islington & Camden, London, is essential for fostering a more inclusive and vibrant local economy. It helps address historical inequalities by providing opportunities for diverse entrepreneurs to thrive in a dynamic urban environment.

Encouraging these founders can bring unique cultural and community-driven innovations that enrich Islington & Camden's vibrant identity.

Additionally, empowering these entrepreneurs contributes to social cohesion and sustainable growth within the boroughs, benefiting the wider community.



# Programme Structure

Start Strong Islington is a 6-week business support programme helping local residents turn early-stage ideas into impactful enterprises.

- **Duration:** 17 February to 31 March 2026
- **Format:** In-person, Online
- **Cohort Size:** 15-20 Islington and Camden residents
- **Target Participants:** Aspiring entrepreneurs from the boroughs, low-income, BAME, female founders, LGBTQ+, refugees, disabled, or care-experienced backgrounds. No business experience needed – just a great idea and motivation to start a social venture.
- **Cost to Participants:** This programme is 100% free for participants.

## Features:

- Weekly 2.5-hour workshops
- 1:1 mentoring for 4-6 weeks post programme
- Legal setup/business registration support
- Access to co-working space
- Access to Allia's national network of entrepreneurs, advisors, investors and alumni

Workshop topics include impact-driven business models, funding, sales and marketing, legal structure and business registration, pitch masterclass.

Participants will get hands-on training, tailored support while connecting with a community of local changemakers.



# Timetable

## Session 1: Start Strong Launch

17 February (Tues) 10 am to 3pm, In-person

10 am - 12:00 - **Programme Overview and Cohort Introductions**

12 to 1:00 pm - Lunch

1:00 to 3:00 pm - **Business Models and Legal Structures**

## Session 2: Sales & Customer Pathways

24 February (Tues), 10am-12:30, Online

## Session 3: Alternative Fundings

03 March (Tues), 10am-12:30, Online

## Session 4: Coaching Sessions

10 March (Tues), 10am-12:30, Online

## Session 5: Storytelling and Pitching with Impact

17 March (Tues), 10am-12:30, In-person

## Session 6: Wrap Up and Showcase

31 March (Tues), 2-5pm,  
In-person

## Elective: Pitch Practice/Coaching

24 March (Tues) 3-4:30 pm, online

Each participants will be assigned an Allia mentor for 4-6 weeks post wrap-up session. Introductions will be made by the Programme Lead.

## Contact Us

If you have any questions regarding the Start Strong Programme, please email our Venture Support Team at [ventures@allia.org.uk](mailto:ventures@allia.org.uk)



# Hear from our alumni and partners

Thank you for offering this programme. I've been considering starting my own business since the middle of last year, but this programme has truly helped me overcome several emotional and psychological barriers. It has given me the confidence to finally commit to launching my business and taking this major step in both my career and life. - Richard



I found the programme really inspirational. It was also very good at clarifying my business idea and building upon this to make it more unique. The help with putting a business plan together was just amazing. - Catherine

Highly recommend this for early stage impact founders. You'll find a great community and support. - Sarah

It is both a valuable experience for mentors, as well as the ventures. Highly recommend anyone who has the necessary skillset to contribute as mentors to do so! - Jason, CVC DIF mentor

Thanks to you and your team for being great partners and introducing us to our first VC investment SpriveApp and brilliant founders. - Jessica, CEO & co-founder of Two Magnolias

Tower Hamlets Council has had the privilege of collaborating with Allia on several projects. They have proven to be an exemplary delivery partner. Their experience and professionalism have been demonstrated by the positive impact they have had on residents, communities and businesses in the borough. - Reehan, Programme Manager of LBTH

We particularly valued Allia's commitment to providing tailored, hands-on support. They ensured all teams received the bespoke guidance they needed to address their individual challenges. It has been inspiring to see how the participating innovators have gone on to achieve success in a variety of ways, a testament to the dedication and expertise of the Allia team. We are proud of what we have accomplished together and look forward to building on this strong partnership in the future. - Sandy, Tech and Innovation Lead of GLA

## We have partnered with:

GREATER  
LONDON  
AUTHORITY



Balderton.

CVC | DIF



Hackney



# Connect with us



WEBSITE

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