

se

social enterprise west midlands

SOCIAL PURPOSE | BUSINESS SENSE

GROWING YOUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

TOP MARKS
FOR SUMMER SCHOOL 05



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It all adds up



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Sally Edwards | sallyaedwards@btopenworld.com

2009 is proving to be a significant year in the development of social enterprise. The recession, and resulting increase in worklessness, has drawn increased government investment into the sector – targeted not only at helping social enterprises to deliver more services, but also at building their capacity and strengthening their positions in the long term.

As this issue of **se** shows, social entrepreneurial activity in the region is flourishing! We feature the stories of five social enterprises Social Enterprise West Midlands is working with as flagships to help raise general awareness of the business model. We also take a look at what's being done in the sector to stimulate new start ups, support existing businesses and create jobs for the long term unemployed. And we have some tips for making the most of Social Enterprise Day on 19 November. We hope you will be inspired. **se**



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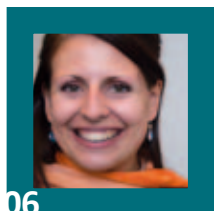
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WEST MIDLANDS

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Social Enterprise West Midlands is the regional strategic network and voice for social enterprise. The network is funded by Advantage West Midlands to advise on policy issues and promote the value and contribution of the sector across the region.

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Social enterprises are businesses that trade for a social or environmental purpose. There are around 5,500 social enterprises in the West Midlands. Visit **www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk** for more information and central access to resources, intelligence, contacts and sources of social enterprise advice and support.

Available in large print at www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk

IN THE NEWS

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SECoE leads push for improved business support

SECoE, the Social Enterprise Centre of Expertise, is forging ahead with activities designed to improve business support for social enterprises in the West Midlands.

SECoE is working with Business Link West Midlands to help its staff better understand the needs of social enterprises. One early success has been ensuring that potential start-ups with significant social aims are offered access to specialist support even if they have not specified that they "want to start a social enterprise". This is a significant development, as not everyone is yet sufficiently familiar with the concept of social enterprise to aspire to run one. SECoE's vision is that,

in future, every time a new business is launched, social enterprise has been considered as a potential business model.

SECoE is also helping to develop a Continuous Professional Development system and facilitating the set up of a West Midlands Business Support Professionals Forum, to give organisations providing business support and advice, the opportunity to improve their skills, share their experiences and collaborate.

Feedback from social enterprises about the quality of support they have received is crucial to the process of improving what's on offer. The SECoE team is keen to hear about the business support experiences of social enterprises.

They have launched an online survey – to capture the good, the bad, what's worked and what hasn't – available at www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk. **se**

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i **SECoE** is funded by Advantage West Midlands and hosted by Social Enterprise West Midlands. The SECoE team is led by Kevin Maton, SEWM Network Director. He is supported by Melanie Mills, Business Service Assessor, who works with Business Link, and Laurence Green, Skills Development Broker, who works with other Business Support Providers.

Minister reads SE

Angela Smith, the Prime Minister's parliamentary private secretary and MP for Basildon and East Thurrock, was appointed Minister for the Third Sector in June 2009.

Reflecting the growing importance of the sector, the role of has been raised from parliamentary under secretary to minister of state. The new minister has a strong voluntary sector background as well as a long career history in local government. Having read Issue 3 of **se**, Angela Smith wrote to Social Enterprise West Midlands, saying:

“se Magazine clearly demonstrates the wealth of support that Social Enterprise West Midlands is providing for social enterprise in the region and gives an inspiring insight into the vitality of the sector. As Minister for the Third Sector I am committed to work with you and with the wider social enterprise movement to develop an environment in which social enterprises can grow and thrive.”

Angela Smith, 29 June 2009

Film set to inspire next generation of social entrepreneurs

A new film about successful young social entrepreneurship has been produced for schools, colleges and universities.

Aiming to inspire young people aged 14-25, the 'Create Yourself – Create Change' film and tool kit is an interactive learning resource, designed to help teachers deliver GCSE social enterprise modules. It introduces social enterprise as an exciting career choice by showing the amazing achievements of five top young social entrepreneurs in the UK.

The challenges, triumphs and tips of Emma Spiegler, Duane Melius, Ash Rahman, Laura Burgess and Birmingham-based Lotty Cunningham (all aged 19-27) are captured in the film, which demonstrates that success can be found whatever your background.

A DVD is available to purchase, which includes: the 30 minute film, teacher's notes and lesson plans, student activities and fun interactive features. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Careers Surgery | 0845 519 1063 | www.careersurgery.com



Good practice forums

Over the next 18 months, Social Enterprise West Midlands will be initiating a number of good practice forums focusing on different areas of social enterprise development.

The forums will be an ideal opportunity to bring together valuable experience and expertise for peers to learn from and adapt for their own use. The forums will be owned and developed by the participants.

The first forum will focus on 'Marketing your Business' and is open to social enterprise staff that have responsibility for marketing. **se**

Marketing Your Business – Good Practice Forum: 10.30am to 1.00pm, 3 December 2009, St Paul's Crossover, Birmingham.

MAKING CONTACT

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Top marks for summer school

Thirty of the region's leading social entrepreneurs took part in the first ever summer school for the sector in September.

Social Enterprise West Midlands organised the two-day residential business development programme in order to maximise the growth potential of some already very successful businesses.

A mix of peer to peer learning, master classes and keynote addresses covering marketing, growth strategies, finance and leadership were provided to enable managers and chief executives take forward their businesses in a sustainable way. The networking opportunities and the time to 'work on the business' were aspects of the event delegates found most valuable.

Delegates took inspiration from award winning social enterprises Sherwood Energy Village and The Phone Co-op, and reflected on their key strengths and strategic outlook as part of a leadership session delivered by the Birmingham based consultancy Caret.

Ranjit Bansal of Social Enterprise West Midlands said, "We've already had early feedback on business opportunities that may arise as a result of the connections made. Hopefully the impact of the two



Photo © Bob Finney Photography / www.bobfinneyphotography.co.uk

days will continue to be felt for months, if not years, ahead. There are already calls to repeat the event next year."

The Summer School was heavily subsidised by the Capacitybuilders-funded Trading Know-How project and sponsored by Advantage West Midlands. The learning and impact of the residential will be assessed over the next 12 months and shared with business support agencies and funders with a view to improving provision for established social enterprises. **se**

“This pioneering event has shown what a dynamic sector we are in. Developing contacts and networking with other companies will be invaluable for the future.”

Martin Hogg, Citizen Coaching (delegate)

MAKING CONTACT

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Keeping social enterprise on the government's agenda

Kevin Maton Social Enterprise West Midlands

POLICY



Photo © Ian Cuthbert / info@iancuthbertdesign.com

With a general election looming in 2010 and the party conference season now over, it's concentrating

minds within the sector on the possibility of a change in government, national policy, spending cuts, and the impact all this will have on social enterprise.

The Social Enterprise Coalition is currently in the process of developing its manifesto asks from the main political parties in the run up to the general election. It will be consulting widely over the coming months, and as part the campaign, a

document will be prepared setting out the vision for social enterprise for the next 5-10 years – identifying key commitments for the in-coming government.

This also presents an opportunity for us to articulate our collective vision for the future development and contribution of social enterprise within the West Midlands.

Social Enterprise West Midlands is currently working up a social enterprise 'prospectus' for the region which will set out a vision that inspires, enthuses, and secures commitment and action. From those looking to start and develop social enterprises to those that support, invest and buy from the sector. We're aiming to launch the prospectus in 2010 and are inviting members and stakeholders to shape and inform the document.

Social enterprise has come a long way over the past 12 years and we want to see it break new ground and become a mainstream business model of choice, firmly embedded in the policies of all political parties. However we must retain control over our own destiny and continue to drive forward the sector ourselves not through government.

Have your say

If you want to get involved in shaping our thinking and comment on the latest version of the prospectus please email Kevin Maton at Social Enterprise West Midlands. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

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Innovative NHS health care solutions



Photo © Ian Cuthbert / info@iandesign.com

NHS Birmingham East and North has taken a bold step in becoming the first NHS department to support a Social Entrepreneur in Residence. **Eleanor Cappell** has been appointed to the role and talks to **se** about her remit to support and establish viable and sustainable social enterprises aimed at tackling health inequalities in Birmingham.

Throughout my career I have strongly and passionately been an advocate of social enterprises; ever since watching Jamie Oliver's televised quest to find gifted but disadvantaged young people to train as high quality chefs, when I was first struck by the potential of successful social enterprises.

So, I was delighted to be appointed as the UK's first Social Entrepreneur in Residence (SEiR) with the Young Foundation – a centre for social innovation based in London with a 50 year history of success. Its business is finding and developing new and better ways of meeting pressing unmet needs.

We are all becoming only too aware that the current model of health care, developed at a time when the main challenge was to provide hospital-based care for acute conditions, no longer gives best value or has a sufficient patient focus. The NHS is facing a difficult time ahead with the burden

of meeting the needs of an aging population and increasing numbers of people living with a long-term condition.

Within the Young Foundation, the Health Launchpad team has fostered a dynamic partnership with NHS Birmingham East and North (BEN) which hosts me as its SEiR. The Health Launchpad is an early stage social venture fund which supports the development of promising ideas into new ventures by providing intensive hands-on support in the form of financial, intellectual and social capital.

My primary remit is to act as a catalyst, spotting talent, scouting for ground-breaking ideas and putting people in touch with the support available to help them develop robust social enterprises that make a profound difference in tackling long standing health inequalities. I'm here to provide expertise in social entrepreneurship and help to develop promising ideas into viable business propositions.

Ideas can come from anyone – NHS BEN staff, members of the public, or individuals from the third sector. Wherever they originate, they have to go through a rigorous assessment to ensure they meet a number of criteria. They must demonstrate innovation, social impact, sustainability, scalability and a true entrepreneurial flair.

Joop Tanis, Programme Manager for Health Launchpad, says: "NHS organisations need to explore radical ideas and create innovative solutions if they are to meet the challenging reduction in health care budgets in coming years. The SEiR is a fantastic opportunity to transform a good idea into a real service delivering better care at a lower cost."

If you think you that you have an innovative idea that can transform service delivery and deliver real costs savings to the NHS, please contact me. In addition to tailored support you may be able to access financial support up to the value of £30,000 in the form of a loan or an equity stake to help you really lift your idea off the ground. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Eleanor Cappell, Social Entrepreneur in Residence (SEiR), NHS Birmingham East and North | eleanor.cappell@youngfoundation.org | 0121 380 9019 (Tue. to Fri.)

HAVE YOU GOT THE RIGHT IDEA?

Health Launchpad is looking for:

INNOVATION: projects that are radical in approach, have the potential to transform society and truly break the mould.

SOCIAL IMPACT: ideas that will bring about a real step change in addressing health inequalities in Birmingham.

SUSTAINABILITY: ventures that are financially viable and sustainable on a long term basis.

SCALABILITY: ventures that are replicable or scalable on a national or international scale.

PEOPLE/TEAM: entrepreneurial flair, enthusiasm, drive and commitment to make a social enterprise work.

pad

“NHS organisations need to explore radical ideas and create innovative solutions if they are to meet the challenging reduction in health care budgets in coming years.”

The Health Launchpad

The Health Launchpad promotes innovation in health by investing in social ventures. The Health Launchpad team comprises an unusual mix of people from the diverse worlds of business start up, NHS, social entrepreneurship, consulting, investments, social research, investigative journalism and social policy.

<http://launchpad.youngfoundation.org>

NHS Birmingham East and North

NHS Birmingham East and North's core purpose is 'to work in partnership to tackle inequalities and improve the health and well-being of local people'. It provides services for a diverse community of 438,000 people, occupying six localities and covering 17 Wards in Birmingham, which include some of Britain's most deprived areas.

www.benpct.nhs.uk

The Department of Health

The Department of Health has a Social Enterprise Unit and actively encourages the development of social enterprises to tackle healthcare issues. NHS staff can take up the 'right to request' to set up a social enterprise. There is a Social Enterprise Investment Fund (SEIF) to help new and existing social enterprises to set up, grow and improve their services. And there is a Third Sector Investment Programme, which awards grants from an Innovation Excellence & Service Development Fund.

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Socialenterprise/index.htm

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Financeandplanning/Section64grants/index.htm

BUSINESS INSIGHT

Business Insight, based in Birmingham Central Library, is a treasure trove of business information and support, and is now celebrating its 90th birthday!

This comprehensive resource is available to anyone who needs it – and most of the services are free, including to those from outside Birmingham. The staff will help you to find what you are looking for, or advise you about resources you may not have heard of. Information is available in both physical and electronic form.

In total, there are over 40 services on offer, including:

Business advice and seminars

A free, impartial service covering a range of subjects from start-up advice and business information to legal compliance and taxation.

Company formations

A 24 hour service for private, limited companies. The package includes a letter of introduction, a list of regulatory

requirements, a certificate of incorporation, memorandum and articles of association, share certificates and first directors' minutes.

Creative Insight

A free service to help talented people turn their creativity into commercial success. Specialist support services include: business planning, networking, E-commerce and showcasing.

Enquiry services

Three specialist enquiry desks and a free 15 minute telephone service.

Intellectual property

Practical advice for inventors, manufacturers and the creative industries. Information is available on trade marks, copyright, patents and registered designs. Business Insight is part of the PATLIB Network. To contact a member of this specialist team, ring 0121 303 4538 or visit www.creativeinsightuk.com

Management information

Practical how-to guides on all aspects of managing and running your own business. You can access the latest management books, journals and electronic resources.

Other resources include:

- Business Planning Service
- Business Research
- Company Information
- Competitive Intelligence
- Credit Checks
- Fact Sheets and How To Guides
- International Company Information
- Intellectual Property
- Mailing Lists
- Market Research
- Marketing Resources
- Overseas Trade
- Patents
- Trademarks

Business Insight also provides a range of pay-as-you-go services, which include Companies House documents, bespoke research and tailored marketing lists.

If you have a Birmingham Libraries membership card, you can access the COBRA business database from internet connections anywhere. **se**



MAKING CONTACT

Business Insight | Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ | 0121 303 4531 | business.library@birmingham.gov.uk | www.birmingham.gov.uk/businessinsight

MAKING CONTACT

Jobcentre Plus | www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Richard Smith | 0121 452 5564 | richard.smith2@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Contacts at Government Office West Midlands, for assistance with bids:

John Perkins | 0121 352 5351 | john.perkins@gowm.gsi.gov.uk

Chris Eade | 0121 352 5138 | christine.eade@gowm.gsi.gov.uk

Future Jobs Fund | www.dwp.gov.uk/campaigns/futurejobsfund

Jobcentre Plus uncovered

The West Midlands has been particularly hard hit by the recession, with unemployment rising faster than in any other area of the UK. Now more than ever Jobcentre Plus is keen to ensure that its services are widely promoted and accessed. We asked **RICHARD SMITH, Employment Engagement Manager at Regional Office, Birmingham** to outline what's available to social enterprise employers.

What exactly is Jobcentre Plus?

Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It was created in 2002 from the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency that delivered services to working age people.

What is your remit?

Jobcentre Plus plays a vital role in helping to deliver the DWP's objectives by contributing to the government's aim of tackling poverty, reducing worklessness, promoting growth and opportunity, and modernising government. Our aim is to help more people into paid work, assist employers in filling their vacancies with job-ready candidates and give people of working age the help and support they are entitled to if they cannot work.

What services do you offer?

Our key services include:

Vacancy advertising services – enabling employers to advertise vacancies quickly and helping them to advertise effectively. Jobcentre Plus has Britain's largest database of job vacancies and currently works with over 350,000 employers, advertising over 4 million jobs per year.

Rapid response service for redundancies – so that, where possible, support can be made available before people lose their

jobs, reducing the time it takes to find new employment. This service is delivered in partnership with skills bodies, development agencies and local authorities.

Recruitment advisory support: Local Employment Partnerships

– Jobcentre Plus arranges additional support such as pre-employment training, or sets up a work trial to help employers invest in the untapped pool of talent within their own community. So far, more than 20,000 people in the West Midlands have been helped back into work this way.

Recruitment subsidy – £1,000 to employers who recruit someone who has been claiming Jobseekers Allowance for 6 months or more. To qualify, the new employee simply needs to work an average of 16 hours per week for a minimum 26 week period.

On top of that, in-work training worth up to £1,500 may also be available through Jobcentre Plus partners to help employers get the most from their new recruits and current employees.

Work trials – a great way for employers to determine whether prospective employees are the right candidates for the job. They also allow the candidate to decide whether a particular role in a particular company or sector is right for them, whilst continuing to receive whatever benefits they are entitled to, plus travel and meal expenses. They typically take place over one to two weeks and allow a prospective employee to fill an actual vacancy in a company.

Young Persons Guarantee and the Future Jobs Fund – the government is investing more than £1bn in young people, and others at disadvantage in the labour market, to make sure a generation is not written off during the economic downturn. The aim is to

create 250,000 jobs in the public and private sector, including 150,000 new jobs through the Future Jobs Fund and 100,000 job opportunities in the sectors of the future that will help Britain's economy to grow. The Young Person's Guarantee is an offer of work or training to every 18-24 year old in Britain at risk of becoming unemployed for over 12 months by January 2010. The Future jobs Fund is open to any organisation from the public, private or third sectors to submit innovative bids for jobs. The jobs created must take people off Job Seekers Allowance and all recruitment must be handled through Jobcentre Plus.

What is the procedure for social enterprises wishing to submit a bid to the Future Jobs Fund?

Bids can be submitted at any time and are being assessed in batches at the end of the month in which they are received. Bidders can expect to find out whether they will receive funding within six weeks of the monthly cut off. If your bid is unsuccessful, you may bid again. Advice is available on submitting bids from Government Office West Midlands.

Bids are assessed against minimum criteria by a central assessment team before being transferred to the appropriate region for scoring against secondary criteria. The final decision on whether to award funding is taken by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions following recommendations from the regional assessors and a senior cross-government panel.

The bidding form, guidance notes and further details about the assessment criteria are available from the DWP website. **se**

INSPIRE, PROMOTE AND CELEBRATE

Social Enterprise Day 2009!

This year Social Enterprise Day, which is part of Global Entrepreneurship Week, is on Thursday 19 November. Since 2004, the week has grown from a UK initiative to a worldwide movement of entrepreneurial people who come together with the aim of inspiring the budding entrepreneurs of the future. SE asked SHEMAINE ROSE, Communications Assistant at Social Enterprise West Midlands, to give readers a few ideas for activities to help them get the most out of the day. Here are seven to choose from:

1. Launch a new project or service

This is a highly effective way to raise awareness of what you offer. Tying the launch of a new product or service in line with Social Enterprise Day will help you to reach a wider audience, as well as help promote the day itself. To maximise publicity, write a press release to send out to your local newspapers and radio stations. Press releases are inexpensive to produce and will increase the credibility of your business. If you are not familiar with press release writing, you'll find information on how to write and use press releases effectively on page 5 of Issue 1 of **se**, which you can download from www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/resource-library.

2. Run a competition

A competition, such as the photography competition Social Enterprise West Midlands will be running again this year, is an opportunity to encourage people to think about social enterprise in general and your enterprise in particular. It could be a way of demonstrating how

social enterprise is transforming the lives of people and communities across the region or of reaching out to local schools and inspiring young people to get involved with social enterprise. In 2007, Social Enterprise West Midlands sponsored St Paul's Community Development Trust to run a Dragons' Den style pitching competition.

3. Organise an open day

Opening your doors to the local community is a great way for people to come and find out more about your business. An open day, during which anyone can drop in, gives you the opportunity to showcase what you do and raise awareness of the impact you have had in your local community or on the local environment.

4. Send a 'Happy Social Enterprise Day' e-card

This is a quick and cost effective way of raising awareness of your social enterprise and this special day. Be creative and use vibrant colours when designing your e-card. This is your chance to capture attention and encourage people to find out more about what you do. You can also use it as an opportunity to generate business, by including a special Social Enterprise Day offer.

5. Host an awards event

This is the ideal opportunity to acknowledge and reward those who have made a valuable contribution to your business. Awards can be targeted at employees, colleagues or business support providers. To cut costs, you can also collaborate with others as well as ask businesses and

IT'S A FACT Last year in Global Entrepreneurship Week, there were nearly **25,000** events and activities run in **77** countries, attended by more than **3 million** people. In the UK alone 644,000 people attended 6,363 events.

organisations to sponsor specific awards. Invite professionals from the sector and local people from the community to attend the ceremony.

6. Collaborate with others to organise an Awareness Day

Why not organise an event to raise awareness of the work of all, or a group of, social enterprises and support providers in your local area? The social enterprises could display their work and invite guests to come and find out more about their businesses and how they benefit the community. You could invite members of the community as well as members of large organisations to attend. This is also a great way to generate media coverage of your business. However, it is important that, when preparing your event, you are clear about your target audience and key aims and objectives.

7. Make a splash on your website

To mark Social Enterprise Day why not add a new feature to your website? This will increase traffic to your site and could help you appear more frequently in search engines. Most importantly, whatever you choose to do to celebrate the day, if you are attracting interest, make sure your website is up to date! **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Social Enterprise West Midlands would love to hear how you decide to celebrate Social Enterprise Day this year. Please email you plans to: **Shemaine Rose** | s.rose@socialenterprisewm.org.uk

Global Entrepreneurship Week | www.gew.org.uk

Rising stars: From the Flagship Social Enterprises (left to right) are: Vicki Fitzgerald (Gateway Family Services), Charlotte Hollins (Fordhall Community Land Initiative), Katherine Shepherd (Marches Energy Agency), Will Nixon (PM Training), Jon Argent (Halo Leisure), with Kevin Maton from Social Enterprise West Midlands.



Flying the flag

Introducing the West Midlands' Flagship Social Enterprises

Earlier this year Social Enterprise West Midlands launched the search for five Flagship Social Enterprises; businesses with the potential to become well-known, nationally-recognised, examples of social enterprise – based in the West Midlands.

The initiative is one many approaches being utilised to raise awareness and develop understanding of social enterprise, particularly amongst those most likely to enter, support and invest in the sector now and in the future.

"One of the most powerful ways to convey the concept of social enterprise is through examples people in the West Midlands can identify with," says Ranjit Bansal, Information & Marketing Officer at Social Enterprise West Midlands. "Over 30 social enterprises applied to work alongside us as 'flagship social enterprises' as part of a two year PR campaign, but only five could be selected. We were looking for businesses that clearly exemplify the fundamental principles of social enterprise and show that it is possible to be successful, profitable and viable whilst being driven by a social or environmental

purpose. The selection process revealed the amazing achievements of all that applied and made us incredibly proud of our members."

The five successful applicants were announced in July. Ambitious, successful and hoping to inspire others, they are:

- **Halo Leisure** – a major leisure and sports provider creating opportunities for the whole community to participate in active leisure pursuits.
- **Fordhall Community Land Initiative** – England's first community-owned farm, promoting sustainable farming and healthy living.
- **Marches Energy Agency** – one of the UK's leading sustainable energy and climate change social enterprises.
- **PM Training** – offers more than 800 training and employment opportunities every year to tackle youth unemployment.
- **Gateway Family Services** – one of the first social enterprises to be born out of a primary care trust, tackling inequalities in health, employment and learning.

“One of the most powerful ways to convey the concept of social enterprise is through examples people in the West Midlands can identify with.”

The Flagship enterprises will receive a mix of publicity, training and networking opportunities over the next two years, with the aim of helping them to significantly raise their profile and become nationally recognised both within and outside of the social enterprise movement.

In the following pages we profile each flagship enterprise, tell their stories, their achievements to date and their plans for the future. Each enterprise will be opening its doors and hosting a study visit – between November 2009 and March 2010 – and they are looking forward to welcoming SE readers.

MAKING CONTACT

Trading Knowhow project, Social enterprise West Midlands | www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk

PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE



Photo: © Ian Cuthbert / info@iandesign.com

Some Wards within Hereford City and Leominster are in the top 20% of the most deprived areas in the UK. Residents in these areas in particular can struggle to access the facilities they need to keep active and healthy. **HALO LEISURE** has used the social enterprise business model to provide affordable and accessible facilities at nine leisure centres and swimming pools throughout Herefordshire. **SE** talked to Chief Executive **JON ARGENT** to find out how the organisation has become so successful.

"Differentiation is very important in a market such as ours," he says, "but we believe we have a unique selling point in that people know that all the profits made from our centres are invested directly back into the local community.

"We also pride ourselves on offering more than just fitness and leisure activities. Our centres also promote social inclusion and community safety. Our initiatives to encourage young people to participate in exercise and sporting activities, for example, have seen a reduction in anti-social behaviour, as children feel they have a purpose in life and are beginning to form relationships with older people in the community."

Halo Leisure was established as a leisure trust (a specific form of social enterprise) in 2002, when the council was under pressure to provide extra funding for its leisure centres. The organisation's founders saw an opportunity to lease the leisure centres and reach the widest customer base practicable, resulting in health and fitness activities becoming available to a more diverse demographic than ever before.

"Our users include a high proportion of older adults, unemployed people, disabled people and families with young children," says Jon. "Thanks to Halo, there are now a number of programmes on offer which encourage these people to get fit." The programmes include free swimming, a Fit 4 Free scheme for 12-16 year olds and reduced fees for senior citizens and disabled people.

"Due to financial constraints or the inability to travel to their local sports centres, the well-being of people in Herefordshire is suffering," says Jon. "Increasing numbers of children are leaving school overweight and obese, and the health of older people is also being affected. Since taking over the centres, we have been able to help tackle these issues. We have received excellent feedback from our users, the council and the community, and we have ploughed our profits back into the service to enable us to continue to grow. We are proud to have eliminated a number of barriers to participation and as a result we are working towards a healthier, happier community."

Halo has experienced continued growth over the past seven years and now has a turnover of over £6.5million and almost 200 full-time staff. Its success has been recognised by its receiving 'Highly Commended' under the national framework of excellence. "We have been able to show that social enterprises are

able to compete successfully with the market leaders – private gyms and other competitors," says Jon. "I believe part of our success is down to the way we structure our business. However, it would not have been possible without the local community's support for our services. We hope we can continue to become a larger, more diverse organisation and be recognised nationally, in the future, for our good practice."

Research has shown that users and non-users believe it is important that their leisure services are delivered by a social enterprise rather than the council. The leisure trust model has now been used by a number of councils throughout the UK. Jon believes the model is increasing in popularity because it is likely to be wholly committed to providing just one service and will not be faced with financial constraints from other departments.

As well as running the nine centres in Herefordshire, Halo has supported the needs of over 70 other businesses throughout the UK. It offers asset management software, supports local businesses in specialist areas including human resource development, and supports local authorities in outsourcing leisure services and partnership monitoring. "The consultancy service we offer to companies around the UK has proven to be extremely popular and is something that we are looking to take to an international level in the future. The profits we have made from this arm of our business have been invested back into the charity." Speaking about SEWM's Flagship Social Enterprise Programme, Jon comments: "We are looking forward to the new opportunities this programme will bring for sharing our business model and supporting other social enterprises in the region." **se**



“Increasing numbers of children are leaving school overweight and obese, and the health of older people is also being affected. Since taking over the centres, we have been able to help tackle these issues.”



IT'S A FACT Halo Leisure: Leases nine leisure centres from Herefordshire Council / Receives over **1.5 million** visitors to its centres each year / Has an annual turnover of over **£6.7 million** / Employs **190** staff / Is one of only two companies to achieve the level of at least '**Highly Commended**' for all facilities it manages in the Quest quality awards supported by Sport England / Achieved **Investor in People** status in 2009 / Has saved and reinvested over **£37.5 million** since inception in 2002.

MAKING CONTACT

Halo Leisure | www.haloleisure.org.uk

i **Halo Leisure** is a social enterprise and registered charity, established in 2002. Staff care passionately about creating and providing opportunities for the whole community to participate in active leisure and are dedicated to providing an exciting, value for money, inclusive service.

STUDY VISIT | Halo Leisure will be hosting a study visit on **5 February 2010**. To register your interest, contact s.crowder@socialenterprisewm.org.uk

Over the past three years **FORDHALL FARM** in Market Drayton, Shropshire, has become one of the best known social enterprises in the West Midlands as over 8,000 shareholders from around the world have invested in its future. The heart-warming story perfectly demonstrates the success a local community can have when it is fighting for a common cause. **SE** spoke to **CHARLOTTE HOLLINS**, who set up the enterprise with her brother, Ben.

Fordhall Farm is one of the longest established sites of continuous organic farming in Britain. In 1929 Arthur Hollins took on the tenancy of the farm at the young age of 14 following the death of his father. He carried out extensive research into soil fertility and the relationship between farming and nature and became a pioneer of organic farming methods.

In 2001, the farm was hit financially. The landowners wished to sell, just as the farming industry was experiencing a number of difficulties including foot and mouth disease. Charlotte and Ben, Arthur's youngest children, took it upon themselves to save the farm and their home.

After a long and high profile campaign, the Fordhall Community Land Initiative (FCLI) was established in 2006 and began selling shares to raise capital to buy the land. FCLI succeeded in raising the £800,000 required and took ownership of the land. Speaking about the initiative, Charlotte says: "We began the venture simply by opening up the farm gates and inviting the community to get involved. That's what we felt a community-owned project should be about."

Bringing the land into community ownership enabled Charlotte and Ben to remain tenant farmers. Ben now continues the day-to-day running of the farm business and the last three years have seen significant developments, including the opening of a new farm shop and butchery. At the same time the community enterprise – as the landowner – has developed farm trails, volunteering opportunities and educational visits, which are led by Charlotte, whose role as Project Director and Company Secretary of the Initiative allow her to remain at the forefront of the farm's development.

REAPING TH

“For those people thinking about starting a community project, my advice would be communicate, communicate, communicate – as much and however you can.”

Charlotte and Ben's top tips for a successful community-owned enterprise...

- Keep your local community involved from the very beginning.
- Involve your local papers - they are one of the most useful tools for keeping your community involved with your project.
- Always ask for help and advice - this is the most powerful way of involving and empowering people.
- Develop a variety of ways in which people can get involved, such as offering advice, volunteering, offering equipment or stationery, donating money, spreading the word. The more ways you can think of, the easier it is for people to fit your project into their lives.

Charlotte says: "With the support of our community, we have been able to meet our main goal of saving the farm and we are now continuing to work on the objective set by my father many years ago: to reconnect people to the land, food and farming. The community is key to every aspect of the FCLI: it is they who volunteer to help organise our events, they who bring their children and families to walk the farm trail, or they who offer to volunteer on an organised weekend to help put that infrastructure in

place. Their ideas and enthusiasm are what drive our enterprise forward."

The community-owned model has proved highly successful for Fordhall Farm. And it is a model that has seen a boom in the UK in recent years. Charlotte says: "For those people thinking about starting a community project, my advice would be communicate, communicate, communicate – as much and however you can. We networked with the media and local figureheads on a regular basis, frequently updated our website and blog, and kept the community



THE BENEFITS



Spot on: Charlotte and Ben Hollins with a Gloucester Old Spot cross Tamworth pig at Fordhall Farm, the first community-owned farm in England.

1929 Arthur Hollins takes over the tenancy of the farm.

1940s The Fordhall Country Club is started, complete with grass tennis courts and swimming pool, and is used to fund Arthur's pioneering work into soil fertility and organics.

1992 The farm comes under significant strain due to the foot and mouth crisis and increased pressure from the landowners to sell the land.

2004 Two days prior to their eviction, Charlotte and Ben Hollins are successful in extending their leasehold on Fordhall Farm.

2005-2006 The Fordhall Community Land Initiative structure is launched and successfully raises the £800,000 required to purchase Fordhall Farm, which becomes the first community-owned farm in England.

2006-2009 Charlotte and Ben, the local community and over 8,000 shareholders successfully develop Fordhall Farm into a place that connects people to the environment and provides the local community with organic produce.

2010 The future of the farm is looking bright, with plans in place to build a new classroom and an organic tea room. The eventual goal is to restore Fordhall Farmhouse to its former glory.

up to date with our progress. We have received great media interest, with national newspapers such as The Guardian, The Observer and The Telegraph promoting our campaign and pledging their support. We were also 'Highly Commended' in the Daily Mail Enterprising Young Brits Awards 2009 and won the 'Against All Odds' prize of £25,000 at the 2008 Morgan Foundation Entrepreneur Awards.

Being a part of SEWM's Flagship Social Enterprise Programme means a lot to Fordhall Farm. Charlotte believes

that this recognition will encourage other communities to work together to complete projects which will benefit the local area. In addition, Charlotte concludes: "We hope that other projects look at our success and realise that a community that is able to work together can achieve anything they desire. It took a lot of dedication and team work to make Fordhall the success story it is today, but we have proved that it's not impossible and hope other communities will follow our lead." **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Fordhall Community Land Initiative | www.fordhallfarm.com

i **Fordhall Community Land Initiative** is a ground-breaking Industrial and Provident Society, which took Fordhall Organic Farm into community ownership in 2006. The land is now owned by over 8,000 people from across the world and tenanted to farmer Ben Hollins. It is England's first community-owned farm.

STUDY VISIT | Fordhall Community Land Initiative will be hosting a study visit on **4 March 2010**. To register your interest, contact s.crowder@socialenterprisewm.org.uk

protecting people and planet



Marches Energy Agency, based in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, was set up in 1998 with the objectives of protecting the environment, educating people about sustainable energy and the alleviation of poverty. The advent of climate change as an issue of major concern meant the organisation had to rethink its whole stance and consider a new way to target its customer base. SE talked to **RICHARD DAVIES**, Director of MEA since 1998, about how the enterprise has adapted in order to continue flourishing.

"Awareness of human-induced climate change significantly increased in 2006," says Richard, "and we experienced rapid growth. We began to realise that rhetoric, declarations and reports could not address the challenges of climate change, and instead, a service delivery culture was needed. For that we needed to restructure the company. We found that the best way to handle demand was to split our services into five themes: Low Carbon Communities, Re:think Energy, Project Carbon, Keep Shropshire Warm and Carbon Forum, with each project meeting different objectives and target markets."

Marches Energy Agency (MEA) now offers a wider range of services, including educating secondary

“We are committed to helping all sectors of society foster a more efficient lifestyle, and where appropriate encourage the use of renewable energy sources to achieve a sustainable, secure and affordable supply of energy. **”**



school children about the importance of being eco-friendly, helping to lower the CO2 emissions of whole communities and providing local businesses with advice and funding to reduce their energy output. In 2008 the enterprise won second prize in the Charity Award category of the Ashden Awards, in which it was recognised for successfully reducing the carbon footprint of six local communities.

MEA's core objectives have remained constant, whilst its approach to them has altered as its target market has diversified from niche to mainstream. Richard says, "It is important for social enterprises to understand that they must be able to adapt their business model, and recognise that sometimes an overhaul is needed to enable the business to grow."

Richard continues: "We are committed to helping all sectors of society foster a more efficient lifestyle, and where appropriate encourage the use of renewable energy sources to achieve a sustainable, secure and affordable supply of energy. We do not simply impose solutions on anyone, but we pride ourselves on working alongside our clients to find not only a successful, but also a practical, solution. Having five major themes running through the business allows us to cater for a wide

range of markets, and I believe that we will see a further change in our target audiences over the coming years as climate change really takes hold. We are ready to be flexible and keep adapting our business model to suit their needs."

MEA is also committed to setting a good example for its customers. It's leading the way in reducing its own carbon footprint with an eco-friendly office, a travel policy which promotes the use of walking, cycling and public transport, and an ethical policy that favours locally produced goods and services. Richard says: "We now employ over 20 staff, all of whom are committed to the welfare of our planet. It is important for everyone at MEA to reinforce the idea that combating climate change is a way of life rather than a quick-fix solution."

With regard to what SEWM's Flagship Social Enterprise Programme means to MEA, Richard says: "The programme will increase awareness of the successful social enterprises in our region and enable us to mentor other social enterprises. We have set an example of how businesses must adapt to a changing market and this is something I would be eager to share with other local enterprises, especially in the current economic climate." **se**

IT'S A FACT Over **60,000** individuals have benefited from MEA's work in the last 12 months: **4,500** homes have been insulated, saving a collective **15,868,400kWh** of energy per annum / **50%** of all businesses in three Shropshire communities have been audited and **£500,000** of grant funding distributed to **10%** of businesses in those communities / **30** visits have been made to communities, resulting in a saving of some **3,360 tonnes** of carbon dioxide and **£1.7 million** of avoided electricity costs over the lifetime of the measures distributed / With the first distribution of capital grants in early October 2008 – **7** projects have been funded with **£100,000**, including a waste wood biomass plant for rural industrial heating / **10** communities in Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire have been helped to reduce their energy output.

MAKING CONTACT

Marches Energy Agency | www.mea.org.uk

i **Marches Energy Agency (MEA)** is one of the UK's leading sustainable energy and climate change social enterprises and a registered charity. Created in 1998, MEA helps businesses, organisations, households and communities to reduce their energy output. It strives in all of its work to 'create the climate for change' and has a wealth of experience in delivering local, regional, and European projects.

STUDY VISIT | Marches Energy Agency will be hosting a study visit on **18 November 2009**. To register your interest, contact s.crowder@socialenterprisewm.org.uk

As unemployment among young people rises to record levels, the need for PM Training's services has never been greater. Over the last 27 years it has helped more than 10,000 people into sustainable jobs, and has increased the profitability of some 250 businesses in Staffordshire. Following an acquisition by the Aspire Housing Group in 2008, **PM TRAINING** has become a social enterprise. **SE** talked to Chief Executive **WILL NIXON** about how the business is performing.

PM Training, based in Stoke-on-Trent, was established as a private company in 1982 to help people as young as 14 receive training once they left school, by offering a series of apprenticeships, NVQs and work taster programmes. Will Nixon took over as Chief Executive in 2008. "Becoming a social enterprise has undoubtedly contributed to our success," he says. "It allows us to be flexible in our approach and has focused our efforts on unlocking the potential of local people from disadvantaged backgrounds and helping them to secure a job within their local community."

PM Training has shown continued growth as a social enterprise and now has a turnover in excess of £2,000,000. It is hoping to continue to expand and develop the wide range of services

it provides. Will explains: "We are aiming to harness the potential of local people and businesses, ensuring enterprising futures which add value to the economy, enhance people's lives and strengthen North Staffordshire communities. In order to achieve these goals, we have divided our services into four core market areas: Preparing People for Employment; Apprenticeships; Workforce Development and Homeworks, which provides home improvement and environmental services delivered by trainees to over 4,000 customers. We also offers initiatives such as Train to Gain and Entry to Employment which support young people in making the right career decisions and ensure they receive the correct training to carry out their job. Our plans for expansion include offering new types of apprenticeships, opening a new office in Newcastle-under-Lyme, and introducing more Homeworks schemes across the region."

The credit crunch was already underway as the business plan for PM Training as a social enterprise was being drawn up. "During the acquisition in 2008, we anticipated the implications the credit crunch would play on our business," says Will, "and we planned as much as possible for the outcome. We have been inundated with young people seeking our

help and as a company who never turns anyone away we have met the demand by increasing the number of programmes we offer. We currently have a number of young, skilled people waiting to enter employment, and despite the current situation we are still meeting our targets and are continuing to place high quality staff in apprenticeships and placements. We work closely with some of the region's biggest firms, as well as the Armed Forces and Fire Service, so although unemployment is rising, we ensure young people are aware that a variety of career paths are still available to them."



Tackling worklessness

Will is passionate about the services PM Training offers, and he is keen to share the secret of its success: "Success comes down to one word: focus," he says. "For social enterprises to succeed, they must remind themselves why they put the key in the car everyday to come to work and ensure they continue to strive to meet their objectives. Like all businesses, social enterprises need to have clarity of purpose, a strategy to achieve it and most of all, a positive attitude to their mission.

"Once you are clear about what you are doing, you also need to communicate and build good relationships with all your stakeholders.

We have invested considerable amounts of time in establishing and maintaining excellent relationships with young people, local businesses, community organisations, schools and service providers, such as Connexions and Jobcentre Plus."

"We believe that the Flagship programme will enable us to broaden the positive impact we have on individuals across the region and increase our social impact. PM Training is dedicated to supporting and mentoring social enterprises in the area and we look forward to sharing our model of delivery by working alongside other companies in the West Midlands." **se**

“PM Training gave me stability and structure. My confidence and independence grew by the day. Everyone treated me with respect and as an individual – something I had never experienced before.”

ONE TRAINEE'S STORY...

PHIL HERATY joined PM Training at 17, having come from a dysfunctional family background and been told by teachers that he would amount to nothing.

"PM Training gave me stability and structure," he says. My confidence and independence grew by the day. Everyone treated me with respect and as an individual – something I had never experienced before."

Phil later went on to become the Youth Build UK National Apprentice of the Year.

MAKING CONTACT

PM Training | www.pmtraining.org.uk

i **PM Training**, established in 1982, began its work as a private company dedicated to providing high quality training and work experience for young people. In 2008 it was acquired by the Aspire Housing Group and became a social enterprise. The Group now consists of three companies, Aspire Housing, PM Training and the Realise Foundation. Any surplus profit generated by PM Training is covenanted to the Realise Foundation to enable reinvestment into the social, economic and environmental regeneration of North Staffordshire.

STUDY VISIT | PM Training will be hosting a study visit on **26 November 2009**. To register your interest, contact s.crowder@socialenterprisewm.org.uk

Time to celebrate: Left to right are Paul Farrelly (MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme), Phil Heraty (Youthbuild UK's National Young Builder of the Year), John Montague (Chief Executive of the TREES Group) and Sinead Butters (Chief Executive of Aspire Housing).

from NHS to CIC

New public, new services, new opportunities

GATEWAY FAMILY SERVICES started life as a department within South Birmingham Primary Care Trust, but became a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2006. It was set up to tackle health and employment inequalities by helping the NHS and local authorities to identify the needs of communities and encourage local people to train to fill gaps in service provision. **SE** talked to Chief Executive **VICKI FITZGERALD** about how the business has developed and its hopes for the future.

"When establishing a new enterprise, it is essential that you enter a market with a strong product that provides a solution to a problem. And that's exactly what we did," says Vicki. "Social, cultural and economic factors, including low self-esteem, language barriers and financial worries, can make it difficult for people living in disadvantaged areas to access health care," she explains. "Our aim with Gateway is to reduce inequalities in health, learning and employment, which not only improves individual lives, but also benefits society. We like to think of ourselves as a one-stop shop, where people can come for advice, training and support for gaining employment. I believe this to be our unique selling point and the main reason we have become so successful."

Gateway currently employs over 150 staff and has an annual turnover of £3.1m. It is tackling inequality in a number of ways. Firstly, by developing and testing new health care service delivery models. Secondly, by training people who face barriers to learning and employment to enter jobs in the health and social care sector. And thirdly, by working with the NHS to re-design services and develop its workforce to make it easier for the hardest to reach groups to access health care.

Vicki acknowledges that there were a number of barriers to overcome at the outset. "The major problem was ensuring everyone understood the services on offer and the ways in which we could help the local community," she recalls.



Team work: Gateway Family Services CIC staff at a team day, at Warwickshire County Cricket Club, in September 2009

HELPING TO CHANGE LIVES...

Before she joined Gateway Family Services CYNTHIA KABOTE had lots of experience of working in the community. However, as she freely admits, without further qualifications she was unlikely to advance.

After two years with Gateway, Cynthia has made outstanding progress as a Pregnancy Outreach Worker and recently completed a foundation degree. She is now planning to do a BA (Honours) and "who knows maybe after that I could even do a Masters!" she says. "My co-workers have been wonderful and the encouragement I have received from the management has also helped to push me to where I am today!"

"Firstly we had to communicate with the NHS and local authorities, who were to contract our services. It was important to demonstrate how we were able to meet their objectives. Once we had gained their understanding and our first contracts, we had to make local communities aware of what we were offering. We did this through existing organisations in the community, which resulted in our services being promoted through word of mouth. We attended events and networked to demonstrate our commitment to the communities we are here to help."

Three years on and Gateway's services are viewed as valuable and extremely important by the NHS and local authorities, as well as the communities it serves. Gateway uses statistical data to determine where there are service gaps. It also facilitates the Birmingham Local Involvement Network (Birmingham LINK) – a public representative body, which has a direct influence on the delivery, quality and commissioning of health and social services.

At present Gateway's focus is on support services relating to pregnancy, obesity, smoking and mental health, and on combating the social problems that people face in trying to address these issues. Gateway's Health Trainers Service is supporting individuals that need assistance with making lifestyle changes recommended by their GPs or health care professionals.

Vicki says: "We ensure our workforce is drawn from local communities as they are most likely to understand the issues

that prevent people from making the most of health services." By offering a 'learning pathway' that can run from pre-employment support to a BA Honours in Community Family Support, Gateway is developing a workforce of highly trained 'paraprofessionals' able to support the work of health and social care professionals. "They are filling new roles where gaps in service provision exist," Vicki explains. "Our Pregnancy Outreach Workers, for example, offer emotional and practical support through all stages of pregnancy – meeting the social needs a midwife often would not have the resources to meet."

Gateway would like to see the role of paraprofessionals grow and become better recognised. Vicki sees this as an important part of modernising health care services to meet the needs of our current diverse society. "By 2014 we aim to be delivering services across the West Midlands and hope to utilise our evidence base to work with the NHS nationally on implementing our approaches," she says, adding: "Gateway has an excellent business model that can support the work of the NHS. We don't want to be seen as a charity or a good cause, but as a worthwhile and innovative business."

When it comes to SEWM's Flagship Social Enterprise Programme, Vicki says: "We're delighted to be part of the initiative and believe this will enhance our reputation and credibility. We also look forward to sharing our experience and approaches with other social enterprises across the country." **se**



MAKING CONTACT

Gateway Family Services | www.gatewayfs.org

i Gateway Family Services was one of the first Community Interest Companies to be created from a department in an NHS Primary Care Trust. It aims to reduce inequalities in learning, employment and health, by offering supported training and employment opportunities in community health service delivery.

STUDY VISIT Gateway Family Services will be hosting a study visit for interested social enterprises on **21 January 2010**. To register your interest, contact s.crowder@socialenterprisewm.org.uk

Who are the Social Entrepreneurs in the West Midlands?

An academic research consortium, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), has been measuring the entrepreneurial activity of working age adults across a wide range of countries in a comparable way since 1998.

The GEM UK team is currently working with Advantage West Midlands and Social Enterprise West Midlands to find out more about the nature and scale of social entrepreneurial activity in the region. So, who are the West Midlands' social entrepreneurs? The team has shared its headline findings with **se**.

The GEM project defines social entrepreneurs as individuals who are trying to start any kind of social, voluntary or community activity, venture or initiative. These include providing subsidised or free training, advice or support to individuals or organisations; profit making activity, where profits are used for a socially-orientated purpose; and self-help groups for community action.

Largest survey in the world

The GEM UK survey is the largest, longest-running national study of entrepreneurial activity in the world, with over 200,000 individuals interviewed since monitoring began with a sample of 1,000 adults in 1998. The most recent survey was conducted between May and September 2008, just as the effects of the recession were beginning to bite. 32,007 adults aged 16-80 were interviewed and 3,000 of these lived in the West Midlands.

We find that in 2008 1.7% of the UK population aged 18-64 is engaged in social entrepreneurial activity which includes individuals trying to start a new venture or initiative and those already running a trading business that is less 3.5 years old. In the West Midlands the equivalent percentages are similar:



1.5% (almost two-thirds of whom are nascent social entrepreneurs ie in their first three months of activity). This broadly translates into around 50,000 nascent and new social entrepreneurs.

Gender balance

Unlike 'mainstream' or private sector entrepreneurs, who are twice as likely to be men, social entrepreneurs are just as likely to be women as men in both the West Midlands (1.5% versus 1.5%) and the UK (1.6% versus 1.8%). Social entrepreneurship rates do not differ significantly by age group in the West Midlands, although in the UK as a whole, what we can say is that people aged 35-44 are significantly more likely to be social entrepreneurs than people aged 55-64.

Regional variation

Gender and age aside, there are distinctive features of the profile of individuals engaged in nascent or new social entrepreneurial activity in the West Midlands. For example, individuals who are members of an ethnic minority group are about twice as likely to be social entrepreneurs in the West Midlands. Graduates are also twice as likely to be social entrepreneurs: 2.3% versus 1.2% for non-graduates (compared with 3.2% and 0.9% respectively in the UK).

In the West Midlands, those individuals in low income households (less than £17,500) or high income

households (£50,000 or more) are significantly more likely to be engaged in nascent or new social entrepreneurial activity (2.5% versus 0.7%).

In the UK overall, however, only those in high income households have elevated social entrepreneurial activity. At least part of this difference may be because the proportion of low income households in the West Midlands that are ethnic minority-based is double that in the UK as a whole. Indeed, we find that the social entrepreneurial activity rate among low income ethnic minority households in the West Midlands is 3.8% (compared with 2.9% across the UK). These households comprise 15% of all social entrepreneurially active individuals in the West Midlands, which is three times that found in the UK as a whole (4.5%). **se**

MAKING CONTACT

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Jonathan Levie | j.levie@strath.ac.uk
GEM UK and Global Projects |
www.gemconsortium.org

i **GEM's primary focus is on the study of three areas: measurement of the differences in entrepreneurial attitudes, activity and aspiration between countries; uncovering factors which underpin these differences; and identifying policies that may enhance entrepreneurial activity. The GEM UK team is led by Professor Mark Hart, Aston Business School, Aston University and Dr Jonathan Levie, Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Strathclyde. Advantage West Midlands sponsors the West Midlands component of the GEM UK research project.**



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A Community Interest Company committed to
reinvesting surpluses into the local community

WeCreate

you applaud_

- * Fashion labels from local, young designers
- * Free fashion-based Business Help and Support Service
- * Fashion Design and Commercial Development course (no qualifications or experience required)

Store: The Oasis | Birmingham | B4 6SX
Call: 0121 233 4488
Email: rich@WeCreate.org.uk

We Create* is a Social Enterprise that offers young people around Birmingham the opportunity to gain access to qualifications and commercial experience in Fashion Design.

WeCreate.org.uk

Support your sector from the inside

Put your skills, experience and passion for social enterprise and the third sector to good use!

brap is looking for successful social entrepreneurs or those working for enterprises who have a desire to support others in their field to find their own solutions. You'll be up for acquiring new skills that will equip you to work with peers in mutually beneficial relationships, one which is more about exploration, reflection and opportunity than advice, guidance and lessons on 'how things are done'.

A recent participant on one of our peer mentoring days said: "I really respect the underlying principles of **brap**'s peer mentor development day, that the mentee takes responsibility for their learning. We are there simply to provide a safe, yet challenging space, in which to explore business and professional development. I'm really excited about this valuable programme and I'm excited about the skills that I am learning. I guess you could say I've been brapped!"

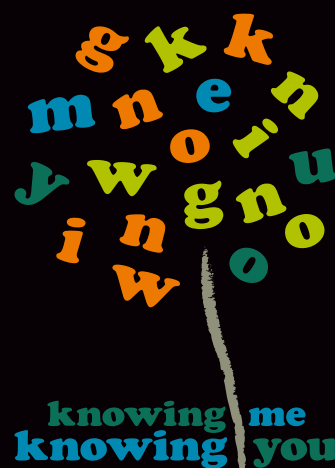
If you think this is you, and you'd like to get involved, receive training and payment for the time you offer to a mentee, then get in touch.

Calling all social enterprises across the West Midlands

Do you want to get connected with a mentor who can support you to find your own ways forward?

Join our peer mentoring network and help your social business to bloom. Organisations driven by social aims have repeatedly stressed the value and benefit of peer support. **brap**'s Knowing Me Knowing You programme brings peers together, face-to-face, to share learning, ideas and experience – creating opportunities to get connected.

So, if you're looking for a non-judgemental space to discuss your ideas, concerns or future aspirations, with someone who is trained to get the best out of you and your organisation, then get in touch. We'll help you receive free, practical, and friendly support.



“I like the idea of being a non-judgemental sounding board, who provides other individuals in the sector with a mechanism to find their own way to address their issues and challenges.”

“I've got 28 years experience in the sector and I believe I have the skills and experience that other younger organisations could learn from. The problem is we don't have a structure to make such sharing possible.”

If you think you'd like to be a mentor, or you'd benefit from peer mentor support, contact:

Amy Wilkins
amyw@brap.org.uk
0121 456 7403

or download an application form at

www.brap.org.uk

