

# se

## magazine

SOCIAL PURPOSE | BUSINESS SENSE

“One of the major gaps in the market for financing the sector is the availability of risk and working capital for frontline organisations.”

**Caroline Mason**  
Chief Operating Officer  
of Big Society Capital

# SHOW ME THE MONEY

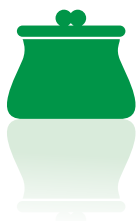
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FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE 14

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MORNING  
WORKSHOP



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The Workshops are written and presented by **Simon Michaels** of F3 and **Maurice McCartney** of Fresh Management Solutions. Maurice and Simon are members of the **Specialist Enterprise Support** pool of consultants for **Making Local Food Work**.



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# Plenty of evidence for optimism



Sally Edwards | sallyaedwards@btopenworld.com

**The overall economic forecast may appear gloomy, but there's a brighter outlook for the social enterprise sector, which report after report shows is gathering strength.**

It's heartening to learn that the tremendous effort and creativity being invested in launching new enterprises and services, re-positioning and re-branding existing enterprises is paying off. The annual State of Social Enterprise Survey, the RBS SE100 Index and new figures released by Co-operatives UK all reveal that social enterprises are out-performing small to medium sized commercial businesses, whilst a flurry of government legislation and the increased availability of finance for social enterprise look set to further support the sector's growth and development.

Whatever your endeavour, we hope that you will find plenty to interest and support you in this issue of **se**.



## FIGHTBACK BRITAIN

The State of Social Enterprise survey results have been published by Social Enterprise UK.

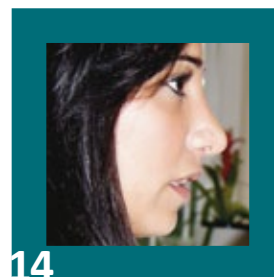
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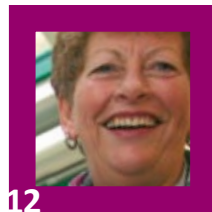
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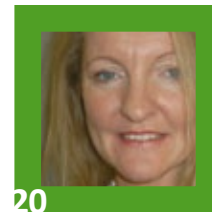
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**socialenterprise**  
WEST MIDLANDS

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](http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk) for more information about the social enterprise sector and the benefits of joining SEWM CIC – the leading business network and consultancy for social enterprise in the West Midlands.

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IN THE NEWS

POLICY MATTERS

FINDINGS

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

BUSINESS MATTERS

SPECIAL FEATURES

DO IT RIGHT

For details about **advertising in SE** and to download a media pack, go to [www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk)

## New chief executive for SEWM CIC



Melanie Mills, Chief Executive, SEWM CIC

**M**elanie Mills has been appointed **Chief Executive of SEWM CIC.** Melanie has been a core member of the senior management team at SEWM (Social Enterprise West Midlands) for a number of years and has most recently been focusing on business development opportunities for the new CIC.

Commenting on her new position Melanie says: "I am both excited and honoured to take on this new role and to continue to work with my colleagues, who have invested so heavily in making sure that SEWM CIC succeeds as an independent business and social enterprise."

Melanie has championed improvements in social enterprise business support and developed innovative and sustainable programmes to demystify social enterprise for key stakeholders looking to collaborate with the sector.

"Working for SEWM has provided me with the opportunity to use my commercial skills in a different way," she says, "adding real value for more than just

shareholder benefit. I am committed to 'doing business differently' and believe that there are new and untapped markets for us to explore for our members.

The SEWM team will continue to work together to unlock these opportunities."

Kevin Maton, who has served as Network Director since 2007, is now heading up SEWM's new consultancy arm. He comments: "I am delighted that Melanie has accepted the role of Chief Executive. Her energy, enthusiasm, tenacity and commercial experience have been crucial in driving through our transition from a publically funded programme to an independent social enterprise. As a team we have invested a great deal into the organisation and we strongly believe in the opportunity that social enterprise provides. That is why we are completely committed to ensuring the sustainability and success of SEWM CIC with Melanie leading the way." **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

**SEWM CIC** | [www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk)

## buySe is partner in 'Society Profits'

**A** campaign designed to help social enterprises raise the profile of their model of doing business and increase trade has been launched by Social Enterprise UK (SEUK).

Called 'Society Profits' the campaign involves social enterprises sending for, or downloading, a free, unbranded, set of promotional materials that deliver the message 'Choose social enterprise and society profits'. The materials include a mix of tongue-in-cheek and very direct posters, as well as digital and paper post-it-style sticky notes alongside other tools.

SEUK is launching the campaign in partnership with buySe.co.uk, the UK-wide social enterprise directory developed by SEWM CIC, to make it easier for anyone and everyone to buy products and services from social enterprises.

Celia Richardson, Director of Communications at Social Enterprise UK, comments: "Our members have told us that they lack a common language to describe what social enterprise is and simple tools to get the message across, so this initiative is designed to help. We hope the campaign will be taken up with enthusiasm by the champions of social enterprise who are multiplying fast across the UK." **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

**Society Profits information and toolkit** | [www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk)  
**buySe, the Social Enterprise Directory** | [www.buyse.co.uk](http://www.buyse.co.uk)



## SEC becomes SEUK

**S**ocial Enterprise Coalition (SEC), established nine years ago to act as a collective voice to promote social enterprise, has unveiled a new name and a new look – **Social Enterprise UK (SEUK).**

Chief Executive, Peter Holbrook, explains: "Our members told us we needed to be clear and be bold about what social enterprise is and what it can do. The new branding is designed to give us the strongest possible basis for this. We now do much more than we were originally set up to do, including providing support, services, networks, tools and information to social enterprises. It had become increasingly clear that our name and visual identity no longer accurately represented us. What you've seen so far is just the first stage. Soon we will be launching a new web platform, which will reinforce our efforts to put our members in the spotlight and act as a marketplace for the movement." **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

**Social Enterprise UK** | [www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk)



## Free BVSC health check pays dividends

**B**VSC has launched a new easy-access service designed to ensure that the city's voluntary, community and social enterprise groups have access to the precise support they need to thrive.

The BVSC Health Check, which can be completed online or by speaking to a member of BVSC's Business and Enterprise Team, enables organisations to establish where to focus in terms of developing their business.

One organisation which has recently benefited from the service is Rosetta Life, a company of filmmakers and artists working within health and social care, with specialist experience in end of life and palliative care.

Jennifer Sweeney, Projects and Development Manager for Rosetta Life, comments: "I was sceptical about the availability of genuine and affordable, even free, advice so I didn't hold great expectations. However, I was extremely impressed with the level of support we received. The Health Check was a fantastic opportunity for us to reflect on our operations, strategy, management and planning. We got in-depth advice around finance, fundraising and our particular needs related to establishing a Community Interest Company to provide film and media services to voluntary groups and volunteers."

Rosetta Life has gone on to use other BVSC services, including accountancy and marketing, and benefited from



Rosetta Life's Health Check with BVSC included advice on setting up a new CIC

access to a wider network of charities and community groups in the city.

Brian Carr, BVSC's Chief Executive, says: "We've been working very hard to maintain a significant level of free-at-the-point-of-delivery services for voluntary groups in Birmingham. This has been quite a challenge given the current economic climate, but I'm pleased to say that a large proportion of our services are still free and we are committed to keeping them that way. We're able to do this through the investment made in our infrastructure by several important funders including

Birmingham City Council, the city's Primary Care Trusts, the Big Lottery Fund and a growing range of independent charitable trusts. Most importantly, over 30% of our income is generated through our own social enterprise activities, which enables us to ensure that our services to the city's voluntary sector are as high value, low cost, and as high a quality as possible." **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

**BVSC Health Check** | [www.bvsc.org/organisation-health-check](http://www.bvsc.org/organisation-health-check)  
**Rosetta Life** | [www.rosettalife.org](http://www.rosettalife.org)

## Aspire4u launches event management service

**B**irmingham-based Aspire4u CIC is drawing on its team's extensive experience of co-ordinating all kinds of exciting, creative and memorable events, to launch an event management service for corporate and social occasions.

Aspire4u has been successfully running events and youth projects since 2007 and during that time has worked with hundreds of young people from across the West Midlands, helping to increase their life chances, confidence and skills.

Whilst the organisation has been successful in drawing down



funding over the past two years from a variety of sources, it recognises the importance of moving towards becoming self sustainable. Any profits derived from the new event

management service will be invested into its projects for young people. **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

**Aspire4U** | [www.aspire4u.co.uk](http://www.aspire4u.co.uk) | [www.projecttalent.co.uk](http://www.projecttalent.co.uk) | 0121 622 3603

## Q3 Academy launches InQbate



**Q3 Academy in Great Barr has launched a scheme called InQbate, with the aim of encouraging students who have completed their A Levels to develop social entrepreneurial skills.**

Students can propose an idea for a social enterprise in one of six areas covered by the Academy – hair and beauty, catering, photography, events and promotion management, sports management, graphic design/website development, horticulture – or in any other area of their choice.

Commenting on the scheme Chief Executive and Principal of Q3 Academy, Caroline Badyal, said: “Prospective entrepreneurs will be asked to

demonstrate how their idea will succeed not only as a business, but also how it will engage and benefit the local community within their business model.”

InQbate was launched at Q3’s annual sponsor’s dinner, hosted this year by Eric Payne OBE and his wife Grace, which provides an opportunity to reinforce links between the Academy and its local business partners. Addressing an audience of over 200, Keynote Speaker Dalton Philips, CEO of Morrisons supermarket chain, emphasised the importance of a close relationship between education and business. He advised students, especially Q3’s budding entrepreneurs, not to always look for lucrative ideas, but instead to

find what excited them. He stressed that the route to success involves three As: ability, attitude and ambition.

Guests were left in no doubt that Q3 itself has these qualities. Dalton Philips said: “Q3 is no ordinary school, it does remarkable work.”

The Academy opened its doors to students in 2008, with a purpose-built, open-plan space offering a flexible, personalised curriculum. It has an ethos focused on individuality and community and regularly introduces distinctive initiatives to promote learning. **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

**Q3 Academy** | [www.q3academy.org.uk](http://www.q3academy.org.uk)

## New name for the Deaf Cultural Centre’s conference business

**BID Services, a registered deaf charity based in Ladywood, Birmingham, has re-branded its conference and events business as The Signing Tree Conference Centre.**

The new name has been introduced to highlight the strong links and history the charity has with deaf people and to reflect the culture and history of the community it supports.

At a champagne and canapés launch event, visitors had the opportunity to tour the conference space, engage with staff and even try out their sign language skills. Guest speaker, Martina Irwin from Aims Direct also ran a short workshop on the effectiveness of using QR (quick response) codes – a new app that can be used to engage with customers in a different way.

The Signing Tree Conference Centre offers a unique experience for those looking for a high quality conference venue. The centre strives to break down

communications barriers between deaf and hearing people, whilst at the same time allowing visitors to gain an appreciation of the heritage and history embedded in deaf culture. Visitors can also expect light and spacious accommodation, high levels of customer care and good food. **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

**Sam Berrow, The Signing Tree Conference Centre** |  
0121 450 5121 |  
[www.signingtree.org.uk](http://www.signingtree.org.uk)







## Waterloo Woodwork trebles its income

**Waterloo Woodwork, based in Solihull, has generated income almost three times higher than last year, by applying some basic marketing principles.**

Charles Rapson, Enterprise Manager at Colebridge Trust, explains. "It's all down to getting the basics right and a lot of hard work from the staff at Waterloo," he says. "We spent a great deal of time understanding the market and customers and designing a suite of products that met those needs at a price that was competitive and represented value for money."

Compared to last year, sales are exceeding the organisation's most optimistic forecasts. "This doesn't mean Waterloo is banging stuff out on the cheap," says Simon Cockerill, Manager at Waterloo. "In fact we are competing at the top end of the market with high quality goods including garden fencing, garden benches, bird boxes and garden structures, as well as a host of other outdoor timber products and services. We are relatively low volume and so will never compete with the bulk goods that the likes of B&Q ship in. By going for the top end of the market,

we can be competitive, profitable and give our learning disabled clients the best work experience and sense of achievement possible."

Waterloo Woodwork provides work experience and training for learning-disabled and other disadvantaged groups and is now looking to expand the client base it serves to meet the needs of excluded school pupils, young people who are NEET and ex-offenders.

### MAKING CONTACT

**Waterloo Woodwork** | Simon Cockerill:  
0121 770 7555 | [www.waterloowoodwork.co.uk](http://www.waterloowoodwork.co.uk)

## Development in Social Enterprise makes its mark

**Development in Social Enterprise CIC, a Solihull-based start-up, is making its presence felt having already delivered over £1,500 worth of free support to fledgling enterprises. It has also formed a partnership to create a start-up fund and was recently awarded the Social Enterprise Mark.**

Development in Social Enterprise, which set up in April 2011, provides a range of business support services for individuals, community groups and public sector workers.

Among its first clients is Birmingham New Communities Network (BNCN), which has received support with creating management and governance structures and developing a business plan, helping to transform it from an organisation which was 'giving up' to one which feels it has a positive future ahead of it. Suzanne Bisani, CEO for BNCN, says:

"We found Dave to be an honest, fair and understanding consultant. I would recommend him to any community organisation that has future dreams and needs a little help to get there."

Dave Lane, founder and Managing Director of Development in Social Enterprise CIC, says: "As a new start up we've been busy delivering social enterprise support for local community groups and tendering for contracts and consultancies. We have also formed a partnership with a small cost-reduction broker, called Zone 4 Biz, based in Coventry, which involves them donating 15% of the money they make through commission with third sector organisations in Birmingham and Solihull to a start-up fund." **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

**Development in Social Enterprise** |  
Dave Lane: 0121 779 7829 | [www.disecic.org](http://www.disecic.org)



Suzanne Bisani, CEO of BNCN – a network of more 70 new communities in Birmingham and the surrounding areas – which has been supported by Development in Social Enterprise.



**S**ocial Enterprise UK has published the results of its State of Social Enterprise Survey, the largest analysis of the sector in Britain. Its report, called 'Fightback Britain', paints an exciting, and at times surprising, picture.

39% of all social enterprises are based and working in the most deprived communities in the UK, compared to 13% of all small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A third of all social enterprise start-ups also originated in the UK's poorest areas and bring job opportunities and wealth-creation to the areas which need them most. These businesses are still in their infancy, but they signal the potential for social enterprise to play a key role in fighting deprivation, tackling social problems and creating a fairer economy.

# Fightback Britain

The findings also reveal that social enterprises are trading more than was previously thought with consumers and the private sector. Much of the policy discussion around social enterprise concentrates on their potential to innovate public services, but the survey shows that social enterprises are most likely to report 'trade with consumers' as their main source of income. 37% of respondents did most of their business with consumers, compared with 19% who are trading mainly with the public sector. This finding bodes well for the future as the more consumers engage with and buy from social enterprise, the more mainstream the sector's values will become.

Social enterprises trading with the public sector are less confident about the coming year. Only 51% of those who generate most of their income through public sector contracts expect to see growth in the next twelve months, compared with 67% of those who earn most of their income through trading with the general public.

So while the circumstances are now ripe for social enterprise to deliver real reform in public services, many social enterprises are diversifying away from public service markets to survive and expand, looking instead to the private sector and the general public for future growth. The risk is that opportunities appearing as a result of an opening up

“Social enterprises are outstripping SMEs in start-up rates, growth and confidence.”

of public service markets will swiftly be swallowed up by large private providers, which would be unpopular with the public and a huge missed opportunity for social enterprise.

Looking at how social enterprises are faring in relation to mainstream SMEs, 'Fightback Britain' reveals that social enterprises are outstripping SMEs in start-up rates, growth and confidence. Across Britain, one in seven of all social enterprises is a start-up, more than three times the proportion of start-ups in mainstream small businesses (14% compared to 4%). Social enterprises are twice as likely to have reported growth in the past year (58% compared with 28%) and they are more confident about the next twelve months. 57% of social enterprises predicted growth for the coming year compared with 41% of SMEs.

These are just some of the findings to emerge from the 'Fightback Britain' report. The full report is downloadable from the Social Enterprise UK website and is an invaluable resource for anyone keen to understand more about the state of social enterprise in 2011. **se**

## MAKING CONTACT

**Social Enterprise UK** | [www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk)

## Resilient co-operative economy holds lessons for UK plc

**The co-operative sector has significantly outperformed the wider UK economy according to new figures recently released by Co-operatives UK, the trade association for co-operative enterprises.**

The combined turnover of all UK co-operatives grew by 4.4% last year to £33bn, and has grown by 21% since the start of the credit crunch in 2008.

'The UK Co-operative Economy 2011', the latest annual analysis into the size and performance of the UK's unlisted co-operative businesses, reveals that membership of co-operatives has increased since 2008, with growth of

18% to 12.8 million. It means that one in five of the entire UK population is now a member of a co-operative.

The number of co-operatives in the UK also continues to grow and has now reached 5,450, an increase of 15.1% from 2010. With the UK government predicting that one in six public sector employees could be working in new mutual enterprises delivering public services by 2015, there is potential for further growth.

The biggest percentage growth in turnover was seen amongst organisations owned by their employees, such as John Lewis, Suma Wholefoods or Co-operative

Web – a provider of bespoke software and service solutions for both public and private sector clients, based in Longbridge on the outskirts of Birmingham. This sector showed 8.7% growth to £9.4bn.

The largest sector remains consumer-owned co-operatives, which amounts to £16.1bn with growth of 6.5%. This sector includes The Co-operative Group, whose £14bn revenue includes food, financial services, pharmacy and funeral services.

Co-operatives contribute to a multitude of sectors, from financial services through agriculture to public services. In the West Midlands, for example, worker-



# Top performing social enterprises

**S**ocial enterprises are flouting the fiscal gloom to grow faster than the rest of the UK economy, the latest RBS SE100 Index reveals.

Now in its second year, the RBS SE100 Index aims to gather facts and figures about social enterprises, charting both growth and social impact, to put the stats behind great stories of businesses delivering positive economic change across the UK.

The report has found that the social enterprise sector is one to watch. This year 409 entrants (compared with last year's 309) showed impressive growth and revenue figures, outperforming the FTSE100 and the SME sector.

The total revenue of the top 100 performers grew by 51% and the revenue growth by all those on the Index who provided figures was 14%. This compares well with the revenue growth by all the FTSE100 in 2010 of around 5%, and against the fastest recorded growth period of UK SMEs (in 2006) when their revenue growth was 9%.

Other key findings include:

- 45% of senior management team members of Index participants are women. Only 12.5% of directors on FTSE 100 boards were women at the end of 2010, according to the Cranfield School of Management.
- The average growth of the start-up enterprises on the Index was

“The total revenue of the top 100 performers grew by 51% ... the revenue growth by all those on the Index was 14%.”

a staggering 5,490%, compared with 120% last year. The median growth for this group was 81%, up from 35% last year.

- Environment and recycling, health and social care, and employment and training were the sectors that reported the highest growth figures.
- The average profit for enterprises on this year's Index was £110,000, an increase of 26% from £87,000 the previous year. Of those who reported on their profitability, 185 posted a profit and 79 made a loss.

Of the 409 organisations listed in year two, 29 were from the West Midlands (nearly double the figure for 2010).

SEWM member, My Time CIC, scored top marks of 5/5 for impact reporting and was shortlisted for the SE100 Impact Award. Other SEWM members featured in the Top 100 are:

- **PM Training** (no. 33)
- **Access to Business** (no. 41)
- **South Shropshire Furniture Scheme** (no. 43)
- **Jericho Foundation** (no. 60)
- **ENTA CIC** (no. 92).

## RBS SE100



The RBS SE100 Index was created by Social Enterprise magazine in partnership with Royal Bank of

Scotland Community Banking to gather robust information from the sector on an annual basis.

Any organisation that classes itself as a social enterprise is welcome to enter by completing an online or telephone survey. The survey requires transparency on legal structure and sources of income, both of which will be used to assess whether an organisation is a bona fide social enterprise.

The Index enables organisations to see how their growth and social impact compares to others in their marketplace and in the social enterprise arena as a whole.

To sign up to the 2012 Index, or download the RBS SE100 Data Report 2011, visit the Social Enterprise Live website. **se**

## MAKING CONTACT

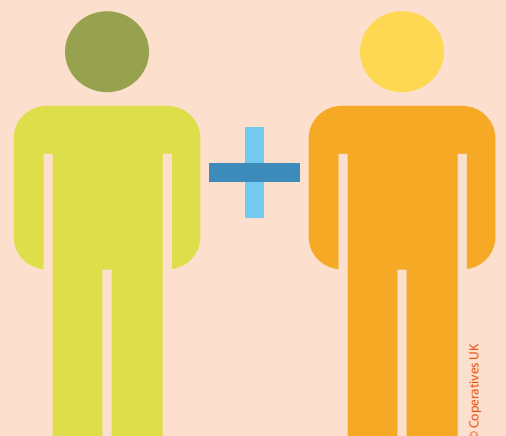
Social Enterprise Live | [www.socialenterpriselive.com/se100](http://www.socialenterpriselive.com/se100)

owned businesses like Co-operative Web are running profitable enterprises that give employees the control of the business, whilst consumer-owned co-operatives, such as Midlands Co-operative Society, are giving customers an equal say and share of the profits. Midlands Co-operative Society Limited had an annual turnover of £962,175,000 and is ranked third in The Co-operative UK 100.

Ed Mayo, secretary general of Co-operatives UK, believes the resilience of the co-operative economy holds lessons that could help the UK economy avoid repeating the problems of recent years.



“The evidence we have is of remarkably stable growth across a wide array of co-operative businesses. The values of shared ownership, shared wealth and democratic control appear to provide resilience in the face of economic adversities. Our co-operative economy is in good health – still further proof, to both the public and private sectors, of exactly how economic success can be pursued alongside social responsibility.” **se**



## MAKING CONTACT

The UK Co-operative Economy 2011 | [www.uk.coop/economy2011](http://www.uk.coop/economy2011)

# Flurry of government policy activity

There's a definite flurry of activity going on in Parliament at present related to social enterprise, with a raft of policy being debated that has direct relevance to the sector. Here **KEVIN MATON**, Consultancy Director at SEWM CIC, sheds some light on what's going on.



Kevin Maton, Social Enterprise West Midlands

## Planning for sustainable development

When the Social Enterprise World Forum convened in South Africa earlier this year, its theme – 'social enterprise as a catalyst for sustainable development' – anticipated issues that are now right at the forefront of policy here in the UK. The Government's recently released 'Draft National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF) is due to form the basis of the planning system in England, replacing all the existing national planning policy statements and guidance.

Central to the proposed NPPF is an emphasis on approving developments which are seen to be 'sustainable' with the idea that the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' should be seen as a 'golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking' for local planning authorities.

It is this 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' that has generated much debate and media coverage. So how does it relate to the social enterprise sector?

The very basis of the social enterprise model relates directly to the concept of sustainability and it is an issue which the sector has been debating for some time. The introduction of the Social Enterprise Mark, which has the strapline 'Trading for People and Planet', demonstrates this. It is awarded to social enterprises that can show they have society and the environment at the heart of their business. Our sector is therefore in a very strong position to evidence what sustainable development can mean in practice.

Whilst the proposed NPPF will only apply in England, the Welsh Government

has set out what it believes are the principles of sustainable development – and they strongly mirror the values of the social enterprise sector:

- Improving the economy and the social and environmental wellbeing of people and communities
- Promoting fair and safe communities and equal opportunities
- Supporting our natural and cultural environments and respecting their limits.

## Moving from centralisation to localism

The Localism Bill, which should be enacted by Autumn 2011, is all about the decentralisation of government powers down to the lowest possible levels. This means to individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities, as well as to councils and other local institutions.

The parts of the Localism Bill of greatest relevance to social enterprise are:

- Community right to challenge
- Community right to buy
- Community infrastructure levy
- Community right to build.

The community right to challenge will mean individuals, groups and communities can argue to run local services. My concern about this is that the skills needed to run a public service or a community asset are not those you just pick from a quick reading of information on a website. The infrastructure to support these changes will need further investment if community organisations are not to be set up to fail.

Similarly the community right to buy could give communities new powers to save local facilities threatened with closure, or to identify assets with a use they wish to maintain or enhance. Again, the skills and expertise to make this happen will need to be made accessible to communities.

In both cases the skills and expertise required are directly related to those required to run a successful social enterprise, so it could provide an opportunity for specialist support organisations – providing their services can be paid for.

The Localism Bill contains a raft of different policy changes and the general view at present is that it contains such a variety of proposals that it's difficult to predict what exactly will be in it by the time it completes its process through Parliament.

## Contracting with social enterprises

Chris White MP's Public Services (Social Enterprise and Social Value) Bill 2010-11 aims to encourage local authorities to give greater consideration to social enterprise when contracting/procuring services.

This will be important to the social enterprise sector as it will:

- Require the Secretary of State and local authorities to publish strategies in connection with promoting social enterprise and enable communities to participate in the formulation and implementation of these strategies
- Require that public sector contracts include provisions relating to social outcomes and social values.

However, the Bill seems to have stalled since November 2010 and we are still awaiting an announcement of when it will enter the committee stages. **se**

## USEFUL LINKS

**Draft NPPF** | [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/draftframeworkconsultation](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/draftframeworkconsultation)

**The Social Enterprise Mark** | [www.socialenterprisemark.org.uk/](http://www.socialenterprisemark.org.uk/)

**Welsh Government's Principles of Sustainable Development** | [wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/?lang=en](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/?lang=en)

**The Localism Bill** | [www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/)

**Public Services Bill** | <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/publicservicessocialenterpriseandsocialvalue.html>



# A new breed of CSR and an opportunity for social enterprise

**M**elanie Mills, Chief Executive of SEWM CIC, offers her views on why the time is right for social enterprises to push harder to engage with the commercial sector and capitalise on the current corporate mood.

Everyone knows about CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) these days don't they? If you are a cynic you will say it's just a fancy name for a department paying lip service by using a tiny percentage of huge corporate resources to gain good PR! The optimists will say that it's the first step towards harnessing the conscience of business and using these resources to make positive change.

And what about you, what do you think? I know what I think: now is the time to seize the opportunity brought about by the catalyst of difficult economic times and greater public demand for business to behave more responsibly and work with real commitment to the future rather than playing the short game, which is all about winning now and having scant regard for the future! We all know where that led us...

So what is the opportunity? I recently came across an article in The Guardian with the headline 'Why CSR is not enough to create a sustainable world', in which the author argued that it's time to reinvent CSR and business strategy into something new – sustainable business. He went on to highlight three underlying principles of sustainable business:

- **Focus on the long term.** Jeff Immelt, CEO of General Electric Company, gets it when he says: "we are going to solve tough customer and global problems and make money doing it".
- **Long term success is based on how employees and consumers act today.** This is the 'best of breed' in CSR strategies, mentioned by the marketing gurus Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee in 2004, because it links real social change with measurable commercial benefit.
- **The freedom to innovate within a strategic framework.** We are all catalysts and can use our power



Simon Devonshire of O2, which sponsored Voice 11 and is one of many corporates supportive of social enterprise

for positive change. For business, improving lives and achieving commercial success are not at odds. They are indissociably linked.

This is our territory and where our businesses excel. So now all we have to do is to get in there. The door is ajar, we just have to find the way to metaphorically fling it open!

We need to show those CSR directors and private sector businesses that investing in social enterprise will help them to achieve their objectives. I think our hook is simple: we can give more for your money!

What do I mean?

- **The triple bottom line** – we must be able to quantify, through SROI, social accounting, or any other of the methods available, how supporting, investing in and contracting with social enterprise can and does make a difference. If you are not already measuring your businesses impact in this way, now may be the time to start.
- **Tangible results** – commercial businesses should be able to demonstrate to shareholders, through annual reports and other marketing materials, the tangible difference that their money is making. Supporting social enterprises through a sustained CSR programme is not a quick fix, but helps to solve issues such as unemployment, employability, social exclusion, litter and recycling.

- **Competitive advantage** – proactive private sector businesses are already seeing not just the social and economic impact that might exist from taking this approach, but also that it could offer them a competitive advantage. Some sectors, such as construction, have really forged ahead with this agenda and there are notable examples. Which sector will be next off the blocks I wonder and who will be playing catch up?

To take full advantage of this opportunity, social enterprise needs to be loud and proud. To this end I would encourage all social enterprises to apply for and display the Social Enterprise Mark and to register on [www.buySe.co.uk](http://www.buySe.co.uk), the UK-wide social enterprise business directory.

There is one caveat to my proposal! I am not suggesting that businesses should abandon all existing CSR activities – volunteering staff time, fundraising for charities, offering donated goods, etc – we just need to make the commercial sector aware that working with social enterprises is another way to invest in their local communities and local enterprise.

So, all that remains is to get out there and make this work! I know I am going to be trying really hard for SEWM CIC and for the sector. I would love to hear how you get on. **se**

## MAKING CONTACT

Melanie Mills, SEWM CIC | [m.mills@socialenterprisewm.org.uk](mailto:m.mills@socialenterprisewm.org.uk)

# SOCIAL ENTERPRISE **AMBASSADOR** PROGRAMME 2011

Do you want to **increase the value** of social enterprise within your organisation?

**Our Social Enterprise Ambassador Programme is specifically designed for organisations that wish to understand how 'doing business differently' can offer innovative and effective solutions and unlock new markets, suppliers and customers.**

By raising awareness and understanding of the social enterprise business model, we provide key staff with the knowledge, tools and contacts required to confidently and proactively identify and seize opportunities that social enterprise offers.

With our help they become Social Enterprise Ambassadors within your organisation. We've already successfully delivered the programme for a range of organisations including West Midlands Chambers of Commerce, Jobcentre Plus, Enterprise Learning Partnerships, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, Accord Group and Trident Housing Association.

Tailored to the specific needs of each organisation, our programme opens up opportunities to connect and work with the social enterprise sector.

## BECOME AN **AMBASSADOR**

**The programme is structured around four key themes, all geared towards embedding social enterprise within the organisations we work with.**

### **Demystifying social enterprise**

Starting with the basics:

- What is a social enterprise?
- Social Enterprise Mark
- Legal structures and governance
- The bigger picture.

### **Strategic context**

Exploring how social enterprise can benefit your organisation and role:

- Supply chain opportunities
- Identifying opportunities and challenges
- The role of the Ambassador
- Embedding social enterprise in your organisation
- Overcoming barriers.

### **Case studies and study visits**

Visiting and hearing from leading social enterprises, contextualising the learning so far:

- The story
- Understanding the business model
- Impact and challenges
- The future.

### **On-going support & resources**

Equipping Ambassadors with the tools they need to deliver on your investment:

- Ambassador resource pack
- Access to a 'Social Enterprise Buddy'
- 12 months SEWM Premier Membership.

### **Who should attend?**

We've developed the Ambassador Programme for key staff at all levels, managers and directors working across different functions within the organisation.

The programme can be delivered on site, locally or at our offices in central Birmingham.

**“We believe that, today more than ever, social enterprises have the power to make a genuine impact, as they play a key role in revitalising communities.”**

John Morris | Chief Executive,  
Trident Group





“The social enterprise study visit to the Jericho Foundation was not only interesting and inspiring but gave us some great practical ideas to take forward at Walsall Adult and Community College. We will expand our activities in catering, craft and print and are considering new opportunities in a re-use shop and landscaping to provide real progression opportunities for our learners.”

Ianthe Wassell | Walsall Adult Community College

**Contact us for an informal discussion about your requirements:**

**Melanie Mills** | Chief Executive | [m.mills@socialenterprisewm.org.uk](mailto:m.mills@socialenterprisewm.org.uk)

**Helen Ryman** | Lead Consultant | [h.ryman@socialenterprisewm.org.uk](mailto:h.ryman@socialenterprisewm.org.uk)

[www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk)

**0845 450 7515**

## REAP THE **BENEFITS**

**There is real advantage if your own staff can help spread the word about the benefits of social enterprise internally.**

They become the acknowledged first point of contact and source of information about social enterprise and help make connections, leading to new ideas and initiatives, or even new social enterprises within your organisation.

### **The benefits for your staff...**

- Acquire new knowledge, perspectives and fresh ideas
- Develop and identify best practice
- Challenge existing thinking and culture
- Personal professional development
- Be inspired by the achievements of others.

### **The benefits for your business...**

- Develop strategies to realise the revenue potential of social enterprise
- Realise the marketing value of promoting social enterprise activity
- Explore new enterprise activities with your staff and customers
- Embed the idea of 'doing business differently'
- Develop new knowledge and contacts
- Harness the power of your community
- Inspire staff to recognise worthwhile opportunities.

## DEVELOP **KNOWLEDGE**

**The Social Enterprise Ambassador Programme is a knowledge development programme for organisations with a desire to unlock the value of social enterprise.**

It has been designed with a range of core components which you mix and match to suit specific needs. Our bespoke approach ensures that you can measure real value from your investment in the Social Enterprise Ambassador Programme.

### **What's included?**

- Workshops (from half day sessions to two full days)
- Learning materials and resources
- Case study visits
- Expert speakers including:
  - Legal experts specialising in social enterprise
  - Leaders of dynamic social enterprises relevant to your business interests
  - Peer practitioners
- Corporate or board briefing session
- Social Enterprise 'buddy'
- Knowledgeable facilitators
- SEWM membership.

# SHOW ME THE MONEY!

Social Enterprise UK's recently published 'Fightback Britain' report states that 'the single largest barrier to the sustainability of social enterprises is access to finance, with 44% of respondents saying that they are still hampered by the availability and affordability of finance.' **se** wanted to find out why this remains an issue and what solutions there might be, so we asked a local Community Development Finance Institution, a national social lender and investor, a social bank and new Big Society Capital to give us their perspectives.

## Does the sector really need additional funding?



Nigel Price, Unity Trust Bank

**With huge amounts of money now being made available for investment in social enterprises NIGEL PRICE, National Lending Manager at Unity Trust Bank, offers his views on the state of the market.**

After ten years in gestation, the first tranche of lending from Big Society Capital (BSC) – a relatively modest £1m to a private equity foundation helping disadvantaged young people into employment – has been made.

Make no mistake about it, although this is a relatively modest sum, going

forward BSC will be required to lend money to the sector like it's going out of fashion – well almost!

With a war chest of £200m from the four Project Merlin banks, plus probably double that from dormant bank accounts, BSC's aim is to '...be the start of a revolution similar to the venture capital movement in the 1980s'. So that's all well and dandy, but does the social enterprise sector need this level of funding, and is it ready for it?

The sector as we know has been around since the late nineties, yet the lack of access to readily available capital is still cited as the main reason for lack of development. Is this a question of a gap in the market, or does it highlight the need for better signposting to the finance that is available?

As a specialist lender with more than 15 years' experience of lending to the sector, the issue that Unity Trust Bank is seeing is actually one of low demand. Whilst there's been an increase in the amount of capital going in to Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs), that money itself is not being taken up. Contrary to what is often said, we are actually seeing little evidence that there is a huge amount of unmet demand.

An increasing amount of equity is now being made available. But being available is one thing; the sector having the capacity, desire and will to use that equity wisely is another. At Unity, we're not seeing much connection

between the two at the moment. I can only think that it is a structural issue.

Unity, in common with many of the primary funders in the sector, has seen its lowest ever interest rates over the past two years. Public sector spending cuts might be a reason for this reticence to borrow, yet the latest 'State of Social Enterprise Survey' has revealed that social enterprises have a greater proportion of revenues from the general public than from the public sector. Perhaps it's the continuing negative sentiments generally about the state of UK plc, as well as the potential funding of redundancies should the worst case scenario happen.

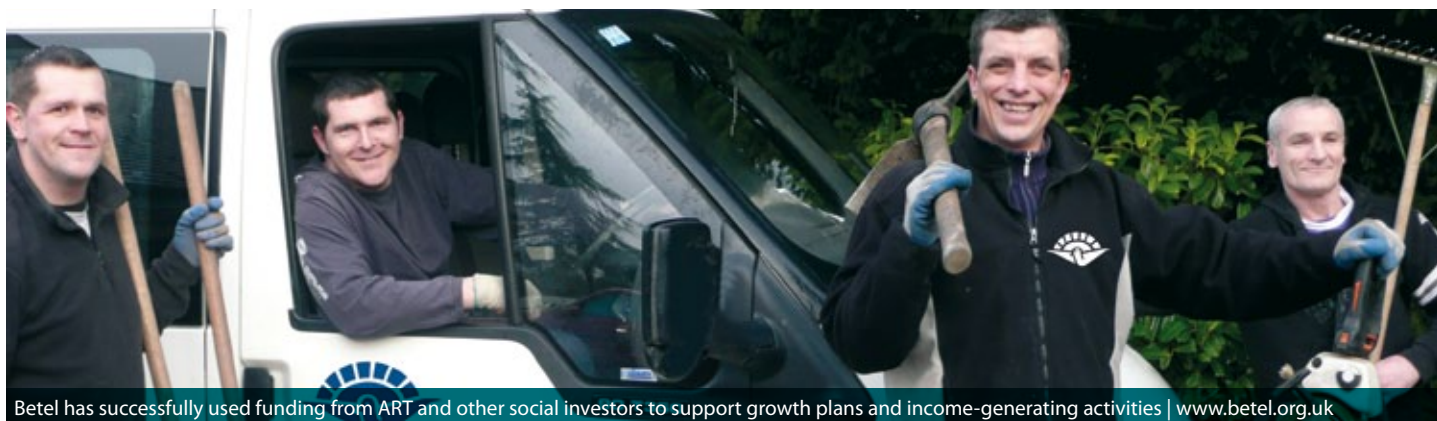
With landlords continuing to exert rent rises, a mortgage to acquire existing or upgraded buildings that could potentially secure an organisation's longer term future, becomes an increasingly attractive proposition.

We're expecting the historically low interest rates to prevail for the foreseeable future and this, coupled with a good supply of finance, means that for many social enterprises, the time to take the plunge into borrowing could not be better. **se**

**i** **Unity Trust Bank**, as a specialist bank for social enterprises, provides a full range of banking services. Its Birmingham-based, award-winning, customer services team is dedicated to helping customers find the right banking solution. **Contact Neil or Remi on 0845 155 3355 to find out about UTB's discounted banking package for SEWM members | [www.unity.com](http://www.unity.com)**



# Social enterprises need to become investment-ready



Betel has successfully used funding from ART and other social investors to support growth plans and income-generating activities | [www.betel.org.uk](http://www.betel.org.uk)

**STEVE WALKER**, Chief Executive of ART (Aston Reinvestment Trust), a social enterprise that pioneered lending to social enterprises, shares his views on how more of them could be cashing in on loan finance.

Having researched the issues surrounding access to finance for enterprise in the late 1990s, ART produced a definitive report on the potential use of loan finance by the then 'third sector' entitled 'Developing Social Enterprise'. This research was followed by action. We raised and lent £400,000 of social investment capital to social enterprises in our target area of Birmingham and Solihull, many of whom are still flourishing today.

The pilot scheme was hailed a resounding success and the expectation was that demand for loans from the social enterprise sector would show steady growth.

How wrong we were! We have actually seen a significant reduction in demand for loans from social enterprises in the last decade, in our £10,000 to £50,000 range, particularly over the past five years. Of those we have lent to, some social enterprises have failed – as also happens in the commercial sector – but some have repaid their loans and borrowed again, using the money to support their growth and development. So what lessons have we learnt from this experience?

## Success factors

Those social enterprises that have successfully used loan finance have followed the same principles of good business practice as commercial enterprises which thrive over the long term. These success factors include:

- Understanding their market and delivering what people want
- Being focused about what they offer
- Planning for the future, not just hoping that something will turn up
- Having a clear understanding of cashflow and a realistic schedule for re-paying a loan
- Having strong leaders, not afraid to make difficult decisions and take action when it's needed.

## Becoming investment-ready

The financial world has a term for enterprises that it is prepared to lend to. They are known as 'investment-ready'. We do take risks, but they are calculated risks with a high chance of working out well. We need to be confident that our money will not be poorly managed, or lost through circumstances that could have been avoided.

Social enterprises can take action to ensure they are following good business practice, are well run and investment-ready. Business support can be obtained in many ways: through specialist organisations, online forums and resource centres, professionals who are willing to serve on boards or offer pro bono support, mentoring or coaching and peers who are operating successfully.

## In good company

At ART, over the years, we have supported many local social enterprises, including Betel of Britain, ENTA, Future Health and Social Care, Jericho, My Time CIC, Birmingham's Chinese Society, the Buddhist Vihara Trust, the Amina Trust, Ashiana Trust and the New Jerusalem Apostolic Church.

They have used loan finance for a variety of trading purposes, including to buy vehicles or property, set up a new income-generating venture, and to support cashflow.

## What you can expect from ART

- Loans of £10,000 to £50,000, if a bank can't help
- Finance for any business purpose and for most market sectors
- Friendly, supportive, staff
- Straightforward application process
- Flexible repayment terms and security requirements – no early repayment fees
- Advice and signposting to other sources of finance and support
- A wide knowledge of the social enterprise sector.

ART's remit is to boost the local economy in Birmingham and Solihull, helping to create or protect local jobs for local people. It has seen a significant increase in demand for loans from the commercial sector since the credit crunch and has been able to attract additional investment to support this growth. **se**

**i** ART is a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI), constituted as an Industrial and Provident Society. It is owned by its members – both borrowers and investors – and money repaid on loans is used to provide more loans. ART is one of a number of CDFIs serving different areas across the West Midlands, currently with the support of European funding (ERDF). They are all members of the Fair Finance Consortium. ART | [www.reinvest.co.uk](http://www.reinvest.co.uk) | 0121 359 2444 Fair Finance Consortium | [www.fair-finance.net](http://www.fair-finance.net)

## BII scales up to meet needs of social enterprises

**B**ig Issue Invest (BII) provides finance from £50,000 to £500,000, ranging from loans to equity and everything in between. Since 2005 it has provided over £8 million to 45 social enterprises and has plans over the coming years to scale-up its operations to do much more to meet the needs of social enterprises, as **SARAH FORSTER** and **ED SIEGEL** of BII explain.

Our mission is to build a social merchant bank – ‘for the social entrepreneurs, by the social entrepreneurs’ – that will meet the needs of all social enterprises, from early stage social ventures through to large social enterprises.

We believe that social enterprises need specialist finance providers, like ourselves, with the market knowledge and expertise to structure financing that is tailored to their specific growth needs and that can achieve social and financial returns for investors.

Increasingly, we are structuring many of our investments as so-called participation loans or redeemable preferred shares. These are most appropriate for social enterprises with strong growth prospects, but as yet unconfirmed revenue streams. Repayment is dependent on the businesses’ success in achieving revenue and profit targets and, as such, the investments behave similarly to conventional equity investment: if the business performs well, the investor return is enhanced; if the business underperforms, the investor can lose some or all of its return. Such equity-like investment is appealing where traditional equity investment is not feasible due to the legal form of the social enterprise. These mezzanine debt or quasi-equity investments align both parties’ interests in the future success of the social enterprise and avoid the drag that traditional loans can have on young businesses.

If the social enterprise’s legal and stakeholder structure allows, BII may make more conventional equity investments. These would be considered appropriate for social enterprises that are in a growth mode where a realistic



My Time CIC, Birmingham, secured £200,000 investment from BII

“Many social enterprises have clear social missions but do not have clear, sustainable, revenue-generating models. That makes it difficult for any lender or investor to support or take a risk on them.”

exit possibility for the equity investor can be foreseen. It is recognised that traditional exits among social enterprises will be rare and therefore most exits would be through creatively structured redemptions, management buy-outs or sales to like-minded social, financial or strategic investors.

In terms of why access to finance is a challenge, we find that many social enterprises have clear social missions but do not have clear, sustainable, revenue-generating models. That makes it difficult for any lender or investor to support or take a risk on them. **se**

**i** **Big Issue Invest** is a specialised provider of finance to social enterprises or trading arms of charities, which are finding business solutions that create social and environmental transformation. Part of The Big Issue group of companies, BII is led by social entrepreneurs and experienced social financiers. As a social enterprise itself, BII pays any dividends generated up to its parent, The Big Issue, and to a social enterprise with a charitable arm, The Big Issue Foundation. **Sarah Forster, Director of Development** | [sarah@bigissueinvest.com](mailto:sarah@bigissueinvest.com) **Ed Siegel, Director of Investments** | [ed@bigissueinvest.com](mailto:ed@bigissueinvest.com) [www.bigissueinvest.com](http://www.bigissueinvest.com)





My Time CIC and BII signing the deal

## My Time CIC secures £200,000 from Big Issue Invest

As one of the first investments of redeemable preferred shares into a Community Interest Company (CIC), this ground-breaking deal demonstrates that equity investments are a feasible, attractive, alternative to loan financing for some social enterprises.

My Time is an award-winning counselling practice based in Birmingham that delivers mental health services to individuals who are typically underserved by mainstream health provision such as refugees, ethnic minorities and middle aged men. My Time uses a service-user led approach, training and employing therapists from the service user community. This model is inherently culturally sensitive and has proven remarkably successful at delivering positive outcomes.

My Time needed investment to help replicate its model nationally through social franchising. Although the enterprise had a strong trading history, revenues from the new franchising business had yet to be clearly identified and, therefore, could not be depended upon to meet a conventional loan repayment schedule. The investment of preference shares conditions investor repayments on the future growth of the business and the generation of adequate surpluses to meet dividend payments and eventual share redemption.

Over the next 12 months Big Issue Invest is investing £200,000 in My Time to set up another 10 franchises across the UK operating on its original model. **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

My Time CIC | [www.mytime.org.uk](http://www.mytime.org.uk)



Caroline Mason, Chief Operating Officer of Big Society Capital

## Introducing Big Society Capital

**CAROLINE MASON**, Chief Operating Officer of Big Society Capital, explains how the much anticipated organisation will work.

Big Society Capital (BSC) has been set up to inject funds from dormant bank accounts, together with a capital investment from the big four high street banks, into the social investment sector.

It will do this by investing exclusively in Social Investment Finance Intermediaries (SIFIs).

SIFIs are defined as organisations that exist primarily to:

- Provide, facilitate or structure financial investments for organisations which have a primary objective of achieving a positive social impact and/or
- Provide business support to organisations which have a primary social objective.

BSC hopes to stimulate greater non-governmental investment in the social investment market, thereby ultimately increasing the social impact achieved by the frontline social sector.

It will do this by:

- Increasing the quantity, diversity and sustainability of capital available to SIFIs to invest into the frontline social sector
- Providing support and helping to build the infrastructure necessary to facilitate the creation of an efficient social investment finance sector which can fully support the frontline social sector.

One of the major gaps in the market for financing the sector is the availability of risk and working capital for frontline organisations. In order to facilitate entrepreneurship and encourage small social enterprises to start-up, flourish and grow, BSC will invest in SIFIs that develop solutions, products and services in this area.

By linking this to the organisation's role in terms of establishing best practice for developing skills and social impact reporting, BSC hopes to see the growth of a vibrant sector of social enterprises, diversified across all sectors of social need, able to obtain supportive and appropriate forms of capital. **se**

### MAKING CONTACT

Big Society Capital | [www.bigsocietycapital.com](http://www.bigsocietycapital.com)

# Working with a prime contractor

**I**n recent years government has restructured the delivery of large scale programmes and as a result social enterprises across the country are finding that they need to pitch to 'prime contractors'. One organisation with considerable experience of being a prime contractor is Pertemps People Development Group (PPDG). Its latest contract, which comes on stream in January 2012, involves working for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to deliver an offender support programme in the West Midlands. **SE** asked **DAL VEYSEY** about the implications and opportunities for local social enterprises.

## Could you briefly explain the role of a prime contractor?

A prime contractor generally has three roles:

- To provide some services directly
- To sub-contract some services to other organisations
- To manage the payment and performance of the sub-contractors.

Sometimes we are asked to specify at the tender stage who our sub-contractors will be. On other occasions, we are free to choose them afterwards and to modify our provision to suit local circumstances as they arise. We are usually asked to say how we will manage the relationships to ensure consistent quality and cost-effectiveness.

## What will you be doing in terms of the NOMS European Social Fund (ESF) contract?

As prime contractor we have a responsibility to ensure that our clients are given the best possible support in their search for sustainable employment.

In the case of offenders, our role also includes a focus on improving the transition of clients to mainstream provision. By moving ex-offenders into training, education, or sustainable employment, we can help to reduce re-offending.

## What is the position regarding sub-contractors for the NOMS ESF contract?

As part of our supply chain management process, we have already identified a number of sub-contractors that will be supporting us with delivery in the West Midlands. Until we start to see clients we can't be sure about any gaps we might have in our provision and what opportunities there are for additional suppliers.

In the meantime, we are interested in finding out who offers what in terms of support for ex-offenders in the West Midlands, so anyone interested in working with us should get in touch with me. We are building a knowledge bank from which to draw in future when we are looking to sub-contract or spot purchase services.

## What do you see as the particular issues facing ex-offenders that there is a need to help them overcome?

Traditionally ex-offenders have found it hard to access training, education or sustainable employment. Individuals with a long offending history may lead very chaotic lives, so there may be multiple barriers to address – a need for sustainable housing, mentor support, support to rebuild social skills along with positive social networks, help with managing debt or to overcome addictions, even help with sorting out childcare, for example.

Those participants who have served long custodial sentences may require support with resettlement and learning to adapt to living outside of a custodial setting.

## What have you found are examples of 'good practice' in getting ex-offenders and other people with particular disadvantages to gain access to the workplace and hold down a job?

We believe the key to supporting ex-offenders into employment is to work in partnership, sharing knowledge and experience – whether that be with the offender, the prison and probation services, or employers

and other organisations capable of offering employment opportunities.

The other crucial element is treating each person as an individual, with a distinct set of skills, needs and aspirations that require a unique approach. The blanket term 'ex-offender' can be unhelpful, although we have identified certain common characteristics. Many ex-offenders have become accustomed to routine, for example, and are highly motivated to work.

## What is your advice to social enterprises that believe they can deliver the kinds of services you describe as needed to support ex-offenders? Do you have any minimum criteria they must meet in order to qualify for your preferred supplier register?

To work with us, social enterprises need to be able to demonstrate:

- A track record of delivery of at least two years, with evidence of positive outcomes
- Financial stability – ie have a good balance sheet, cashflow and reserves
- That they have all the necessary policies and procedures in place to meet public sector procurement requirements.

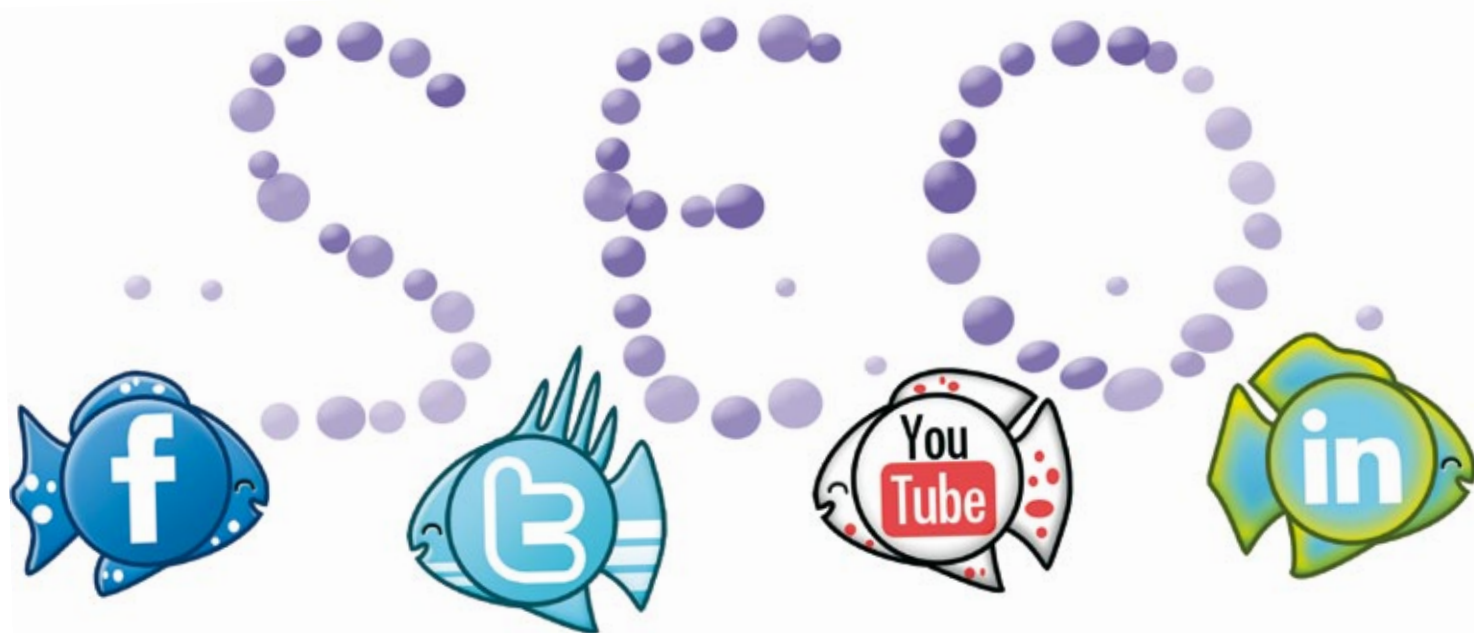
We are always happy to talk to potential suppliers and can help them work towards qualifying to become one of our preferred suppliers. Our philosophy is to grow within the communities and societies in which we are based and work in partnership with local social enterprises as far as our contracts allow. **SE**

## MAKING CONTACT

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**i** **Pertemps People Development Group (PPDG)** is a member of the ESH Group - one of the world's leading providers of Welfare to Work, training and recruitment services to an extensive number of Government and private companies across Australia and the United Kingdom. [www.ppdg.co.uk](http://www.ppdg.co.uk)





## Getting noticed online



**C**reating a website is only half the battle when it comes to building the most effective online presence for your business. The other

half is getting your website listed and seen in search engines, such as Google and Bing, to attract customers for the products or services you offer. Here **NATE SHERIDAN** of **SMMME.co.uk** shares some of the secrets of success.

There are several ways to get your website listed. In this article I'm focusing on search engine optimisation (SEO); the things you can do to improve your website's visibility. By using effective SEO techniques the position of your site in search engine results can be raised, leading to more visitors to your site and ultimately more business.

Here are my SEO TOP TIPS to improve your site's search engine visibility:

### Content is key

While each search engine uses its own algorithm for determining the ranking of each page indexed, it is possible to increase your rankings by making your site content-rich. We know that Google loves content, so update your site regularly. The best way is to have a blog feed on your site rather than changing a static page, as in the latter case Google

might conclude that the original content was incorrect, with a negative effect.

### Have your blog feed on your homepage

As your homepage is the first page of your website, it is the first page scanned by search engines. If it is constantly updated via your blog posts, search engines will index your site more often. Try to avoid having a loading page as your homepage or anything Flash-heavy, as you may get penalised for slow loading time.

### Do your keyword research

Keywords are the words people use to search for products, services or information that you want them to associate with your website. A common mistake when selecting keywords is to choose words related to your business which are not the words people are using in searches. The two are not always the same.

To determine which keywords are most relevant to your website/business and therefore likely to bring you targeted traffic, use the AdWords Keyword tool on Google. Once there, you can type in a keyword and find out how many times that and other related words have been used per month in Google's search engine, both locally and globally.

### Make good use of your keywords

Once you have made an informed decision on your keywords (based on relevance, monthly searches per word

and competition) use these words liberally throughout your site's content. Don't have more than six keywords for your site and make sure they are used naturally, ie in a sentence.

### Use your keywords in your site's meta name, title, description and tags

Meta data is the information behind the scenes used to inform a search engine about your site. To view a website's meta data simply click 'view', then 'view source', from the top of any web browser. Here you can check whether your site is taking advantage of your keywords. If you are not sure how to change your meta data contact your web developer.

### Social media integration

Many people overlook social media in terms of SEO. Although Google does not rate back links as much as it used to, if you have a business page on Facebook or YouTube, with a link directed back to your website, it may count in your favour. Search engines trust social media sites. Also you might have noticed that Facebook pages and YouTube videos appear at the top of Google searches. Create social media profiles to increase your web presence using your keywords and make sure you link to them on your website.

## MAKING CONTACT

**Nate Sheridan, Social Media Marketing Made Easy**  
0121 314 7075 | [www.SMMME.co.uk](http://www.SMMME.co.uk)

## PROFILE OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

# DEBBIE ROBERTS



**There are some amazing people working in social enterprise and we thought it would be good to get to know some of them a little better. Here SE talks to Debbie Roberts, who set up EPIC CIC in 2008.**

### Where did you grow up?

I was born in Lichfield as my dad was in the Staffordshire regiment. We lived in Dover until I was five years old, when we moved to Bromsgrove. My two sisters and brother travelled widely with my mom when dad was in the army, but as he retired from the army when I was five I have always lived in this country. What I have is a real love of travel and adventure after hearing all my family's stories of living in other countries.

### What was your first job?

My first job was working for the Midlands Electricity Board as a salesperson. I loved the wide variety of people I met and soon rose to the role of Deputy Manager. I then had a fascinating role within the company, travelling all over Worcestershire as an energy advisor.

### What made you want to set up a social enterprise?

I have always had a passion for working with people in communities to improve their life chances. Alongside this I have always had a strong business focus in any work I have done. Setting up a social enterprise allowed me to combine both of these aspects of myself. The diversity of the work also allows my creative entrepreneurial side to shine through.

### What is the biggest challenge facing social enterprise?

I think the challenges facing social enterprise are similar to any businesses in these challenging economic times. My experience of working within the social enterprise sector is that people are creative and switched on to the changing environment, which can help people overcome challenges.

### What is the most valuable lesson you have learnt so far?

That there are only 24 hours a day in a day and that sometimes it takes time for people to 'understand and share a vision'.

### What has been the highest point in your business life?

EPIC gaining the contract to run the Areas Of Highest Need Project for Bromsgrove Partnership and the fact that so many partners and agencies supported and believed in the vision I put forward for the future. It really was a catalyst for growth and in terms of my business life it has given me the confidence to aim high.

### What are your goals for the year ahead?

Our goals are to develop and expand our work around healthy eating and a community food project. The opening of the Starlight Café in partnership with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust has given us an excellent vehicle through which to work in the community, providing good quality, locally sourced food at affordable prices. Offering training places will also be an area for development over the year ahead.

### Where would you like your enterprise to be in five years time?

I would like EPIC to still be in its established base in the heart of the community, but to have a number of other 'branches' from our base at THE TRUNK, in areas where there is a need for services. This could be around more Starlight Cafés, more community food projects, but also supported training places for people who have their own budgets and who would like to have a wide ranging menu of opportunities to choose from.

### Who are your role models?

That's quite a difficult one as I have met so many people over the years who have guided my thinking and learning. I don't think I could single anyone out!

### What do you like to do to away from work to relax and unwind?

My time away from work is very limited, so I make the very most of this time by spending it with family and friends – and also dancing, which I love, and it keeps me fit too! **se**

**i** **EPIC CIC** is based in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, and was set up by Debbie Roberts to empower people within communities to influence and engage in the better delivery of public services. The organisation works with a variety of partner agencies and community members to bring about positive, sustainable changes within communities in Worcestershire, throughout the wider West Midlands region and beyond. [www.epic-se.co.uk](http://www.epic-se.co.uk)



## From TUPE to tomorrow

Take your people with you on your journey, says Jan Golding Chartered FCIPD, chief executive of Roots Human Resources CIC.

We see definite trends in the type of work that comes through our offices. Pre April 2011 it was all about restructuring, redeployment, retraining and redundancies. But a few months later it's all terms and conditions, tenders and transfers. The shift is easy to explain: those organisations that have now downsized to survive are gearing up to convince commissioners in an increasingly competitive arena that their organisation will be The One to provide the best outcomes for the least money. But winning a contract quite often also means accepting the staff that are currently carrying out the work in another organisation... and that's what makes our phones ring.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations or TUPE is a complex piece of legislation, but it covers a very simple principle. If an employee's work transfers to another organisation, then their job transfers there too, with no detriment to their pay and conditions (with the exception of pensions, where some differences are lawful). Other obligations also transfer. Such transfers are



Photo © Rob Howard / rohoward@bluewin.ch

particularly relevant to social enterprises winning government contracts and to those emerging social enterprises that are 'spinning out' from the NHS and other public sector origins. Robust due diligence is essential to understand the potential risks being accepted with the transfer.

The new employer cannot pick and choose which employees to take on and the only way the employee can avoid the transfer is to move jobs in the same organisation, or to resign. A dismissal because of the transfer is automatically unfair.

The new employer can lawfully make changes to the staffing structure, and make redundancies, if they can show 'an economic, technical or organisational reason' for the change (an 'ETO'). Even if the number of jobs is not affected, service delivery and therefore job descriptions often change. In many cases, the

need for such changes is obvious and transferring employees can understandably approach a transfer with anxiety.

There are ways to make the process easier for everyone. Carefully planned communication is your friend and formal consultation is your duty. If your transfer is a 'spin out', involve staff in workshops about changes at the earliest stages. Wherever possible, collaboration between the new and the old employer makes for an easier transition. Take professional advice – we can plan a supportive and constructive change management process with you that takes account of the needs of the individuals throughout, whilst ensuring you cover the legal duties.

Download a 1 hour free voucher from [www.rootshr.org.uk](http://www.rootshr.org.uk) to take initial advice about your organisation's situation or contact us at [info@rootshr.org.uk](mailto:info@rootshr.org.uk) to request a free TUPE factsheet for your employees.

## Change management support for civil society organisations



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## MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to SEWM CIC's new members! Find out more by taking a look at our members directory at [www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/join](http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/join)

**Aidem Digital CIC** | West Bromwich | [www.aidemdigital.org.uk](http://www.aidemdigital.org.uk)

**Ashram Housing Association** | Birmingham | <http://ashramha.org.uk>

**Barbryn Ltd** | Solihull | [www.barbryn.co.uk](http://www.barbryn.co.uk)

**Birmingham Disability Resource Centre** | Birmingham | <http://disability.co.uk>

**Bromford Housing Group** | Solihull | [www.bromfordgroup.co.uk](http://www.bromfordgroup.co.uk)

**Central Consultancy and Training** | Birmingham | [www.centralconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.centralconsultancy.co.uk)

**Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre Trading** | Coventry | [www.covrefugee.org](http://www.covrefugee.org)

**Sandra Crowder** | Coventry | [sandracrowder11@hotmail.com](mailto:sandracrowder11@hotmail.com)

**Ethnic Minority Council** | Wolverhampton | <http://emc2010.groupsie.com/main/summary>

**Fry Housing Trust** | West Bromwich | [www.fryha.org.uk](http://www.fryha.org.uk)

**Groundwork West Midlands** | Tipton | [www.groundworkwm.org.uk](http://www.groundworkwm.org.uk)

**Institute of Economic Development** | Midlands | [www.ied.co.uk](http://www.ied.co.uk)

**Jestamine Community Theatre CIC** | Redditch | <http://jestamine.co.uk>

**Know Urself CIC** | Birmingham | [www.knowurself.org.uk](http://www.knowurself.org.uk)

**Makhosi Nkala** | Manchester | [m.nkala@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:m.nkala@mmu.ac.uk)

**MCD Project Management Ltd** | Halesowen | [mark.davies@mcdprojectmanagement.co.uk](mailto:mark.davies@mcdprojectmanagement.co.uk)

**Novas Scarman** | Nottingham | [www.novasscarman.org](http://www.novasscarman.org)

**Pathways Shropshire Ltd** | Shropshire | [www.pathways-shropshire.co.uk](http://www.pathways-shropshire.co.uk)

**Roots HR** | Kidderminster | [www.rootshr.org.uk](http://www.rootshr.org.uk)

**The Net Writer** | Telford | [www.thenetwriter.co.uk](http://www.thenetwriter.co.uk)

**The University of Birmingham** | Birmingham | [www.birmingham.ac.uk/partners/employers](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/partners/employers)

**TPP Law Limited** | London | [www.tpplaw.co.uk](http://www.tpplaw.co.uk)

**Witton Lodge Community Association** | Birmingham | [www.wittonlodge.org.uk](http://www.wittonlodge.org.uk)

**Worcester Community Trust** | Worcester | [www.worcester.gov.uk](http://www.worcester.gov.uk)

**Worcestershire County Council** | Worcestershire | [www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)

To find out more about the benefits of SEWM membership visit [www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/join](http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/join) or call us on 0845 450 7515

### FOUNDER MEMBER SEWM CIC Founder Members

We are proud to have the support of our Founder Members who are helping us to grow the social enterprise sector in the West Midlands – working in partnership with SEWM to 'do business differently'. If you're interested in becoming a Founder Member please contact Melanie Mills, SEWM: [m.mills@socialenterprisewm.org.uk](mailto:m.mills@socialenterprisewm.org.uk)

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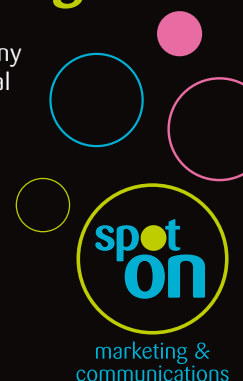
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