



KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

A LEADER'S SURVIVAL KIT
FOR AN
AGE OF AUSTERITY

se
magazine

SOCIAL PURPOSE | BUSINESS SENSE

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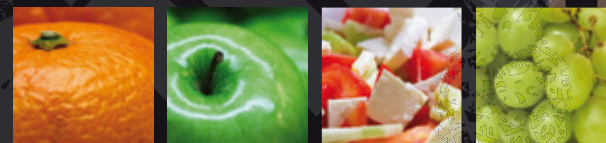
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Keep calm and carry on!



Sally Edwards | sallyaedwards@btopenworld.com

Our sector is going through a period of significant change, with some exciting opportunities as well as some testing challenges facing most of us – so the cover felt appropriate!

There are plenty of examples in this issue of the creativity and dynamism that exists within the sector, from which we hope you will draw inspiration. We've made a few changes to the format, to help members get to know each other, but retained the balance of practical information and sharing of best practice that we know are valued.

If you have any news or information you'd like to share in the next issue, do get in touch. In the meantime, we wish you every success. **se**



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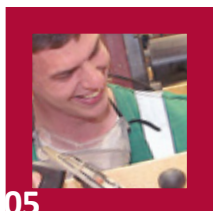
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socialenterprise
WEST MIDLANDS

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 for more information and central access to resources, intelligence, contacts and sources of social enterprise advice and support.

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For details about **advertising in SE** and to download a media pack, go to www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk

New board for new SEWM CIC



Geoff Walker, chair of SEWM CIC

Social Enterprise West Midlands is poised to strengthen its role as the business network for social enterprise in the region, with the appointment of a new board that has the credentials to lead by example and inspire members to realise their full potential.

Geoff Walker of Sandwell Community Care Trust (SCCT) and Jon Argent of Halo Leisure, together with Kevin Maton, are the founder directors of SEWM CIC, the new social enterprise formed to take forward the legacy of a four year funded programme which came to an end in March.

Like many of its members, Social Enterprise West Midlands is now trading as a social enterprise, offering services that enable the organisation to continue delivering its primary purpose. Founder members such as

Trident Housing Association, Unity Trust Bank and the West Midlands Chambers of Commerce are backing the move, which has seen the introduction of membership services that open up access to the social enterprise market.

Speaking about his appointment as chair, Geoff Walker said: "I am pleased to be a part of SEWM CIC's board at this early stage, to help shape its vision and direction. I think it's important for an organisation offering support to social enterprises to understand what it's like to operate as one. We will need to be flexible, creative and prepared to diversify in order to provide services that existing and new members require. Together with the staff team, we're ready for the challenge."

The process for appointing additional directors, including membership representatives, will be announced later this year. **se**

Read interviews with Geoff Walker and Jon Argent in our Transforming Public Services special feature (p10-12) for the stories behind SCCT and Halo Leisure.

Social Enterprise Mark for SEWM CIC
Just weeks after launching the new venture, SEWM CIC was awarded the Social Enterprise Mark.

New resources from SEC

The Social Enterprise Coalition has produced two new resources which may be of interest to SE readers.



'Social enterprise explained' is a guide introducing social enterprise 'for beginners, wonderers and people with ideas, big and small' – making social enterprise easier to understand.



'Working with the public sector: busting the myths' was developed in partnership with Birmingham-based Anthony Collins Solicitors. This guide helps social enterprises navigate public sector procurement and tackle the myths that prevent them from winning contracts.

Both publications are free and available to download from the SEWM website. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

SEC | www.socialenterprise.org.uk

UK first as social enterprise directory aims to

The UK's first ever national directory for social enterprises – www.buyse.co.uk – is promising to help the sector take advantage of the growing desire to use its services.

Developed by SEWM, www.buyse.co.uk exists to help social enterprises promote their products and services across the UK, breaking down geographical barriers and crucially enabling potential customers to find them in one simple-to-use location.

It has already attracted 300 registrations within its first month of going live and has the backing of Peter Holbrook, the Chief Executive Officer of the Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC).

"A national directory has been on many people's wish list for a number of years and I am pleased that buyse.co.uk delivers a platform that social enterprises,

public sector, private business and individual purchasers have been calling for to enable the market to grow.

"This initiative offers social enterprises an invaluable chance to market themselves to people and organisations with an interest in working with our sector."

Ranjit Bansal, Marketing Manager at SEWM, has been leading on the development of the innovative website: "Latest figures suggest there are around 62,000 social enterprises in the UK, but the number one question we get asked is 'Where are they?'"

"There have been many attempts at launching trade directories trying to address this issue, but they have often been network or regionally focused and never really achieved what the consumer and supplier have been demanding."

She continued: "In essence, buyse.co.uk will be the number one destination for anyone looking for social enterprise suppliers. It will also boost recognition of the Social Enterprise Mark, the national brand and identifier for social enterprises. Holders can display the logo on their business profiles, proudly showing their credentials whilst also benefitting from additional search filters."

The website, built by Birmingham-based social enterprise Social Media Partnership, offers comprehensive business listings and a review mechanism for customers to leave feedback.

Business listings cost just £99 per year and members of selected networks across the UK can benefit from a 10% discount. This includes firms involved with the Social Enterprise Coalition, Social

Jericho launches wood recycling venture



Birmingham-based social enterprise **The Jericho Foundation** has unveiled its latest business venture, **Jericho Wood Recycling**.

Jericho was awarded the £80,000 investment as winner of the Spark Challenge, which saw social enterprises from across the UK compete for £1.6 million of private sector funding. Spark supports business initiatives designed to improve the lives of homeless people by providing opportunities for employment and independent living.

The Jericho venture is based on a franchise from the National Community Wood Recycling Project. It will focus on recycling the region's old canal locks as British Waterways replaces old timbers for new.

Carlo Ropos, Jericho's deputy chief executive, said: "Securing the funding from the Spark Challenge, combined with the valuable support we've had along the way, means that we can provide real skills opportunities for the homeless community throughout Birmingham."

Those joining the scheme will receive full on-the-job training and the opportunity to gain accredited woodworking or administration qualifications, which ensures they leave the foundation with a transferable skill-set and improved employment prospects.

Jericho, which formed in 1993 as a drop-in centre for the disadvantaged people of Balsall Heath, already operates a number of successful social enterprises from its Birmingham hub, including a printing business,

construction and landscaping services, on- and off-site catering provisions, a contract cleaning business and a charity shop. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

The Jericho Foundation | www.jericho.org.uk

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DAY 2011

It's never too early to start planning for Social Enterprise Day – which this year is taking place on 17 November 2011.

The day is a great opportunity to raise awareness of social enterprise and to celebrate and recognise achievement.

Last year the national theme was 'It's time to meet your local social enterprise'. **se** would like to hear your ideas for campaign messages and promotional activities for this year. Email your suggestions to Ranjit Bansal at SEWM.

MAKING CONTACT

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boost sector's ability to trade

Enterprise Mark holders, Co-operatives UK, Locality, Social Firms UK, Sporta, all of the regional social enterprise networks across England and the national bodies for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

"We believe social enterprises across the UK could be missing out on millions of pounds of sales because people do not know where to find them and what they sell. BuySe.co.uk offers the perfect solution," continued Ranjit.

Partnership and sponsorship opportunities are being invited from major investors, who have a previous track record of supporting social enterprise, or who may be looking to take their brand into this booming sector. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

buySe | www.buyse.co.uk / hello@buyse.co.uk



IQS launches travel agency with a difference



Ideal Quality Services (IQS), part of the Sandwell charity Ideal for All (IFA), has launched IQS Travel - a fully accessible holiday service for everyone.

IFA is run by and for disabled people. It provides a range of social and health care services to support disabled people, carers and disadvantaged groups in Sandwell, helping them to learn new skills and live as independently as possible.

Vicki Phipps of IQS Travel explains why the new service has been launched: "IFA has run social events now for a number of years and our day trips and breaks have always proved to be very successful. When we organise our trips, we ensure that every detail is checked for accessibility - from the coaches having lifts, to rooms in hotels having the correct

width for wheelchairs. We had been asked many times to provide a wider range of holidays, including holidays abroad, so we decided to open a travel agency with experienced advisers who have the knowledge to find suitable holidays to match the needs of each individual."

IQS Travel will not just be limited to people with specific needs, but will be available to everyone - like any high street travel agency. The difference is that by booking with IQS, holiday-makers or those looking for a short break will be benefiting the community in and around Sandwell. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

IQS Travel | 0121 565 7926 | www.iqstravel.com

Reviive gets going thanks to Charity Bank



Reviive premises in Shrewsbury

Charity Bank, which invests purely for social change, has lent £50,000 to Reviive CIC to help it get started and open a shop in Shrewsbury.

Reviive is a unique joint venture between two charities - South Shropshire Furniture Scheme and Shropshire Housing Alliance. Building on a successful relationship with Veolia Environmental Services, the charities have developed a concept for the new CIC that enables them to go even further in preventing reusable furniture from ending up in landfill. Members of the Reviive staff team have been trained to rescue suitable furniture from Shrewsbury tip! The furniture is restored, cleaned and refurbished then sold on to the public via the new shop. Reviive also receives items donated directly via the shop. Profits will be reinvested in the charities.

"We are delighted to support this new and innovative social enterprise," said Peter Hughes, Regional Manager at Charity Bank. "Both charities are committed to protecting the environment and supporting a range of people in need, including victims of domestic violence, families living in poverty through unemployment and those excluded through disadvantage. Reviive will save tonnes of household items from landfill every year, while providing a range of training and volunteering opportunities and allowing local people to buy quality home furnishings at value prices." **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Charity Bank | www.charitybank.org
Reviive | www.reviive.co.uk

It's Brew On with UnLtd award



Nick Comley of Brew On CIC has been awarded an UnLtd Level 1 award to develop a social enterprise brewery on the National Trust's Brockhampton Estate near Bromyard in Herefordshire.

Brew On will provide supported and permitted-hours employment,

training and volunteering opportunities for disadvantaged adults living in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Its products will be stocked exclusively by The National Trust in their retail shops and restaurants in Herefordshire.

Brew On now has the Social Enterprise Mark and recently became a member of Social Enterprise West Midlands. "Membership will provide Brew On with access to a great range of resources and opportunities for growth," he said. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Brew On CIC | www.brew-on.co.uk | nick.comley@brew-on.co.uk | @SocEntBrewery



Emma Nugent with her award

Emma wins business support award

Emma Nugent, Business Development Director at Intelligence Matters, has won the Social Enterprise Support Professional Award 2011, sponsored by the Institute of Leadership & Management.

Intelligence Matters, a social enterprise which specialises in supplying community-based research, business consultancy, evaluations and Mystery Shopping, attended the West Midlands Enterprise Network Professional Awards event in Birmingham and was delighted to find that Emma had won.

This is the second time Emma has been declared a regional winner at these awards – she gained the Young People's Business Support Professional Award in 2010.

A law graduate, Emma has also gained Gold Standard SFEDI accreditation for both Enterprise and Social Enterprise and is the first Chairperson of the Young People's Enterprise Board. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Emma Nugent, Intelligence Matters Research Consultancy | emma.nugent@imrcl.org.uk

Aspire Group acquires Indigo Training



Sinéad Butters, chief executive, Aspire Group

The Aspire Group has acquired training provider Indigo Training to expand and complement its existing range of services. The move follows last month's announcement that the Group – which also consists of Aspire Housing, PM Training and the Realise Foundation charity – had secured £28m to acquire new businesses, build 300 more properties and improve its existing housing stock.

Indigo Training Solutions Ltd was established in 2004 and operates from training centres in Stafford and Leek. It has more than 30 staff and delivers training to both people preparing for employment and existing employees who are in a position to develop their skills. It will now operate as a social enterprise within the Aspire Group, but retain its own brand identity and continue trading under its own name.

Aspire Group chief executive, Sinéad Butters, said: "We are delighted to announce that Indigo Training has joined the Aspire Group, trading alongside PM Training as part of our network of social enterprises. Both businesses share a genuine commitment to the delivery of high quality training for employment and enhancing the lives of the people we work with. Indigo, like PM Training, is a special business. We will continue to ensure that its uniqueness is protected, and the business is enhanced." **se**

MAKING CONTACT

The Aspire Group | www.theaspiregroup.org.uk

Top chef endorses new Pump Café

The Pump Café is a new social enterprise situated in the heart of East Birmingham. Endorsed by one of Birmingham's top Chefs, Andy Waters, Chef Patron of the highly acclaimed Edmunds in Brindleyplace, The Pump Café is designed to provide training opportunities for young people, as well as healthy and delicious food for its customers.

The cafe has been founded by The Pump Charity and Young Enterprise to enable young people to develop their skills by catering for local people, local businesses and third sector organisations across the city.

The Pump (East Birmingham) Ltd supports the development of young people, particularly those that experience disadvantage and exclusion, whilst Young Enterprise is working to build an interconnected world of young people, business volunteers and educators who can inspire each other to succeed through enterprise.



Top chef Andy Waters with trainees at The Pump Café

Bryan Foster, Programme Executive at Young Enterprise, said: "If you have a taste for healthy food and appreciate the potential and talent that exists within all young people, then please come along and try The Pump Café at 286 Kitts Green Road, Birmingham B33 9SB." **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Bryan Foster | bryan.foster@yewm.org.uk | 07960 063014
The Pump Café | www.thepump.org.uk

Business support for social enterprises

The landscape for business support is changing dramatically as a result of public sector spending cuts. So what impact will that have on the emerging civil society sector? **se** asked two experienced practitioners for their views – and here's what they had to say.



Alun Severn, Third Sector Services

It's a matter of social justice

Five years ago we thought the prospects for business support looked gloomy. Research in Birmingham at that time concluded that attempts to serve the whole city with free, high-quality, social enterprise support were being eroded by a variety of factors – declining resources and geographical and client group eligibility limitations, for example – and that services had consequently become 'patchy, fragmented and incoherent'. In fact, by present standards, business support in 2006 now looks like a golden age.

We now stand on the threshold of a two-tier business support system – the can-pays and the can't-pays.

Existing support providers, of necessity, have begun the painful transition to paid-for services. They have to do this in order to survive – virtually all of the sources they have drawn on to fund specialist business support have disappeared – but this will massively reduce both access to, and the volume of, available support.

The winding-up of the Business Link service also plays a part. The specialist social enterprise service the Business Links sub-contracted was small, but it did add some capacity and providers were able to use this to augment their own services and ensure greater access.

The service which is disappearing fastest, however, is community-based social enterprise development to help create social and economic opportunities in our poorest communities. While social enterprise shouldn't be seen as being only about disadvantage – a diverse sector needs enterprises capable of operating at

all levels – to be meaningful it must have some fundamental concern with social justice. And this means being able to work where need is greatest; it means being able to support the poorest communities.

Under these pressures a fault-line is opening up in the sector. New social enterprise developments will focus on those who are able to pay. There will be money, for example, for the support of public service externalisations, and here – as with PFI and before that privatisation – there will be a gold rush as the major corporates queue up to sell their services into this new market.

But a movement that allows the poorest to be disenfranchised and concerns itself primarily with providing assistance to the richest enterprises will have had its heart ripped out. It will be a business movement, not a social enterprise movement. **se**

i Alun Severn, trading as Third Sector Services, has been providing independent research, reporting and evaluation services for the third sector for over a decade. 0121 233 0278 | alun@thirdsectorservices.co.uk



Kevin Maton, Social Enterprise West Midlands

We need to demonstrate that investing in the right support brings returns

Whilst I don't want to underplay the importance of the reduction in funds that helped to pay for social enterprise support, it is the case that many of the individuals with the experience to provide quality support to social enterprises are still around. In my view, they now have a 'big opportunity' to take control and shape the business support

offer to better reflect the sector's needs. Too often in the past, support for social enterprises 'followed the funding' and was narrowly concentrated on 'start-ups', especially in areas where regeneration funds were available. Generic training workshops, aimed at these start-ups, were the mainstay of the business support offer for the sector.

Right now it is essential that business support is viewed and treated as an investment, and one which must bring returns. This means there are opportunities for a much fuller range of services – high quality leadership and management guidance delivered in a variety of ways – mentoring, coaching, workshops and intensive coaching, as well as help with developing staff and volunteers, improving quality and performance, establishing a stable financial base, raising awareness of investment opportunities and the social returns available.

The Giving White Paper includes the creation of a £30m local infrastructure fund. Like the Transition Fund before it, this will be delivered by the Big Lottery Fund and will support the development of local hubs to offer "better-integrated support services for front-line civil society organisations". If used properly this could provide the opportunity to innovate and re-think how support for social enterprise can be effectively structured, accessed and resourced for the future.

Times are certainly challenging for business support organisations right now, but the more we demonstrate that investing in the right support brings returns, the stronger our argument to bring in investment from funders with an interest in seeing the social enterprise sector and our communities grow stronger. **se**

i Kevin Maton, Social Enterprise West Midlands: 0845 450 7515 | k.maton@socialenterprisewm.org.uk | www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk
Giving White Paper: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/giving-white-paper

All the latest on social replication



In 2010, the Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC) undertook research into social replication as part of the 'Investing in Social Enterprise Expansion programme', funded by Big Lottery (BASIS).

The resulting report, 'Growing social enterprise: research into social replication', explored the current understanding and resources available on social replication and included interviews with a number of social enterprises involved at different stages of their replication journey.

The research outlined three common replication models: social franchising; social licensing; and collaboration/partnership. With combination and hybrid models also being used by social enterprises, the research highlighted that there is no one right way to replicate.

Key findings of the report supported the benefits of replication as a tool in spreading social objectives and innovation, as well as in creating additional or diversified income streams, fostering new partnerships, staying embedded in local context and spreading the message of social enterprise. Despite the benefits, a number of barriers to replication have made it difficult for social enterprises to succeed in doing so. Potential barriers include: confusion over different

replication models; difficulty in accessing social franchising finance; unclear implications for intellectual property; and internal organisational barriers such as a lack of leadership capacity.

The research highlights that social franchises need some common factors to succeed. These include: a unique selling proposition and strong initial brand; the right replication partner; robust business support for replication start-up; strong internal support; and an enabling commissioning environment.

The Social Franchising Manual follows on from these research findings, providing a how-to guide that includes a general introduction to social franchising and practical tools and resources to assist social enterprises in assessing how, why, and when to franchise. It also has a simple readiness tool, a template franchise agreement, FAQs, further information on support and training, and six social franchising case studies.

The manual is primarily aimed at potential franchisors, but will be of use and relevance to a broader audience, including individuals who want to set up a franchise of an existing, successful social enterprise.

Over the coming year more information and support for potential franchisors and franchisees will be made available via the SEC website and in the form of practical training. **se**

A 10 STEP GUIDE

for anyone interested in beginning the replication journey

- 1 Consider different forms of replication: choose the most applicable to your organisation
- 2 Go through a replication-readiness exercise
- 3 Raise funding, or set aside money, to invest in infrastructure and staff time
- 4 Strengthen any weak or 'unready' areas
- 5 Prepare the necessary documents (operations manual, franchise agreement, trademarks, fee structure)
- 6 Select one or two pilot franchisees, using due diligence and criteria
- 7 Provide initial training and (cultural) induction to franchisees
- 8 Support (test) franchises in all aspects of operations in line with obligations – communicating constantly
- 9 Assure quality of test franchises and evaluate the impact/success
- 10 Learn, improve and repeat stages 6 to 9 with more franchisees

Taken from The Social Franchising Manual, available from the Social Enterprise Coalition's website: www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/social-franchising.html

A super-sized partnership can produce a big result

Would you imagine there could ever be any benefit from collaboration if your potential partners were all trading the same products as you?

Research from the Think Venue Co-operative offers proof that if everyone can agree on the way of working, and a common goal, a super-sized trade partnership can reap great rewards – either as a loose association or as a fully-fledged legal entity.

Think Venue's proposition to the public and private sectors is simple: use our co-operative to find ethical venues for your meetings or events and you will be demonstrating corporate social responsibility by enabling those venues to deliver



a whole range of community, charitable and social benefits.

In 2009 Birmingham City Council was meeting 20% of its conference and meeting needs through third sector venues, but since they have been using Think Venue they have increased that significantly and are now spending almost 100% of their budget in the sector. For the financial year 2010/11 this has resulted in an income to member venues of £1.25m – money that has helped third sector organisations to

sustain their social aims in times of cuts, replace grant income and, in some cases, to grow their businesses.

There have been many other benefits from the collaboration, including closer working relationships between venues, spin off partnerships, an increased profile for some venues and better supplier offers.

Is this what the Big Society could look like? **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Think Venue | www.thinkvenue.org
Mark Ellerby | mark@cloudberry.org.uk

TRANSFORMING PUBLIC SERVICES

It's all about people

Geoff Walker Sandwell Community Caring Trust

When we set up 15 years ago, the economic circumstances were very similar to today – public sector budgets were being squeezed and services cut.

As a result, we decided to create an organisation that would offer better value for money, an improved quality and range of services, and sustainable employment opportunities. At the outset we had a staff of 62, a budget of £1m and cared for 85 people. Today we have a staff of 470, a budget of £10.5m and care for 700 people.

This growth has been based on providing services that are highly personalised and genuinely put service users first. If you don't want to transform services in this way, then you shouldn't be looking to set up as a social enterprise. You will fail if you expect to carry on working in the same way as you have in the public sector. You will need to be prepared to be more innovative and flexible, to change, diversify and grow.

Of course, I had worked in the public sector for 20 years and it took time to learn what was really important to succeed as an independent enterprise. I can now say that it's all about people. Policies, procedures, strategies and financial plans are all important, but they pale into insignificance compared to the value of good relationships.

If you want services transformed, service users treated with respect and dignity, their skills maximised, and them feeling happy and good about themselves, then the staff have to feel the same. You need to empower and trust your staff to deliver what is required within an agreed set of values and principles. Any issues can be tackled on an individual basis, rather than by introducing a string of policies that apply to everyone but are not relevant to most. If you have the workforce with you, they will make the rest happen.



“It took time to learn what was really important to succeed as an independent enterprise. I can now say that it's all about people.”

If I had to give one key piece of advice, it would be to get control of sick leave. The public sector tends to have generous policies, which its employees don't cherish. It is important not to reduce employees' rights, but to change their attitude. I spent a long time wondering why my team was so ill. Then I realised they weren't. There were other reasons for them to take days off sick, which we could tackle. By engaging with staff we have managed to reduce our sick leave rate over the past four years from an average of 22 days per person per annum to less

than one day per person per annum – and save hundreds of thousands of £s.

We have also reduced staff turnover from 30% to just 6%. If you can control sick leave and staff turnover, you will be able to develop an experienced, qualified workforce and deliver a reliable and consistent service. You will then have a strong business, with a bright future ahead of it. **se**

i Sandwell Community Caring Trust (SCCT), a registered charity and a social enterprise, was created in 1997 to provide services for adults and children across the Black Country. Born out of a local authority, SCCT provides supported living, residential care, and respite care for adults and children with profound learning and physical disabilities. The organisation now employs 450 staff and has care contracts in excess of £12.5 million per year. It has both won and consistently appeared in the top 10 Sunday Times Top 100 Best Places to Work in the Public/Third Sector. www.sandwellcct.org.uk

Government policy is driving a transformation in public services, with employees being actively encouraged to set up social enterprises to deliver what is needed. But just how easy is that? What might you need to know before embarking on such a venture? **se** spoke to the leaders of three organisations which have already taken the plunge, to see what lessons they had learned.

Reaching a consensus

Jon Argent Halo Leisure



Halo Leisure was set up in 2002, following a 'best value' review of leisure services in Herefordshire, which confirmed to the local authority that it had a one star service that was unlikely to improve.

Doing nothing was not an option – the very rural character of Herefordshire makes leisure facilities a particularly important part of community life. The commercial sector could only offer to run a much-reduced service that would turn a profit – but the council was keen to ensure that the service was not only improved but also integrated across the county. So members took the decision to set up an independent trust to take over leisure services.

Initially Halo received an annual management fee from the local authority of £1m, which was 25% of its income.

“Make sure there is a consensus about why you are setting up and what you expect to be delivering in 10 years time.”

That fee has now reduced to around £950,000 per annum, but represents only 14% of its income. We also generate income through our nine leisure facilities and via a wholly-owned subsidiary social enterprise, which offers a range of business services. The profit from this enterprise is covenanted to the Trust.

Social enterprise is a different delivery model, which requires good business skills to make it work. Done well, it can provide improved public services, through investment and a long-term approach, as well as save local authorities money.

My key piece of advice to anyone thinking of creating a social enterprise as a spin off from the public sector would be to make sure at the outset that there is a consensus about why you are setting up, what it means and what you expect to be delivering in 10 years time. Scope out what you are intending to do fully and properly. If you don't, you can find people are some way apart later on and it can be difficult to get back. I found myself having to make a case to the local authority for procuring services such as IT and HR independently. There was an assumption that we would use the council's. I had two problems with this: one, their offer was not suited to an independent, smaller, business; and two, we were aiming to transform from that one star service to a first class service, so we needed to do things differently. We needed to have the authority to act. I am proud to say that we are now one of only two organisations operating leisure centres in the UK to have been awarded the highest quality rating for all of our facilities.

There remains a constructive tension between Herefordshire Council and Halo Leisure, which produces a result I believe is better than either could achieve independently. Clarity and transparency are crucial to enable us to have difficult conversations when they are needed – for example around the recent spending cuts. We are two separate entities tied together for a common purpose.

Our priority is to ensure that service users have a good time using our facilities. It's the front line staff that make Halo Leisure what it is. I see the other functions of the organisation as supporting those, which is very different to the hierarchical approach of local authorities. But it works. We have very low staff turnover and a very high staff and customer satisfaction rates – which puts us in a good position to expand our range of services in the future. **se**

i Halo Leisure is the major leisure provider and enabler within the county of Herefordshire. Established in 2002, Halo is a registered charity and social enterprise, operating nine leisure centres under long-term leases from Herefordshire Council. Through its consultancy arm, Halo Enterprises, it provides a range of services to the leisure and cultural sector nationally. Every Halo centre is rated Highly Commended or Excellent, as recognised by Quest, the UK quality scheme for sport and leisure. Halo has around 1.7m customer visits per year and employs around 450 people. www.haloleisure.org.uk

Getting timely advice

Irene Jones & Novelette Williams Go Wisely CIC

Go Wisely CIC was established in 2010 by Irene Jones and Novelette Williams, who have been working with disabled people for 20 years, providing opportunities for them to learn to travel using public transport.

Go Wisely offers bespoke solutions and a step-by-step approach to learning for disabled adults and children, as well as support for those working with them who can be trained to train them using our approach.

For the past seven years we have been working for Birmingham City Council, leading a project working with post-14 youngsters that have a special educational need. The funding for this came through the Young People's Learning Agency and has now come to an end. We discovered that by doing what we believed to be the right thing – empowering disabled people through transport and travel solutions – and being passionate about what we do, we have become national leaders in our field. So, we decided to set up a social enterprise, with the aim of selling a range of bespoke training, consultancy and advice services nationally.

There has certainly been a lot to learn. The world of enterprise has a different language to the public sector and we have needed to acquire new skills along the way. It's been hard work developing our enterprise while still fulfilling our full time roles with the council.

The uniqueness of our offer has also presented us with a couple of challenges. Firstly, it's been a battle to enable people to understand what we do and tailor their professional services to our



Left to right: Novelette Williams and Irene Jones

“The world of enterprise has a different language to the public sector and we have needed to acquire new skills along the way.”

needs. Secondly, there is no benchmark for the business we are creating.

One crucial lesson we've learnt is that, because professionals – such as accountants, lawyers, marketing consultants and business advisers – often don't understand our situation, it's worth doing some research before engaging with them. In that way we are prepared to ask the right questions and probe in the right way to get the advice we need. We've found that there's lots of free, generic, support out there, but that hasn't been enough to enable us to do exactly what we needed to at the right time for our enterprise.

We have also found it worthwhile engaging a professional marketing consultancy to support the development of our branding and website right from the start. We have appreciated having someone else to drive the activity and

prompt us about what needs to be done and when – because we have so much else to think about! We also appreciate the importance of looking professional and making an impact when we launch.

It would have been beneficial to have had a simple checklist at the outset to support us in identifying our own needs – with headings such as Your Finances, Your Insurance, etc, a timeline and costs for the basics, as well as an indication of where to go for more in-depth information on specific topics. Perhaps somebody can come up with one? **se**

i Go Wisely CIC offers training for individuals as well as independent travel trainers working for schools, colleges, local authorities, or for any other organisation interested in supporting disabled people in accessing the community. The training is bespoke – adapted to suit the needs of learners – but the overall aim is to develop a nationally-recognised standard in terms of quality and approach, so that individuals will have a similar experience with their trainer whenever they need to learn a new route. To this end Go Wisely also offers Information, Advice and Guidance as well as consultancy on transport travel solutions. www.gowisely.co.uk

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE REFORMS

The Government's Health and Social Care Bill, currently going through parliament, proposes radical changes to the way that services are designed and delivered. **se** magazine spoke to Solihull Primary Care Trust, to find out more about the implications and opportunities.

How is responsibility for health and social care provision changing?

The plan is to abolish current Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities and transfer their responsibilities to a National Commissioning Board, Local Authorities or to GP Consortia. Delivery of services will be split from Commissioning. The idea is to empower local government and communities to tackle all the elements that impact on health and wellbeing, with a variety of organisations working together to determine and deliver what works best given their specific circumstances.

Isn't there a danger of creating a postcode lottery in terms of health and social care?

Not all areas have the same demographics or need. The new approach envisages a strong nationally-led health protection function that feeds through to the front line, where services are 'owned' by communities and shaped by their needs. The aim will be to ensure a balance of central versus local action and individual freedoms against the avoidance of harm.

Why is a new approach needed?

The Government wants to address a number of issues. It believes that:

- Too many people are dying too young, or are spending too long suffering from preventable ill-health, and the gap between rich and poor isn't improving under the current system.
- There are challenges associated with specific groups or health issues –

Local authorities

- Sexual health
- Seasonal mortality
- School immunisation
- Accident prevention
- Mental health
- Physical activity
- Obesity
- Drug and alcohol services
- Prevention/early presentation
- Dental public health
- Health intelligence
- Alcohol misuse
- Tobacco control
- NHS health checks
- Health at work
- Preventing birth defects
- Children 5-19 years
- Community safety
- Social exclusion

GP Consortia

- Services from the hospitals
- Community and primary care services (eg district nurses, community matrons, health visitors)
- Mental health
- Prescribing
- Learning disabilities
- Corporate management (ie managers to support the GPs)

Public Health England

- Infectious disease
- Emergency preparedness
- Environmental hazards
- National nutrition
- Birth defects
- Health intelligence

NHS Commissioning Board

- Immunisation
- Contraception
- Screening
- Children under 5
- Prison health

women and children, mental health, winter deaths, infections, changing lifestyle behaviour - which need to be tackled in a different way.

- Actions in the NHS, social care, education, transport and environment can all have a major impact on our health, both locally and nationally, so there should be a more holistic approach to health and social care.

Who will be responsible for commissioning which services?

The picture is changing as the Government's Bill goes through parliament and is debated, but what we understand at present is shown in the diagram above.

What is happening in preparation for the changes?

Primary Care Trusts and Care Trusts have been tasked with facilitating the transfer of their functions. In Solihull we are:

- Working with our two existing GP consortia, Sirius and Solis, to help them decide what GP commissioning looks like for Solihull. They are coming together to form the Shadow Solihull Commissioning Board, Solihull Health, which has begun to take on much more of the responsibility for

commissioning in 'shadow' form since the start of the new financial year.

- Working with our sub-regional cluster (Birmingham) to put into place transitional arrangements for those functions transferring to the new national NHS Commissioning Board and which need to be provided on a larger geographical basis than Solihull.
- Working with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to agree how to transfer health improvement functions and identifying the resources and support the local authority needs to lead on joint commissioning.

What should social enterprises interested in providing services under the new system do?

Follow the news agenda, keep an eye on our website and wait for opportunities to emerge. The Bill passing through Parliament is being amended as it goes. We are still working on defining the model of support required and are not yet at the stage where we can define what we will be looking to commission from new suppliers. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Solihull Primary Care Trust | www.solihull.nhs.uk



Working daily with people who are leading, managing or responding to change, **Liz Watkins-Young** understands the highs and lows of business management and the importance of great leadership particularly well. Liz is a facilitator, trainer, coach and organisational development consultant, so we asked her what advice she would give to leaders working for civil society organisations or in the public sector at this exceptionally challenging time.

At a recent conference Peter Holbrook, CEO of the Social Enterprise Coalition, assessed the leadership challenge facing the social enterprise sector today. He used an interesting quote: "Leaders are visionaries with an under-developed sense of fear and no concept of the challenges that lie ahead". It raised a chuckle from the audience.

Once you get past the humour, I think there's wisdom in that quote; and it got me thinking about the traits that great leaders draw on to get through the tough times.

So what's in a leader's personal 'survival kit'?

Jean Jarvis of South Shropshire Furniture Scheme said, "I draw on my absolute faith in myself and my endless optimism. I always see the bigger picture."

Peter Hughes of Charity Bank said, "For me it's personal resolve: faith in my ability to deliver what I'm doing. Then the ability to rely on others for guidance and the benefit of their experience."

Will Nixon of PM Training said, "It's about being fleet of foot and understanding the environment. Good strategic positioning requires knowing your market and your product well."



What else might there be?

- **Perspective:** assess your position and progress objectively. See your situation from a different perspective – literally go somewhere different to do your thinking. A change of environment creates a change in outlook. Be aware of your blind spots and get other people's perspectives to inform your own.
- **Inspiration:** inspire confidence and motivate others to go with you. On a bumpy road they're looking to you for re-assurance and belief that there's a positive future ahead. Get creative in your problem solving – for example, ask staff to 'name 20 different ways we can finance this project'. Tell stories that build people's belief in the goals you set.
- **Stamina:** pace yourself and the organisation. Leadership is a long-game. It's the 10,000m not a 100m sprint. Slow down. Tired and stressed people make poor decisions. Look after yourself so you have enough energy for yourself and for everyone else.

- **Agility:** be ready to change direction, take avoiding action and seize opportunities when you see them. Like a centre-forward dancing towards the goal-line, your timing is crucial. Talk about your actions and decisions. Re-state your goals and values so people trust your judgement.
- **Congruence:** know what's important to you personally and to the organisation. Notice whether there's ease or tension in what you're asking people (and yourself) to do. Good leadership and good decisions happen when you're working within your values. Stress builds when you're not. If you don't truly believe in what you're doing, others will know.
- **Humanity:** be yourself and be visible. Wearing the mantle of 'leader' 24/7 is exhausting; much easier to be yourself. A personal connection, rapport with everyone in the organisation, is possible and creates trust and a reason for people to accept your lead. Talk to people as if you're taking a road-trip together, which you are.

Keep calm and carry on

At another conference recently, a local authority chief executive was talking about massive change in his organisation: budget cuts, wholesale reorganisation of delivery teams and management, reduced services and, in the midst of that, a continuing commitment to deliver the best services they could with the resources they have. He said, "The attitude and behaviour of our staff is now as important as their technical expertise." By this I believe he meant their ability to adapt to change quickly and easily and their ability to 'keep calm and carry on'.

I suspect he sees his leadership role as equipping his staff to be ready for anything. I wonder if his 'survival kit' is a lot like yours and mine? **se**

MAKING CONTACT

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i Rubus Services, from its Worcestershire base, provides consultancy and leadership and management training and coaching to social economy, public sector and commercial clients. Much of its recent work has focused on social enterprise sustainability: supporting leaders through challenging times to create positive sustainable strategies for the future. Rubus is a founder member of SEWM CIC. www.rubus-services.com

SELLING TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR



Faced with shrinking budgets in the public and civil society sectors, many social enterprises are turning their attention towards the private sector for the first time, as they look for new business opportunities. **se** asked **Melanie Mills** of Social Enterprise West Midlands, who has spent many years working in the private sector, to offer some guidance for readers who are venturing into unfamiliar territory.

Selling has acquired a bad name. This comes from the practice of direct selling, with a focus on sales volume rather than on building relationships with potential buyers. Selling is actually a necessary part of running a successful business, but it needn't involve being unethical!

Social enterprises can benefit from adopting an approach that views selling as a natural extension of strong networks and relationships.

There are two ways to approach selling to private sector companies. The first is by a straightforward pitch to become part of their supply chain. The second is by becoming part of their corporate social responsibility programme. Whichever way you choose, the same basic rules will apply.

Top tips for winning a sale

- **Do your research:** Develop an understanding of the company you want to sell to and the wider sector in which it works. Knowing what makes your prospective customers tick and what challenges they face will help you to build empathy with them.
- **Tailor your pitch to the company's needs:** A private sector business will be interested in what you sell, the cost and any added value – in that order. Use your research as the basis for showing prospective customers how you can meet their needs.
- **Understand a company's 'WIIFM' or 'what's in it for me':** Be very clear about what you can offer that provides advantage to your prospective customers. Knowing what you and they stand to gain from the relationship will help you tailor that relationship to the best mutual advantage.
- **Talk with confidence:** Be clear, confident and direct about what you have to offer. If you appear to be unsure about your pitch, how can you expect prospective customers to have faith in you to deliver what you are promising?
- **Think about self-presentation:** Don't forget that how you look and sound reflects on your business, as do your presentation materials and how

quickly you respond to any queries. People form judgements very quickly based on a whole range of visual clues, as well as their experience of how you behave. So think carefully about how you are presenting your 'brand image' and make sure that you are creating the impression you mean to.

- **Make sure you stand out from the crowd.** Think about your 'unique selling point' and be persuasive about the advantages prospective customers will gain by buying from you rather than anyone else.
- **Invest in training:** Social enterprises often see staff training as a 'nice to have', whereas private sector companies know that training is essential for good staff performance. If your social enterprise has a skills gap, fill it!
- **Learn the language of business:** This includes asking for what you want and negotiating. It also means not being afraid to walk away from a deal that is not really beneficial for you. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

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HELPING TO OPEN DOORS

Social Enterprise West Midlands (SEWM) CIC is working with Chambers of Commerce and leading private sector companies around the region to promote the benefits of getting involved with social enterprises to the private sector.

A brokerage service is also being provided for private sector companies wanting to work with social enterprises.



John Morris, chief executive, Trident Housing Association

A GROWING FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

JOHN MORRIS' TOP TIPS FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES THAT WANT TO PARTNER WITH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Make sure:

- You are careful who you partner with; ensure they have your interests at heart
- You have a shared ethos
- Any contracts you sign suit your purpose
- You get the governance right and avoid being swamped by their regulations and administrative arrangements
- You look at what the partnership can do to help your long term development
- They give you infrastructure support as part of your development
- It is a partnership on equal terms, with shared objectives set out in a basic business plan.

Many housing associations have been quietly trading for years as social enterprises, providing affordable homes for people in housing need.

More recently they have begun to innovate and extend their reach, becoming an increasingly significant force to be reckoned with – both as agents of change within communities and as social businesses. Here, two of SEWM CIC's founder members give *se* readers an insight into what is driving their development and what opportunities there are to work with them.

Trident Housing Association – building effective partnerships

Like many other housing associations, Birmingham-based Trident was set up to complement local authority services and to support a vulnerable client group. Today, it is a major social business, with an annual turnover of almost £20 million, providing approximately 3,000 homes for people in need. This includes sheltered accommodation for older people, housing with care and support for people with learning and mental health

problems, and housing with education and training facilities for young people.

According to John Morris, chief executive of Trident since 2004, social involvement and enterprise have always been part of Trident's mission. He explains that the success of the organisation's portfolio of housing, care and training packages relies on partnerships with a range of stakeholders, including locally-based social enterprises.

"We use the term partner to emphasise the shared values and ethos which underpin our relationships with social enterprises," he said. "This means that our partnerships go beyond a typical contractor/supplier relationship. We believe that operating on business terms, but with a common understanding is the best way to deliver the kind of personalised, tailored service we want for our customers."

John stresses the importance of Trident's social enterprise partners understanding the geography and range of services it offers, as well as what matters to its customers. "We need a supplier, for example, who will appreciate the significance of a broken toilet seat to residents in a hostel and address the issue as a priority," he said. "In the past we have experienced problems with non-delivery of contracts because partners



haven't shared our ethos. But we've learnt from that and I'm glad to say that today we have some excellent partnerships with social enterprises. The Jericho Foundation, for example, maintains our grounds here in Birmingham and we have a new partnership with Dorcas Housing and Community Support Association, which supports black and minority ethnic communities around the West Midlands."

Looking to the future, Trident's corporate plan for 2011 to 2016 includes reshaping the organisation into a group of social businesses and charities. "We have a new vision and mission, which will enable us to complete the transition to a coherent group of organisations with social enterprise at their heart," said John. "Creating our own social enterprises

means we can involve local people or tenants as workers or volunteers, as well as access different funding streams to support our development."

Trident's training centre in Birmingham has also become Social Enterprise West Midlands' new home. "We see this as a natural extension of our corporate plan," explains John, "and we look forward to developing our relationship with them. We are committed to social enterprise because we see it as the right way, not because it's fashionable or current government policy. For us it offers a complete framework in which to provide services for vulnerable people." **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Trident Housing | www.trident-ha.org.uk

WM HOUSING GROUP DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON CUSTOMER NEED



WM Housing Group was created in 2009, when Whitefriars Housing joined West Mercia Housing Group.

Through its partner associations WM Housing now provides over 24,000 homes across the West Midlands and has an annual turnover of £90 million.

Pat Brandum, chief executive of WM Housing, said the group prioritises customer need and adopts a holistic approach to housing support, through creative, client-centred business delivery. For example, its supported housing package for young people (SHYPP) includes training and development opportunities, media training, and counselling. The media project is currently considering opportunities to market its services outside of the group. WM Housing also supports its own training and development agency that operates as an enterprise in its own right, helping particular client groups to achieve trade skills, qualifications and training.

WM Housing's enterprising outlook requires a balance of business acumen, social objectives and customer demand, as Pat explains: "We are on a journey as a social business. Our priority is to develop opportunities, based on customer-need, that will contribute to the long term sustainability of WM Housing." **se**

MAKING CONTACT

WM Housing Group |
www.wmhousing.co.uk

PROFILE OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

DR BIRGIT KEHRER



ChangeKitchen CIC is participating in SEWM's voucher scheme for Plus and Premier members. Use yours to receive 5% off bookings up to £100 and 10% off bookings over £100 until 31 March 2012.

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 Dr Birgit Kehrer, who set up ChangeKitchen CIC a year ago.

Where did you grow up?

In Bavaria, in Germany, in a market town between Munich and Augsburg. I spent a large part of my childhood and youth helping my dad on the family allotment. He encouraged me by making it fun. This, and the fact that I enjoyed eating vegetables as a child – partly because I helped grow and harvest them, has strongly influenced my values for ChangeKitchen CIC.

What was your first job?

My first job was working at the Goldene Gans Vegetarian Restaurant in Augsburg. There I learned the basics of cooking tasty, interesting foods, including lots of fresh, seasonal vegetables. I owe a lot to the Goldene Gans – their salad buffet is still one of the best I've ever eaten at!

What made you want to set up a social enterprise?

In my previous job I worked as a Women's Business Development Manager, which inspired me to start my own business. I wanted to make a difference to people's lives, rather than just work for profit, so it was clear that a social enterprise was the best way forward.

What is the biggest challenge facing social enterprise?

I don't think the challenges are bigger than for any other businesses. In fact, because social enterprises tend to be creative in their approach and good at finding new solutions, they are probably better equipped than commercial businesses to face the challenges of the current economic and political climate.

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

To accept that I cannot – and need not – do it all. And this has led to some fantastic new members joining the ChangeKitchen team.

What has been the highest point in your business life?

There have been many high points – and I feel sure there are a lot more to come! One of the most recent high points was having a stall at Voice 11

and receiving very positive feedback from stall holders as well as attendees.

What are your goals for the year ahead?

We aim to raise the investment to expand and reach a wider market with event catering, weddings and healthy eating cookery workshops. We want to demonstrate that we can offer excellent value for money whilst operating ethically and in an environmentally sustainable way.

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

In five years time I would like ChangeKitchen CIC to have its own premises, to include an eco restaurant with an al fresco seating area. I want the kitchen to produce great food whilst being a healthy work and training space. My aim is to become known as the national ethical supplier of vegetarian, vegan and gluten free event catering.

Who are your role models?

I have met a few people who have, and continue to, inspire me. Those who come immediately to mind are:

- Hildegard Schramm, who I met during my PhD research. Her democratic leadership style I continually try to model my own work on.
- Peter Holbrook, CEO of the Social Enterprise Coalition, and Karen Lowthrop, CEO of Hill Holt Wood. Both are great at looking at challenges in a different way and finding creative and exciting solutions.
- Sarah Crawley, CEO of iSE. Her creativity and drive make iSE a dynamic social firm that makes a real difference to social enterprises at every stage of their development.

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

I really enjoy working at my allotment. This and swimming in lakes in Bavaria and elsewhere are the best ways for me to relax and unwind. I also still enjoy (and find it relaxing) to experiment with new foods and to work out exciting new dishes. **se**

i ChangeKitchen CIC is a Birmingham-based social enterprise that caters for all kinds of events, whilst supporting adults affected by homelessness or addiction back into employment. Its food celebrates Birmingham's diversity and offers interesting and unusual choices aimed at stimulating the senses. **0121 288 3728/07828 825 850 | thechangekitchen@googlemail.com | www.changekitchen.co.uk**

DRIVEN TO DO SOMETHING WORTHWHILE



Increasingly aware of inequalities in the health care provision in Wolverhampton, psychotherapist and coach Teresa Lewis (pictured) decided to leave her job in the private sector and found the social enterprise Lewis Psychology CIC. Two years on, the business is flourishing and other professionals want to know more about her model of practice. **se talked to Teresa about her experience.**

Wolverhampton is home to a significant proportion of individuals who could benefit from counselling and coaching. It is in the bottom 20% of local authority areas in England & Wales for life expectancy, ranked among the 10% most deprived cities in England and its unemployment rate is the second highest in the West Midlands. The suicide rate is rising, contrary to the national trend, and it has one of the highest rates of deaths arising from alcohol consumption in the country.

The problem is that the high cost of private counselling and coaching puts them out of reach for many and lengthy NHS waiting lists mean that free help frequently comes too late.

Teresa explained: "Through Lewis Psychology I wanted to offer an affordable, community-driven, professional psychological health and coaching service that would help to reduce waiting times and improve the health and employability of the local population. I also wanted to provide employment opportunities for

people disadvantaged in the labour market. I have personal experience of employers backing off from disability, so I was particularly keen for Lewis Psychology to be socially inclusive."

In setting up the CIC, Teresa sought the help of third sector support organisations including iSE, brap, UnLtd and Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC). "I had one-to-one business advice sessions and went on a number of training courses," she said, "but perhaps the most useful support I received was from the community accountant at WVSC, who helped me to set up systems that have really come into their own as we have grown."

As Lewis Psychology celebrates its second birthday, the staff team has grown to 10, there is a strong, and diverse, client base and Teresa is increasingly being approached by professionals – both locally and nationally – who want to know more about what she is doing.

Teresa puts this success down to the quality of the services provided and the fact that they are available for everyone, regardless of ethnicity. "The usage of the practice reflects the borough's diversity," she said. "We provide services in a range of community languages including English, French, Punjabi and Hindi."

There is also a strong staff team, over 50% of whom, in line with Teresa's objective, may be categorised as 'disadvantaged in the labour market'. "We only employ high calibre

professionals," she said, "and a number of our workforce have physical disabilities. In our experience, people with disabilities bring a lot to the table. A little flexibility in the job market would make a big difference, allowing more talented and capable people with disabilities to be employed in professional positions."

Currently nearly 100% of Lewis Psychology's income is derived from the sale of services. The business does not rely on grant funding. Profit comes from contracts for commercial and community services won in competition, often with national providers from the private sector.

What Teresa has found more challenging than anticipated is the general lack of understanding about what a social enterprise is and what that model of doing business means. She said: "Some people think we're a charity and so expect to be able to access services free of charge, but I think we are gradually getting the message across that a social enterprise has to trade profitably in order to deliver the social benefits that are a part of its mission."

To help with the education campaign, Teresa applied for and has been awarded the Social Enterprise Mark. "It's important to us to be able to display this mark of our identity and quality standard," she said.

Since she started Lewis Psychology, Teresa has put all her energies into making it a success. She works long hours, but doesn't regret a single minute of it. "I love my job," she said "and am keen to see how far I can take the business. The bigger we get the more of a social impact we can have." **se**

MAKING CONTACT

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i **Lewis Psychology CIC** provides expert counselling, coaching and training services to individuals and organisations in Wolverhampton and across the West Midlands and Staffordshire. Services can be accessed at the Wolverhampton practice or at business premises or community venues, to provide a seamless pathway of support.

GREEN LIGHT FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES TO WORK WITH PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICES



A recent report has proved just how effective social enterprises are in reducing the re-offending rate and given the green light for more to enter the market. In the light of these findings Social Enterprise West Midlands (SEWM) hosted the first regional event to bring together the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) with social enterprises keen to take advantage of the opportunities available. Helen Ryman of SEWM tells *se* all about it.

The report, 'Reducing re-offending through social enterprise', was commissioned by the Social Enterprise Coalition on behalf of NOMS and maps the current level of activity of social enterprises working with prisons and probation services in England. The findings reveal a strong interest from both services in doing business with social enterprises, with a significant amount of work already being delivered by social enterprises in this area.

Our event, held in May, allowed delegates to explore how best to equip themselves to work successfully with ex-offenders, the barriers to involvement and the different ways to engage with NOMS. Those already working in this field were encouraged to share good practice.

Key questions were: "How can social enterprises equip themselves to work with ex-offenders successfully?" "What barriers need to be overcome and what capacity exists?" "How do we engage with NOMS and others?" "What good practice exists for those already working in this area to enable them to continue to remain competitive and add even more value?"

Key considerations for social enterprises

Several priority considerations for social enterprises wanting to deliver NOMS objectives emerged from the day:

Market research

Any decision to get involved in delivering NOMS objectives must be informed by robust research and an understanding of the relationship between sub-contractors and prime contractors. Ex-offenders need a bespoke approach that includes appropriate risk management for NOMS and the social enterprise(s) involved.

Developing consortia

Prime contractors will not work directly with lots of small organisations, particularly as procurement contracts get bigger, so working through consortia is essential. Consortia members need to know how their individual roles complement each other and how to market themselves on this basis.

A varied funding portfolio and sound financial management

Social enterprises need to assess how new funding opportunities can add value to existing contracts. Potential barriers to involvement with NOMS include the trend towards payment by results, which can lead to cash flow problems. Sound financial management is essential when considering new business opportunities, as is being clear on what the prime contractor's offer is.

Specialist support

Delegates agreed that social enterprises wanting to expand into this market need support. This includes the promotion of new opportunities, simpler contracting and commissioning processes, assistance with understanding those processes and the requirements of prime contractors, help with developing effective consortia

“The future looks bright in terms of engagement of the social enterprise sector with the Prison and Probation Services. 47% of prisons said they were interested in developing social enterprise and wider third sector work in the future, whilst 95% of probation services stated this intention.”

Extract from 'Reducing re-offending through social enterprise', p55

and building business capacity, as well as the opportunity to be involved alongside prime contractors in developing future programmes. *se*

MAKING CONTACT

Helen Ryman, Social Enterprise West Midlands | h.ryman@socialenterprisewm.org.uk
NOMS | www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/abouttheservice/noms
Reducing Re-offending Through Social Enterprise | www.socialenterpriselive.com/sites/default/files/stories/files/Reducing%20Reoffending%20Through%20Social%20Enterprise.pdf

SEWM is seeking SE readers' views on exactly what support could be provided for social enterprises wanting to work with ex-offenders. Contact Helen Ryman with your suggestions. h.ryman@socialenterprisewm.org.uk

Why is it so difficult to find a decent bank?

It's difficult to believe now that we taxpayers own so much of the banks on our high street that they continue to provide social enterprises and other small businesses in general with such poor service.

That's according to a recent Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) survey, which shows that a quarter of all respondents are dissatisfied with the support offered by their high street bank over the last 12 months. Multiply that survey of 1,300 businesses up and that equates to 1.2 million enterprises across the country that are unhappy with their bank.

Reasons given for the dissatisfaction vary, but include the number of changes in bank personnel and not having a competitive business account package – which 1 in 5 said was the single most important reason for their choice of bank.

It was against this background that Birmingham-based Unity Trust Bank decided to develop its own, dedicated current account for social enterprises and small businesses, called the Select Account. This new web and phone-based account links an interest-bearing cheque account, and Unity's award-winning customer service with a range of money-saving business and personal benefits.

Neil Forman, one of Unity's Development Managers, said "Unity has a long tradition of supporting the charity and social sector and has always seen itself as providing a real, practical alternative to those entrepreneurs fed up with the treatment they receive from the high street banks. That's why we have worked hard with those in the sector to develop a practical day-to-day current account that meets the banking needs of social enterprises, whilst saving them time, money and hassle.

"We know that time is precious when running any small enterprise, which is why all of our calls come in to our

customer service centre in Birmingham, and not into an anonymous call centre, or worse one of those irritating 'push button 2' systems. We also pride ourselves on answering 80% of all calls in 10 seconds or less. And when you do get through, we try to ensure that the vast majority of callers' queries can be answered by the adviser there and then."

Not only that, but the Select Account also offers a range of savings worth hundreds of £s in the form of market-leading discounts off SAGE accountancy software, Microsoft training, eye tests at Vision Express, and savings on fixed, mobile and broadband lines, as well as personal savings for employees on anything from Alton Towers to hotels and Thomas Cook holidays.

In the end, the choice of where to bank will come down to many factors, but there is now more competition. Do your homework wisely and if you want to move to an account where you are treated like a person instead of a number, remember, there are now real alternatives to the high street offerings.

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Access to Business | Wolverhampton | www.access2business.co.uk

All Saints Action Network | Wolverhampton | www.asan.org.uk

Aston Reinvestment Trust | Birmingham | www.reinvest.co.uk

Bernard Lovatt & Associates | Stoke-on-Trent | <http://bernardlovatt.co.uk>

Birmingham Rathbone Society | Birmingham | www.rathbone.co.uk

Blaze FM | Birmingham | www.blazefm.co.uk

Brew On CIC | Herefordshire | www.brew-on.co.uk

BSSEC | Birmingham | www.bssec.org.uk

Buckman Finance Associates Ltd | Smethwick | rob@buckman-associates.co.uk

Business Insight | Birmingham | www.birmingham.gov.uk/businessinsight

BVSC | Birmingham | www.bvsc.org

ChangeKitchen CIC | Birmingham | <http://changekitchen.co.uk>

Charity Bank | Central region | www.charitybank.org

Citizen Coaching CIC | Birmingham | www.citizencoaching.com 

City College Coventry | Coventry | www.covcollege.ac.uk 

City Save Credit Union | Birmingham | www.citysave.org.uk

Colebridge Trust | Birmingham | www.colebridge.org

Community Matters | London | www.communitymatters.org.uk

Concept & Action for Blind People | Birmingham | www.conceptconferencecentre.com 

Coventry & Warwickshire CDA | Coventry | www.cwcda.co.uk

Co-operatives West Midlands | Birmingham | www.cooperatives-wm.coop

Craftspace | Birmingham | www.craftspace.co.uk

Danks Cockburn PR | Wolverhampton | www.dc-pr.co.uk

Deaf Cultural Centre | Birmingham | www.deafculturalcentre.com

Development in Social Enterprise CIC | Birmingham | www.disecic.org

ENTA CIC | Birmingham | www.entapeople.com

EPIC CIC | Bromsgrove | www.epic-se.co.uk

Fordhall Community Land Initiative | Market Drayton | www.fordhallfarm.com

Future Health and Social Care CIC | Birmingham | www.futurehsc.com

Go Wisely CIC | Sutton Coldfield | www.gowisely.co.uk

Growing Rural Enterprise Ltd | Staffordshire | www.growingruralenterprise.co.uk

Halo Leisure | Leominster | www.haloleisure.co.uk 

Harris & Harris Accountancy CIC | Birmingham | www.harrisaccountancy.co.uk 

Ideal for All | Smethwick | www.idealforall.co.uk

Ignite Creative | Coventry | www.ignitecreative.co.uk

Imagematch Social Enterprise CIC | Shrewsbury | www.imagematch.co.uk

Intelligence Matters Research Consultancy Ltd | Walsall | emma.nugent@imrcl.org.uk

iSE | Birmingham | www.i-se.co.uk

Key Fund | Sheffield | www.thekeyfund.co.uk

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Light Foot Enterprises CIC | Shropshire | www.h-e-s.org

Local Livelihoods | Herefordshire | www.locallivelihoods.com

My Time CIC | Birmingham | www.mytime.org.uk

NewStarts | Bromsgrove | www.newstarts.org.uk

Nick Drew Design | Warwickshire | www.nickdrewdesign.co.uk

Our Community CIC | Birmingham | www.ourcommunity.org.uk

Pathcreating Ltd | Brierley Hill | www.pathcreating.com

PM Training | Stoke-on-Trent | www.pmtraining.org.uk

Purple Patch Marketing & Communications | Coventry | www.purplepatchcommunications.com

Q3 Academy | Birmingham | www.q3academy.org.uk 

Resources for Change | Welshpool, Powys | www.r4c.org.uk

Rubus Services Ltd | Malvern | www.rubus-services.com 

Sandwell Community Caring Trust | West Bromwich | www.sandwellcct.org.uk 

SCVO | West Bromwich | www.scvo.info

South Shropshire Furniture Scheme | Ludlow | www.furniturescheme.co.uk

Spot on Marketing & Communications CIC | Birmingham | www.spotonmarketing.org.uk

Telford & Wrekin Council | Telford | www.telford.gov.uk

The Change Consortium CIC | Birmingham | www.thechangeconsortium.org

The Jericho Foundation | Birmingham | www.jericho.org.uk

The Phone Co-op | Oxford | www.thephone.coop

The Pump Café | Birmingham | www.thepump.org.uk

Thomas Vale Construction | Worcestershire | www.thomasvale.com

Trident Housing Association | Birmingham | www.trident-ha.org.uk 

Unity Trust Bank | Birmingham | www.unity.co.uk 

VAST | Stoke-on-Trent | www.vast.org.uk

West Midlands Chamber of Commerce | West Midlands | www.wmchambers.co.uk 

WM Housing Group | Bromsgrove | www.wmhousing.co.uk 

Workforward CIC | Coventry | www.workforward.co.uk

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

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

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