

# A Job Well Done

Social enterprises and  
the learning and skills  
sector: a partnership for  
the education, training  
and employment of  
disabled people

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For information

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# Executive Summary

This publication has resulted from an explorative study commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)<sup>1</sup> following a recommendation made at an Learning for Work: Employability and adults with disabilities LSC conference (January-April 2008) that:

*The LSC should research existing examples of social firms and enterprises in the regions with a view to publishing a good practice guide for post-16 education and training providers that will raise awareness and encourage involvement in this area of work.*

The explorative study, undertaken by the National Institute of Continuing Adult Education (NIACE), involved gathering evidence of joint working between social enterprises<sup>2</sup> and learning providers through an initial call for information, followed by a series of in-depth telephone interviews, site visits and face-to-face expert interviews.

The aim of this publication is to disseminate the findings of the exploratory study by:

- presenting details on the current interface between social enterprises and the education and training sector;
- providing an overview of the support social enterprises can provide to disabled people making a transition, or return, to work;
- describing the potential support social enterprises can give to the government policy agenda relating to employment for disabled people;
- setting out recommendations as to how policymakers and learning providers can work with social enterprises to achieve even more for disabled people in the future.

## Project findings

The social enterprises encountered during this study provide commercial services or products as a means of generating income but also as a vehicle through which to offer employment and/or training for disabled people.

Social enterprises possess a number of features that equip them to fulfil their social purpose:

- a purpose-led perspective as opposed to an output-led or profit-led perspective which underpins the quality of the training and employment they provide, and determines the direction the business takes;
- the ability to reinvest profits for social aims, providing the financial resources to achieve more than they might if they were a private enterprise with a social conscience;
- provision of real rather than sheltered employment, coupled with helpful working conditions such as flexible working hours, and generous annual leave entitlements, and a proactive approach to reasonable adjustments and embedded supported employment processes;
- the ability to maintain independence by earning the majority of their funding from commercial trade as opposed to becoming reliant on grant or project funders;
- the offer of a diverse range of activities within a single organisation which can give financial resilience, and a greater range of experiential training environments and job roles;
- deliberate involvement in commercial fields that disabled people find difficult to penetrate, e.g. as a means of extending the diversity of employment open to them.

Social enterprises with social purposes relating to the training of disabled people were found to possess:

- a specialist understanding of the needs of disabled people gained through their often longstanding experience of providing training for disabled people in a particular occupational sector (particularly apparent where the social enterprise's social purpose is also to support people with a particular type of impairment);
- high-specification additional learner support which can provide long-term, intensive, holistic, person-centred support;

<sup>1</sup> The responsibilities and duties of the LSC transferred to the Young People's Learning Agency, the Skills Funding Agency and local authorities in April 2010.

<sup>2</sup> A social enterprise is a business that trades for a social purpose and reinvests its profits for that purpose. Some social enterprises (termed 'social firms') have social aims that relate to the training and/or employment of disabled people. For more definitions, see Annex A.

- a thorough appreciation of the local employment context in which learners go on to use their new skills;
- a focus on the provision of experiential, work-based training related to the commercial activities they undertake;
- support from local businesses such as local employer involvement in the offer of work placements in local businesses;
- very committed, flexible and enthusiastic staff and volunteers working in non-traditional, small-scale learning environments which can attract learners who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and who do not wish to return to a mainstream learning setting.

Social firms are social enterprises with a social purpose of employing disadvantaged people. Social firms were found to possess:

- intensive, person-centred, holistic supported employment processes for new staff with experienced job coaches already in place;
- supervisory staff skilled in making reasonable adjustments and in designing roles to fit the capacities and preferences of disabled people;
- effective feedback mechanisms between staff and management, with executive decision-making sometimes being user-led and/or democratic;
- robust personal review, development planning and appraisal processes, which boost staff morale and retention;
- effective and accessible recruitment processes and staff development strategies leading to disadvantaged people being employed at all levels within the organisation;
- a strong commitment to the provision of training and externally delivered staff development opportunities.

The study revealed that some social enterprises were working in partnership with learning providers but this was less frequent than might be expected considering the close relationship between the social missions of learning providers and social enterprises. Examples of the contribution made by learning providers to partnership working as described during the exploratory study included providing:

- vocational training for social enterprise staff;
- learning at Entry Level, e.g. functional skills, employability skills and personal and social development for social enterprise staff;
- accreditation for social enterprise in-house training;
- information, advice and guidance (IAG) and jobsearch support for temporary social enterprise staff, internees and volunteers;
- partnership in the delivery of a portfolio of work-based and college-based learning provision;
- teacher education for social enterprise staff involved in delivering work-based training;
- a customer base for goods and services.

Examples of the contribution made by social enterprises to partnership working as described during the exploratory study included providing:

- work-experience placements as a step in the progression to paid employment;
- work-based learning;
- services and products to learning providers;
- advice on disability awareness and supported employment practices;
- links to the business community;
- links to the local community.

As employers with an awareness of and expertise in supporting disabled people's needs, social enterprises are in an important position to support the policy aims of the coalition government to enable more disabled people to begin or to return to work. Through foundation learning<sup>3</sup>, the government intends that there will be clear routes leading to work for learners studying below Level 2. The achievement of this aim will require the incorporation of substantial work-focused activity into the curriculum, which will necessitate the engagement and involvement of an enormous number of motivated employers. Some employers are in a better position to help than others, with social enterprises already providing this type of support being better placed than most.

<sup>3</sup> Foundation learning was known formerly as the foundation learning tier (FLT).

The social enterprise sector's contribution to government policy objectives is currently only limited by the individual size and the overall number of social enterprises in existence. Organisations in the education and training sector can do a great deal to help social enterprises increase in size and number by:

- working in partnership with local social enterprises;
- supporting the establishment of social enterprises by setting up a social enterprise;
- supporting the ongoing development of social enterprises by taking up social enterprise board positions or by supporting them through networks or umbrella bodies.

Other changes that would assist social enterprises in supporting disabled people include:

- implementing increased flexibility in the use of Access to Work funding to cover all forms of work-based training activity for jobseekers, in addition to the welcome recent extension of Access to Work funding to work trials;
- building a social return on investment calculation into tenders to recognise the added value offered by social enterprises;
- allowing social enterprise start-up grant funding to encompass education and training costs as well as capital expenditure as it does currently;
- encouraging education and training development agencies to work in partnership with social enterprise development agencies to adapt existing social enterprise start-up guidance to incorporate content on how learning providers can successfully initiate social firms;
- ensuring that education and training programme tender specifications do not unnecessarily exclude social enterprises from bidding;
- ensuring that people with Entry-level learning needs who are in employment can be supported through the provision of Entry-level Train to Gain vocational qualifications or by being funded to undertake college-based Entry-level provision on a part-time basis, which often is impossible under current funding arrangements;
- ensuring employer responsive teams within learning providers have strong links with their in-house foundation learning teams to enable them to better support work-based learners with additional learning support needs.



# 1: Introduction

1 This publication is the result of a six-month project (July December 2009) to explore the interface between social enterprises and the learning and skills sector and the contribution made by social enterprises to the education, training and employment of disabled people.

2 Although primarily written for policymakers and learning providers within the education and training sector, other agencies such as research and development organisations and social enterprises themselves may also find much of the content interesting and informative.

## Aims

3 The aims of this project are to:

- present details on the current interface between social enterprises and the education and training sector;
- provide an overview of the support social enterprises can provide to disabled people making a transition, or return, to work;
- describe the potential support social enterprises can give to the government policy agenda relating to the employment of disabled people;
- set out recommendations as to how policymakers and learning providers can work with social enterprises to achieve even more for disabled people in the future.

4 Those who have limited knowledge of social enterprises and the potential they offer are recommended to read the publication in its entirety. Those who have more knowledge and experience in this area may wish to skim the publication and focus specifically on those sections that are of particular interest to them. For example, section 5 sets out points for consideration by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and its successor bodies the Young People's Learning Agency and Skills Funding Agency, and learning providers and social enterprises, which can form the basis of development work in this area.

## Background

5 In 2008, the LSC ran a series of nine regional conferences entitled Learning for Work: Employability and people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Its aim was to bring together practitioners, providers, policymakers and learners to focus on developments regarding employment for disabled people. Two reports have been produced summarising the findings from the conferences:

- *Learning for Work: Employability and people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities* (LSC, Jacobsen & Little 2009);
- *The Learner Voice: Learning for Work: Employability and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities* (LSC, Jacobsen, 2009).

6 The first report describes the main themes, these being the role and nature of supported employment, funding issues, the role of partnerships and partnership working and the involvement and concerns of employers. The second report gives learners' views and describes their experiences. The reports make 12 recommendations for action. Recommendation 1 was:

*The LSC should research existing examples of social firms and enterprises in the regions with a view to publishing a good practice guide for post-16 education and training providers that will raise awareness and encourage involvement in this area of work.*

Jacobson & Little, 2009: 5

To this end, NIACE was commissioned to undertake this project.

## Policy context

7 The government's commitment and intention to enable more disabled people<sup>4</sup> to take up or return to work is evident in many policy developments including:

- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (HM Government, 1995) and subsequent additions: The DDA makes it unlawful for employers and learning providers to discriminate against disabled people, and confers a duty on employers and learning providers to make reasonable adjustments to support disabled people in work and/or learning.
- *Improving the life chances of disabled people* (Cabinet Office, 2005): This long-term strategy included an aim that 'by 2025 all disabled people who are able and willing to work should have the opportunity to get and retain employment, wherever feasible. This includes getting the right support from employers, health and social care, Jobcentre Plus and from all other relevant agencies and individuals' (Cabinet Office, 2005: 181).
- *Learning for Living and Work* (LSC, 2006): The LSC's strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities included an expectation that the 'revolving doors' culture that exists for some learners must be challenged and that work-preparation programmes and vocational courses should deliver skills and knowledge to get people into employment. It stated that by September 2010, vocational provision for learners that did not use either the supported employment model or learning in the workplace would cease to be funded. The Young People's Learning Agency and Skills Funding Agency are taking forward this vision.
- Public Service Agreement (PSA) 16 (Cabinet Office, 2007): PSA 16 set out the government's commitment to increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training. It focuses on four client groups, including adults receiving secondary mental health services and adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities.
- *Raising Expectations and Increasing Support: Reforming welfare for the future* (DWP, 2008). This sets out the DWP's vision for and strategy to realise a welfare system where everyone has personalised support and conditions to help them get back to work, underpinned by a simpler benefits system and genuine choice and control for disabled people.

- *Valuing Employment Now* (Department of Health, 2009): This discusses the government's commitment to improving employment outcomes for people with moderate and severe learning difficulties and sets out wide-ranging aims to achieve this.
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2009): On 8 June 2009, the UK ratified the UN convention on disability rights. Article 27 of the convention addresses work and employment issues. It states that employment of disabled people in an open and inclusive work environment is a right and should be promoted in this way, and that rights for disabled people in the workplace should be on an equal basis with others.
- *Foundation learning curriculum for adults* (Skills Funding Agency, 2010): The foundation learning curriculum will require that there are clear routes from learning into work for all learners studying below Level 2. This includes people with moderate or severe learning difficulties.

8 The above information is intended to provide a brief overview of policy developments to signify the government's commitment to supporting disabled people into work.

9 Certain values, such as the promotion of disabled people's human rights, independence, choice and social inclusion have, in recent years, underpinned policymaking. Policy development has also been supported by a greater awareness and acceptance of the social model of disability, which argues it is not a person's impairment that disables them within society, but instead that people are disabled by barriers put in place by society, such as environmental barriers (e.g. inaccessible buildings, services and information) attitudinal barriers (e.g. stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice) and inflexible procedures and practices. These advances support the development of higher quality vocational provision, work experience and supported employment methods based on person-centred approaches.

10 These values and developments relate well to the intentions and working practices of social enterprises as listed in the 'Values-based checklist' (Social Firms UK, 2007) and described on the Together Works website ('Social enterprise values', Together Works, 2009) as promoting:

- innovative, entrepreneurial solutions to social and environmental problems;
- community ownership, benefit and investment;
- co-operation and mutual support;

<sup>4</sup> The term 'disabled' is used as defined within the social model of disability, encompassing people with sensory impairment, physical impairment, mental health difficulties, long-term health difficulties or learning difficulties, disabilities or difference who may be disabled by societal, environmental and attitudinal barriers.

- trading to support social and/or environment objectives;
- progressive work practices;
- inclusion and equal opportunities for all.

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (November and December 2009). Staff from several of the social enterprises involved contributed to the presentations by describing the work of their organisation and by taking questions from the audience. The project findings were then written up in the form of this publication.

## Methodology

### Stage 1: Exploratory

11 In July 2009, a call for information was distributed widely to NIACE networks of learning providers and social enterprises, social development agencies and other stakeholders. It was also disseminated by the LSC to its own networks. The call for information posed broad questions to find out:

- what activity social enterprises were undertaking with regard to working with disabled people;
- how social enterprises and education and training sector organisations were working together;
- how social enterprises and the education and training sector could work together to better support disabled people.

### Stage 2: Analysis

12 During August and September 2009, the responses to the call for information were collated and analysed by NIACE. The responses received described a range of activities undertaken by social enterprises in support of disabled people across the range of impairments. The responses were also found to be broadly representative of the activity of social enterprises from each of the nine regions of the UK.

### Stage 3: In-depth telephone interviews or site visits

13 Where a response described an extensive interaction between a social enterprise and a learning provider or particularly innovative or well-developed activity, in-depth telephone interviews or site visits were arranged. These interviews and site visits took place during October and November 2009. In addition, in October 2009, NIACE conducted three expert interviews with individuals who were known to have extensive knowledge and an overview of policy and practice regarding social enterprises across England.

### Stage 4: Consultation

14 Initial findings of the project were presented by NIACE at six workshops held during the joint LSC and NIACE conferences entitled Enterprise and employment for people

## 2: Social Enterprises and Generic Features

15 This section:

- gives a definition of social enterprises;
- describes some of the features that equip them to achieve their social purpose, particularly where this relates to supporting disabled people in making the transition from learning to employment.

### Definition

16 A social enterprise is defined as a business that trades for a social purpose and reinvests its profits for that purpose. The social purposes of social enterprises can vary considerably, for example, to protect the environment, provide employment for disadvantaged people or provide care for older people. Consequently, only a proportion of the social enterprises in existence have a stated social purpose of providing education and employment for disabled people.

17 Because elements of their work towards their social purpose will require expenditure, social enterprises generally have to maintain a balance between spending to meet their social purpose and generating sufficient income to maintain financial solvency. To achieve this balance, social enterprises need a viable business model and rely heavily on the expertise of their company boards, which often need to comprise a diverse group of individuals with commercial skills in sales and marketing, business management and accounting as well as knowledge of the client group they aim to serve and the services or products they supply.

18 Of the many different types of social enterprises, those most likely to have a stated social aim of providing education or employment for disabled people are community businesses, co-operatives and social firms (see Annex A for a glossary). Some social enterprises have been in existence in one form or another for many decades whereas others are relatively new. A social enterprise is often most financially vulnerable in its first few years of existence during which it is unlikely to have significant reserves to fall back upon or a strong customer base. For this reason, many social

enterprises are established under the protection of a parent body and only become independent once their financial basis is more secure.

### Generic features

19 Social enterprises aiming to support disabled learners in making the transition from learning to work possess a number of special features that equip them to fulfil their social purpose. These features are at paragraphs 20 to 27 below.

### Ethos

20 The social enterprises encountered during the project aimed to do more than simply survive and prosper. They all appeared to be wholeheartedly committed to their social purpose. This purpose-led perspective made them very keen to not only offer particular opportunities or services but to do this in a manner that really met the needs of the group of people to which they were dedicated. Therefore, the social enterprises encountered during the project that had a social aim of providing training and education for disabled people tried to provide this not just satisfactorily but exceptionally well. Similarly, the social firms encountered during the study were not only trying to meet their aim of providing employment for disabled people but also striving to offer the best possible working environment for them by adopting best practices in human resource management, supported employment processes and progression support.

### Financial capacity

21 Many private sector employers have stated commitments to social aims but because social enterprises reinvest all of their profits towards their social purpose, a social enterprise can generally do more towards their social purpose than a private sector enterprise, which inevitably has to pass the majority of its profits to shareholders or owners. As well as having their profits to devote to their social purpose, the social enterprises encountered in the study could also steer their enterprise in a direction that supported their social purpose. Their decision-making was therefore not entirely market driven as might be expected in a private enterprise.

22 Despite this, commercial considerations are still important to social enterprises as they recognise they can only do as much as their profits allow. A balance therefore has to be struck between the pursuit of their social purpose and their need to be commercially successful.

23 The balance between commercial considerations and their social purpose had an impact on the nature of employment within the social enterprises encountered during the project. On the whole, because of commercial considerations, the employment provided, real, unprotected employment as opposed to sheltered employment. However, this was tempered by their social purpose, which caused the social enterprises to offer helpful working conditions, a proactive approach to reasonable adjustments and the embedding of supported employment processes. This was particularly helpful for learners making the transition to employment as they benefited from exposure to the reality of employment but also had access to the help and support the social enterprise provided to its staff.

### **Independence from funders**

24 Whilst grants and project funding form important contributions to social enterprise income (especially at their outset), most of the social enterprises encountered through the project tried to ensure that revenue from trade formed the vast majority of their income. This enabled them to continue to prioritise their social purpose above all other considerations by retaining an element of independence from the policy intentions of grant and project funders, which might otherwise direct all of their efforts. This also allowed them to offer more permanent jobs since the organisation was not destabilised by the transient nature of project funding. In turn, their ability to provide permanent employment enabled them to retain experienced staff and made the environment more stable for disabled people making the transition from learning to employment than would be the case if the social enterprises were wholly dependent on project or grant funding.

### **Diverse commercial activity**

25 Although committed to their social purposes, in order to remain commercially competitive, social enterprises have to give sufficient attention to the products they manufacture or the services they supply. The social enterprises encountered during the project were therefore very alert to changes in their customer expectations and new market trends.

26 It was quite rare for the social enterprises encountered to provide a single product or service. This was because they had often diversified their commercial activities in response to new opportunities that offered the potential of making

both more profit and an additional contribution to their social purpose. For instance, a social enterprise that initially started out as a café subsequently had an opportunity to employ more people in producing vegetables and flowers for use in the café. It further diversified when it opened a shop to sell the surplus vegetables and flowers. Greater commercial diversity almost always led to a greater diversity of employment opportunities. This is helpful to disabled people making the transition from learning to employment as they may want to try out a number of different roles. There was scope to do this within the social enterprises encountered during the project, with some going as far as encouraging their new staff to undertake a taster in every role before deciding which role they wanted to take up.

27 Sometimes social firms will establish themselves intentionally in fields that disabled people have previously found difficult to penetrate in order to extend the diversity of employment. For example, Concept's conference centre (see Case study 3 below) was established to provide catering opportunities for people with visual impairment, in part to challenge the misconception that people with visual impairment could not work in a kitchen environment due to health and safety considerations.

# 3: Characteristics of Social Enterprises (responding to call for information)

28 This section:

- describes the nature of the social enterprises that interface with the education and training sector and have social aims relating to the education, training and/or employment of disabled people;
- provides case studies of two social enterprises and a social firm.

## Social enterprises interfacing with the education and training sector

### Social enterprises that interface with the education and training sector but do not possess social aims relating to education, training or employment

29 Responses to the call for information suggest that social enterprises with social aims unrelated to education, training or employment may nonetheless interface with the education and training sector, albeit simply in terms of providing a commercial service to it. For instance, a social enterprise with a social purpose relating to the environment recycled the waste paper produced by a learning provider.

### The nature of social enterprises that interface with the education and training sector and whose main social purpose is the education and training of disabled people

30 The responses received from social enterprises with a main social aim of providing education and training for disabled people indicated that they tend to be specialist learning providers with well-developed links to business and their local community. Their characteristics vary but often include:

- a specialist understanding of learner needs, especially if they focus on supporting people with a particular type of impairment;

- high-specification additional learner support which can provide long-term, intensive, holistic and highly person-centred support;
- a thorough appreciation of the local employment context in which learners go on to use their new skills;
- a focus on the provision of experiential, sector-based training related to commercial activities undertaken (see Case study 1);
- inclusion within learning programmes of in-kind support from local businesses such as employer involvement in training and work-experience placements in local businesses;
- committed, flexible and enthusiastic staff and volunteers working in non-traditional, small-scale learning environments which can attract young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and who do not wish to return to a mainstream learning setting.

31 Like most learning providers, social enterprises draw down public funding for the majority of the training they provide, although they are able to supplement these funds with surpluses from commercial activity. Recourse to these additional funds gives them the opportunity to offer more diverse learning provision in comparison with providers who are heavily dependent on public funding tied to qualification outputs. This enables social enterprises to:

- have wider open-door policies, which enable them to engage learners who do not fit learner funding eligibility criteria, for instance, disabled asylum seekers;
- offer flexibility to learners in terms of the duration and scheduling of their learning programme, for instance, by offering part-time or drop-in provision;

- develop innovative provision, for instance by offering personal and social development content within vocational training;
- sustain provision which otherwise would have to be abandoned after time-limited project funding, such as European Social Fund (ESF) funding, came to an end.

### Case study 1: The Stable Trading Company ([www.stabletrading.co.uk](http://www.stabletrading.co.uk))

**The Stable Trading Company is a social enterprise whose main social purpose is to support the transition of disabled people into employment through the provision of work-based learning and work experience.**

The Stable Trading Company, a social enterprise with the status of a registered community interest company (CIC) has been in existence in its current form since 2007. It manages several smallholdings and a bakery for the production of organic bread and organic, high-welfare horticultural and agricultural products, which it sells through a shop and a local vegetable box delivery scheme. A number of its employees are disabled, working in positions ranging from entry to management. In addition to food production, The Stable Trading Company provides a range of accredited training courses in horticulture, agriculture, catering, baking and other skills for working life to individuals who are disadvantaged in some way. These include disabled people, people with learning difficulties and people with mental health difficulties, the aim being to help them become better included in society and to provide them with opportunities for full-time employment.

This year, The Stable Trading Company is working in partnership with Accrington and Rossendale College and Craven College to deliver work-based learning for approximately 110 students. The Stable Trading Company's delivery of accredited learning programmes began following an approach from the LSC, which wanted to pilot collaborative working between a social enterprise and the FE sector. With support from a consultant, Accrington and Rossendale College was helped to contract The Stable Trading Company to both recruit learners and provide full-time learning provision, which would deliver a certain number of qualifications for learners within one academic year.

Since then, The Stable Trading Company has established programmes accredited by City and Guilds, the National Proficiency Tests Council and Ascentis, the core themes of which include literacy, numeracy, ICT, vocational skills and employability. The successful collaboration between Accrington and Rossendale College and The Stable Trading Company was reflected in the award of a grade 1 overall inspection grade to Accrington and Rossendale College in 2009. The Stable Trading Company's effectiveness as a learning provider is underpinned by:

- a holistic initial assessment;
- the inclusion of significant elements of personal and social development within learning programmes;
- vocationally focused experiential learning opportunities;
- substantial personalised learner support;
- an effective peer mentoring process;
- small groups of students (10 to 12 on average);
- learner support that takes into account the learner's home environment, preferences, medication and carer inputs.

The Stable Trading Company is particularly looking forward to developing a new collaboration with a local organic farm which will offer learning opportunities in small-animal care, countryside management and organic gardening. It is likely to be able to employ several of its current learners through expansion of its retail, catering and food production operations in the coming year. Other learners are likely to find work in local catering and other firms with which The Stable Trading Company has links.

If you would like to find out more, please contact Joanne Guirdham at The Stable Trading Company ([joanne@stabletrading.co.uk](mailto:joanne@stabletrading.co.uk)).

## Case study 2: Breakthrough UK

**This case study describes the experiences of one learner, George Kennedy, at Breakthrough UK ([www.breakthrough-uk.com](http://www.breakthrough-uk.com)).**

George Kennedy is a fully qualified electrician who worked for 15 years with Manchester City Council before an accident in 1999 left him unable to continue his career and resulted in retirement on medical grounds. After years of not working, George attended a Jobcentre Plus 'back to work' course where a Breakthrough UK employment officer gave a presentation on its services. Joining Breakthrough UK as a client, George decided he would like to gain computer skills. He started training at Breakthrough UK's IT training site. He says "After being out of the job market for so long, I found the staff approachable, willing to help and most importantly, supportive." Some months later, a volunteer training supervisor post became available at the Breakthrough UK training site. George put himself forward and was soon assisting new entrants with their IT skills. His patient, sensitive and relaxed approach enabled students to feel comfortable with their progress. When a paid position became available, George applied for the full-time post of training supervisor. He was successful in getting the job through an open recruitment process with both internal and external candidates.

George said of his time at Breakthrough UK, "The support I received with application forms, interview skills and practice was invaluable. The availability of the employment team for advice and guidance was excellent." George has since left Breakthrough UK and has progressed to a more senior role in the supported employment sector.



**George Kennedy, training supervisor at Breakthrough UK**

### **The nature of social enterprises that interface with the education and training sector and whose main social purpose is the employment of disabled people (social firms)**

32 Social enterprises whose main social purpose is to provide employment for people, who due to disadvantage or disability, are excluded from the workplace, are called social firms. Social firms are committed to:

- ensuring that severely disadvantaged people form at least 25 per cent of their employees;
- paying employees at or above the market rate for the job;
- creating supportive workplaces that aspire to be models of best employment practice.

33 Social firms and enterprises can be very knowledgeable about the needs of disabled people relating to employment in the commercial sector. They will often be happy to share their knowledge and experience with other third-sector or private- and public-sector employers. This can be particularly helpful in occupations, industries and sectors that have proved challenging for disabled people to penetrate and where there are few alternative sources of information and support for employers.

34 The highly supportive workplace environments generally found in social firms will often include:

- intensive, person-centred and holistic supported employment processes for new staff with experienced job coaches already in place;
- supervisory staff skilled in making reasonable adjustments and in designing roles to match the capacities and preferences of disabled people;

- helpful feedback mechanisms between staff and management, with executive decision-making sometimes being user-led and/or democratic;
- robust personal review, development planning and appraisal processes that boost staff morale and retention;
- effective and accessible recruitment processes and staff development strategies leading to disadvantaged people being employed at all levels within the organisation;
- a strong commitment to the provision of training and externally delivered staff development opportunities.

**35** Managers from social firms and social enterprises interviewed during the project explained that some of the features of the supportive working environments found in social firms could be established with little or no extra cost. Examples given included additional team meetings to explain management decisions and to get feedback from staff, one-to-one support meetings and job-shadowing arrangements. Where significant additional costs are incurred (for example to employ additional staff), these costs can be met if the social firm generates a surplus from its commercial activity. Any further surplus remaining can be used to expand existing operations or establish new commercial activities, which further increases the number of jobs the social firm can offer to disabled people.

**36** It is worth noting that several people interviewed during the project said that a proportion of ventures and particularly those providing gardening and catering services operate within very tight financial boundaries. When this is the case, the ability of these social firms to offer more expensive forms of support is limited.

**37** Because social firms have to survive in the commercial world, the jobs undertaken by disabled people are real in nature and cannot be considered to be protected in any way from commercial realities. However, this has a positive dimension, as the employees therefore do not develop unrealistic expectations of employers and as a result, find it easier to progress to other paid employment outside the social firm, if and when they wish. Many of the social enterprises encountered during the project valued the integrated nature of their workforce and had no intention of ever becoming staffed solely by disabled people.

### Case study 3: Concept ([www.conceptconferencecentre.com](http://www.conceptconferencecentre.com))

#### **This case study looks at an emerging social firm and its work in partnership with local learning providers.**

Concept is a social firm developed by RNIB and supported by Action for Blind People. It provides conferencing and catering facilities in Birmingham through its Concept conference centre. All its staff have a visual impairment. Over 7,000 delegates used Concept facilities in 2008/09, a proportion of these being from learning and skills sector organisations. As an emerging social firm, Concept aims to earn a minimum of 50 per cent of its income from trade and employs a minimum of 25 per cent of its staff from disadvantaged groups in the labour market. Currently Concept employs six people. Four of these staff members are permanently employed. Two staff members are on one-year temporary contracts with in-house training and information, advice and guidance (IAG) support to help them find employment externally when their contracts end.



**Martin Pugh, chef at the Concept conference centre**

In addition to providing in-house staff training, Concept is embarking on the delivery of external training. Concept feels its movement into external training delivery is a natural development in line with its social purpose. Meeting trainers with visual impairments can help employers realise that it is possible for people with visual impairment to work or continue to work if the impairment has recently developed. The manager of Concept believes that the success of its in-house training is down to:

- the adoption of person-centred approaches based on the strengths of each trainee;
- well-trained core staff with good interpersonal skills, prior experience of delivering training and the ability to act as role models;
- peer support from several staff members for a trainee rather than it falling on one person;
- frequent consultation and transparency in decision-making;
- the use of pair work and adjustments where necessary without jeopardising independence to ensure transition to employment in other organisations is easier;
- addressing personal and social development needs, particularly those arising from the trauma of losing one's sight;
- the inclusion of external work placements in addition to in-house training to build confidence.

Having secured National Lottery funding, Concept will offer 10 new trainee places in the near future with the likelihood that some of these trainees will subsequently be employed following the opening of a second Concept conference centre. In the past, Concept has sourced external training for its employed staff and worked closely with the local college to ensure the training was successful. The training provided included national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in administration and catering, and courses in advanced food hygiene and food hygiene trainer training. In all cases, the member of staff and the centre manager met with the learning provider to identify whether the course was appropriate and that the support offered included the necessary reasonable adjustments.

# 4: Interface between Social Enterprises and Learning Providers

38 This section describes the role of:

- learning providers when working in partnership with social enterprises;
- social enterprises when working in partnership with learning providers.

39 Section 3 described the nature of the social enterprises that responded to the call for information and which were further explored through site visits and telephone interviews. In addition to asking them to describe themselves, they were asked about their current links to the learning and skills sector. Learning providers were also asked about their links to social enterprises to get these links described from the learning provider's perspective. The responses received indicate that the range of the interface between social enterprises and the learning and skills sector is quite broad and that many helpful interactions are taking place. However, it was surprising to find that many social enterprises reported no interaction at all with learning providers in their vicinity.

40 When asked how their links came about, both social enterprises and learning providers often reported that this was as a result of an individual deliberately setting out to initiate partnership working. As the interactions between social enterprises and the learning and skills sector were reported to be mutually beneficial, it may be helpful to consider establishing structures and strategies to encourage partnership working between social enterprises and the learning and skills sector.

41 The nature of the interactions reported during the project are described below, starting with those services provided by the learning providers and subsequently listing those provided by social enterprises.

## The role of learning providers working in partnership with social enterprises

### Supply of vocational training

42 All businesses, including social enterprises, may need to source vocational training at some time. This could be to meet the training needs of staff, management or volunteers, for instance, health and safety, supervisory skills training, vocational training leading to qualifications or task-specific training. Social enterprises whose commercial activity is rapidly evolving are more likely to commission vocational training in comparison with social enterprises and private sector companies that are not diversifying. In addition, social enterprises with a social aim of employing disadvantaged people are more likely to take on people with training needs and therefore will commission training more frequently. Examples of helpful partnership working arrangements include North Lincolnshire Adult Education Service's provision of training for learners from the Bridge Ventures social enterprise, and the provision of NVQ training by University College Birmingham for Concept.

43 Some social enterprise trainees will require additional learning support. The social enterprise may have the capacity and expertise to offer additional learner support for the trainee, especially if one of its social aims is related to the education and/or employment of disabled people and it has built up expertise over time. However, even when this is the case, guidance on approaches to additional learner support approaches from the learning provider can be very helpful.

### Supply of Entry-level learning including functional skills, employability skills and personal and social development

44 A significant number of disabled people employed by social enterprises and social firms missed out on educational opportunities in the past or have made slower progress

within mainstream educational settings. Furthermore, some employees with learning difficulties may have significant personal and social development needs. To address these needs, social enterprises often seek to draw upon the training provision available through a local learning provider. This ‘work first, train second’ approach is generally very successful, with staff soon able to perform at the level required for their role and then developing further, helping them to feel more confident and to progress within work.

### **Provision of accreditation for in-house training**

45 Some social enterprises may wish to deliver in-house training themselves but without the ability to accredit the training they provide, they need this to be accredited by a learning provider. An example of this is the NVQ and other vocational training for staff provided by The Healthy Hub café and shop, a CIC based in Lincoln. The Healthy Hub provides the training, which is assessed and accredited by Lincoln College, the Priory Centre, Grantham College or the partnership between Lagat Ltd and CG CIC.

### **Provision of IAG and jobsearch support**

46 Some social enterprises provide temporary paid or unpaid initial work experience for people whom they do not have the capacity to employ on a permanent basis. Social enterprises do this to give people an initial opportunity to become accustomed to work, knowing that gaining experience will help them secure permanent work on leaving the social enterprise. If supported employment is not appropriate for the participant, social enterprises are keen to ensure that during their work experience participants receive alternative forms of IAG and jobsearch support to help them look for, apply and begin paid work elsewhere. Some social enterprises employ an in-house IAG adviser but several social enterprises explained to us that this is unaffordable and that they would appreciate the offer of an IAG service from a local learning provider.

### **Partnership in the delivery of a portfolio of work-based and college-based provision**

47 Social enterprises whose main social purpose is the education and training of disabled people may seek partnerships with mainstream learning providers to extend the scope of their offer to disabled people. Within these partnerships, social enterprises will often focus on experiential, work-based training elements, leaving the mainstream learning provider to cover the required elements of classroom-based delivery. Social enterprises will often develop innovative approaches to delivery as a result of their learning environment and their eagerness to adopt user-led approaches. This can lead to high-quality, engaging programmes for learners with a consequent positive effect on retention and achievement rates.

48 Social enterprises are amenable partners as they are less focused on the bottom line than profit-making organisations. However, this does not mean that they should be taken advantage of within partnership arrangements, as the greater the income of the social enterprise, the more they can do for their learners. Examples of helpful partnership working arrangements include the collaboration between The Stable Trading Company and Accrington and Rossendale College and Craven College (Case study 1) and the provision of portfolio-building sessions by East Surrey College to Richmond Fellowship Old Moat Garden Centre, which provides the services of qualified NVQ assessors, trainers and internal verifiers.

### **Board membership**

49 Ensuring that the management board includes people with the greatest possible range of expertise is vital to the success of social enterprises. The presence of learning provider staff on social enterprise boards can help a social enterprise position itself effectively and take advantage of further partnership or commercial opportunities available within the learning and skills sector.

### **Provision of teacher education**

50 Staff and volunteers supporting employees and trainees within social enterprises can benefit from undertaking adult teacher-training programmes, assessor training and job-coach training, all of which could be supplied by local learning providers. Once their staff become qualified, social enterprises are in a better position to deliver publicly funded learning provision to staff and trainees, possibly in partnership with the learning provider that supplied the teacher training.

### **Initiation of social enterprises**

51 Learning providers have established and supported fledgling in-house social enterprises until they become financially resilient, independent social enterprises in their own right. This can help the social enterprise get safely through the vulnerable start-up phase.

### **Purchase of goods and services**

52 Social enterprises rely on the profits they earn from their commercial activity to fund activities relating to their social purpose. If learning providers purchase goods and services from a social enterprise, this contributes to the social enterprise’s surplus. In this way, learning providers indirectly assist the social enterprise in realising its social aims.

## Case study 4: Hertfordshire PASS ([www.hertspass.com](http://www.hertspass.com))

**This case study looks at the experience of one learner, Andrew Bird, who studied an NVQ in business administration at Level 2 with the charity Hertfordshire PASS.**

In 2007, Andrew Bird became a volunteer at Hertfordshire PASS, which is a user-driven charity providing employment and self-directed support to enable disabled people to live more independently. A year later, Hertfordshire PASS employed Andrew as an apprentice along with two other new staff members. As part of his apprenticeship, Andrew chose to undertake an NVQ in business administration through Train to Gain. The learning provider, North Hertfordshire College, arranged for its assessor to visit Hertfordshire PASS to undertake an initial assessment, which identified that Andrew could embark on the NVQ at Level 2. The college worked closely with Hertfordshire PASS to ensure that Andrew, who has spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy, could fully access the course. For instance, Andrew needed set texts in an electronic format because he cannot easily turn pages. After three months of intense negotiation between the college and the publishers, the publishers agreed to supply the textbook electronically.

The college recognised that it needed to be very flexible to ensure that part-time staff at Hertfordshire PASS could participate in the NVQ training. For instance, as Andrew is employed for just 11 hours a week, the college agreed to be flexible over the amount of time they expected Andrew to set aside during working hours for his NVQ work. Because Andrew was not able to set aside the usual amount of time each week for his NVQ work, the college also arranged an extension to Andrew's course. Andrew is now in the closing stages of his training and is likely to pass the course shortly.



**Andrew Bird, learner at Hertfordshire PASS**

## The role of social enterprises when working in partnership with learning providers

### Future employers of learners

53 *The Annual Survey of Small Businesses UK 2005* (Department of Trade and Industry & Small Business Service, 2006), estimated that 5 per cent of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were social enterprises. This implies that approximately one million people are employed by social enterprises. Currently no more recent statistics are available on the number of disabled people employed by social firms and social enterprises.

54 Even though the actual figures are unavailable, the number of disabled people employed by social firms and social enterprises must be considerable. It follows that social firms and social enterprises are a potentially important source of future employment for current and future learners. Learning providers may therefore find it helpful to engage local social enterprises as part of their employer engagement activity.

55 Inevitably, there will be times when individual social enterprises have no job vacancies. However, these periods may be less common in comparison with private enterprises because social enterprises and social firms will not limit themselves to pursuing commercial opportunities that only offer high profit margins if there is the potential to create employment that meets their social purpose. Social enterprises that are limited in the number of permanent positions they can offer often try to provide some temporary employment to at least give people a short-term opportunity to undertake paid employment.

### Provision of work-experience placements

56 Social enterprises tend to offer helpful environments for an initial work-experience placement. This is because many strive to be models of best employment practice in relation to human resource management practices, working conditions, supported employment processes and progression support. Those that have social aims relating to the employment of disabled people can often draw upon years of experience of supporting disabled people into work and sometimes have specialist knowledge of supporting people with particular impairments into certain occupations. As foundation learning and other curricula increasingly require progression to work-related activity, learning providers will need to identify greater numbers of work-placement opportunities in their vicinity. Social enterprises are well-placed to assist learning providers by providing such placements.

### Work-based learning

57 Social enterprises can offer host learners on behalf of learning providers who wish to offer experiential work-based learning that cannot be delivered in college-based settings (see Case study 1).

### Supply of services and products to learning providers

58 Many social enterprises undertake commercial activities that supply services and products to other organisations. In recognition of their shared social conscience, sometimes a social enterprise may be able to offer a discount to a local learning provider. This may be reciprocated by the learning provider with a discount for the services they provide to the social enterprise. Alternatively, the learning provider might give a longer contract than is usual, thereby helping the social enterprise in its long-term financial planning. Examples of products and services supplied to learning providers include recycling services and the provision of flowers for use in college flower-arranging courses.

### Advice on disability awareness and supported employment practices

59 Social firms and social enterprises supporting disabled people tend to have amassed significant experience and knowledge of the application of disability awareness and supported employment practices. This first-hand experience from the perspective of an employer can be invaluable to other employers, including learning providers seeking to develop their own practice of disability awareness and knowledge of supported employment.

### Links to the business community

60 Social enterprises can provide a helpful link to the learning provider's local business community because, as businesses themselves, social enterprises are embedded within local business communities. As well as being able to introduce learning providers to the business community, social enterprises may also be able to alert learning providers to commercial opportunities.

### Links to the local community

61 Social enterprises often maintain a high profile within their local community as a means of gaining more customers and fulfilling their social aims. They regularly boost their profile through a wide variety of means including advertising, holding events and open days, launching promotions and networking. Through this activity, they encounter a wide cross-section of the community and often have helpful links to local, regional and national decision-makers. By tapping into these links, learning providers can be supported by a social enterprise to develop their own networks.



Katie Frazer, Support Co-ordinator at Hertfordshire PASS

# 5: Partnership Working to Support Disabled People in Making the Transition to Employment

62 This section:

- identifies key government policy statements relating to the progression of disabled learners
- describes how social enterprises can help disabled people undertaking foundation learning programmes
- discusses how greater collaboration between learning providers and social enterprises could increase the volume of work undertaken by social enterprises.

## Recent government policy aims in relation to the progression of disabled learners

63 The current Coalition Government has, as did the previous government, an intention of helping more disabled people find employment. In line with this intention, the Coalition Government has announced in *The Coalition: Our programme for government* (Cabinet Office, 2010) that they will reform Access to Work, so disabled people can apply for jobs with funding already secured for any adaptations and equipment they will need.

64 During the course of the project, it became apparent that the social enterprises encountered may be in an important position to support government policy aims relating to the education and employment of disabled people. The Coalition Government recognises the potential of social enterprises and has announced its intention to support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises in *The Coalition: Our programme for government* (Cabinet Office, 2010).

## Foundation learning and the role of social enterprises

65 Foundation learning<sup>5</sup> comprises the full range of provision and learning at Entry Level and Level 1 for all ages from Year 10 (age 14). It requires that learners follow destination-led programmes of flexible content and duration to support individual progression. Through foundation learning, the government intends to make available clear routes leading to work for vastly increased numbers of learners working at or below Level 2:

<sup>5</sup> Foundation learning was known formerly as the foundation learning tier (FLT).

*DCSF will actively promote supported employment as the preferred route for people with learning difficulties within both the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) and related workforce support for the delivery of [the] Foundation Learning Tier.*

Department of Health, 2009: 40

**66** The achievement of these aims will require the incorporation of substantial work-focused activity into the curriculum. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS, 2009) has said that:

*For learners to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding that will make them employable and allow them to progress further, spending time as part of their FLT programme in a real work environment will be important.*

LSIS, 2009: 21

To make this possible, 'learning providers will be able to fund supported work experience and job coaches (subject to ensuring that individual learning leads to a qualification and a destination such as employment)' (Department of Health, 2009: 21).

**67** This will necessitate the engagement and involvement of an enormous number of motivated employers as recognised by the LSC, which stated that:

*Providers must show how they work in partnership with support agencies, employers and other providers to implement the FLT and provide progression opportunities for learners.*

LSC, 2008: 11

**68** Some employers are in a better position to help than others. In *Effective partnership working within the FLT* (LSIS, 2009), LSIS describes the qualities that suitable employers will need to possess:

- empathy regarding the needs of learners working at Entry Level and Level 1;
- the ability to offer a wide range of learning opportunities within the workplace;
- a willingness to offer regular feedback on learner.

**69** Clearly, social enterprises that already provide this type of support to their staff will be invaluable here.

**70** *Foundation Learning: Interim Guidance*, (LSC & QCA, 2009) states the intention that learners progressing from foundation learning will eventually find paid employment that is sustainable and ideally incorporates accredited training. Not all employers are able to offer sustained employment with training; however, many social enterprises are already familiar with supporting employees with training needs to achieve qualifications. Indeed, many social enterprises have social purposes that have caused them to deliberately employ people who have needed greater support from their employer to achieve qualifications.

### Maximising the contribution of social enterprises and social firms

**71** Social firms already offer the possibility of support for government policy aims. However, the volume of their possible contribution is limited by the size of individual social firms and the overall number of social enterprises and firms in existence. An expansion in the size of individual social enterprises or an increase in the number of social enterprises in existence would lead to a greater volume of work being undertaken in support of disabled learners and employees.

**72** The size of a social enterprise generally depends upon income from its commercial activity and the number of employees it needs to maintain this level of activity. Increased collaboration with learning providers could stimulate the commercial activity of social enterprises by enabling them to:

- expand their current market by delivering their services or products to new customers within the learning provider's networks;
- expand by delivering new services or products if introduced to unmet needs by learning providers.

**73** In addition to enabling existing social enterprises to do more through their individual expansion, learning providers may wish to establish, or support the establishment of, new social enterprises with a social purpose of providing employment for disabled people, i.e. social firms. Some learning providers have already established small-scale social enterprises, which tend to focus on providing part-time, unpaid work experience for learners in a college-based facility such as a café or stationery shop. Some of these may develop into social firms providing paid employment as well as work placements.

74 The establishment of a social enterprise cannot be said to be easy even with the support of a parent body and it is beyond the scope of this publication to describe the best way for learning providers to go about establishing a new social enterprise. However, feedback from the workshops at the LSC conferences indicated that on becoming aware of the potential of social enterprises to support disabled learners, many learning providers and local authorities are keen to explore the possibility of establishing new social enterprises. Annex B details website addresses of several social enterprise development agencies and may be a helpful starting point for learning providers keen to explore what is involved in establishing a new social enterprise. Social enterprise development agencies provide general and bespoke advice on social enterprise formation and have published many helpful materials on various aspects of social enterprise development such as *The Social Enterprise Starting Point Guide* (Social Enterprise London, 2009).



Patrick Fitzgerald, Placement Co-ordinator at Hertfordshire PASS

# 6: Points for Consideration by Policymakers, Funders and Providers

75 This section offers suggestions that will enable social enterprises to do more to support disabled people in making the transition to employment or returning to employment.

76 The following suggestions grouped for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Young Persons Learning Agency, Skills Funding Agency and local authorities, for learning providers and for social enterprises, arise in part from the evaluation of the findings of the project and in part from suggestions made by social enterprises as the research was undertaken. If acted upon, these suggestions could enable social enterprises to do more to support disabled people to make a transition to employment or return to employment.

## Department for Work and Pensions

77 The DWP may wish to consider implementing:

- further flexibility in the use of Access to Work funding to cover all forms of work-based employment training activity for jobseekers in addition to the welcome recent extension of Access to Work funding to work trials;
- a built-in social return on investment calculation for use in tenders to enable better recognition of the added value social enterprises offer.

## Education and training sector policymakers and funders

78 It would be helpful if:

- social enterprise start-up grant funding were to encompass learning and skills costs as well as capital expenditure;

- learning and skills development agencies worked in partnership with social enterprise development agencies to adapt existing social enterprise start-up guidance to incorporate content on how learning providers can successfully initiate social firms;
- learning providers and funding bodies were encouraged to share their positive experiences of partnership working with social enterprises, possibly by describing their experiences through the LSIS Excellence Gateway;
- learning and skills programme tender specifications could be scrutinised to ensure that the criteria are not unduly restrictive and therefore likely to unnecessarily exclude social enterprises from bidding;
- learner funding eligibility criteria were scrutinised to ensure they do not inadvertently exclude some already disadvantaged learners. For instance, the requirement for staff undertaking Apprenticeships to be full time (a minimum of 16 hours) excludes people unable to undertake full-time work;
- Train to Gain were to offer vocational qualifications at Entry Level or alternatively employees were able to undertake college-based Entry-level provision on a part-time (day-release) basis. Neither of these are possible under current arrangements as only Skills for Life qualifications are available from Train to Gain at Entry Level and college-based Entry-level provision tends to be on a full-time basis only;
- part-time learning were to be funded where learners are unable to participate on a full-time basis, i.e. when their benefit eligibility is compromised if they undertake a full-time course. Currently, it is difficult to draw down funding for anything other than qualifications that require a full-time commitment of approximately 450 guided learning hours;

- funding were provided on a more individualised basis rather than funding in block contracts to encourage learning providers and social enterprises to meet individual needs.

### Learning providers

79 It would be helpful if learning providers were to:

- consider working in partnership with social enterprises by:
  - providing vocational training for social enterprise staff
  - providing Entry-level learning, including functional skills, employability skills and personal and social development for social enterprise staff
  - providing accreditation for social enterprise in-house training
  - providing IAG and jobsearch support for social enterprise temporary staff, internees and volunteers
  - acting as partners in the delivery of a portfolio of work-based and college-based learning provision
  - providing teacher training for social enterprise staff involved in delivering work-based training
  - purchasing goods and services
- seek to make contact with their local social enterprises and to maintain links with them through local networks (social enterprises contact details are provided at Annex C);
- offer their knowledge and expertise to social enterprises either by taking up social enterprise board positions or by supporting them through networks or umbrella bodies;
- approach social enterprises to discuss the possibility of developing new work-based learning opportunities located at the social enterprise;
- explore what is involved in leading or supporting the initiation of social enterprises in their area;
- offer greater flexibility to social enterprises in terms of the content, timings and minimum learner numbers within subcontracts;
- establish stronger links between their employer responsive teams and their in-house foundation learning teams to enable them to better support employed learners working at or below Level 2.

### Social enterprises

80 It would be helpful for social enterprises to:

- consider working in partnership with learning providers by:
  - providing work-experience placements as a step in the progression to paid employment
  - hosting work-based learning
  - supplying services and products to learning providers
  - providing advice on disability awareness and supported employment practices
  - acting as a link to the business community
  - acting as a link to the local community
- regularly showcase their work to learning providers and to explore the possibilities of partnership working. One way of achieving this would be for employees within social enterprises to offer to become learning champions for disabled learners on full-time programmes with local learning providers;
- invite senior learning provider staff onto their boards to enable providers to support their development and raise their awareness of new opportunities linked to the education and training sector.

# Annex A:

## Glossary

### Access to Work

A specialist disability programme delivered by Jobcentre Plus providing practical advice and grant-enabled support to disabled people and their employers to help them overcome work-related obstacles resulting from disability.

### Accredited learning programme

A learning programme that provides an opportunity for a learner to work towards a recognised qualification.

### Additional learning support

Specific support identified as being needed by a learner to achieve his or her primary learning goal, e.g. literacy or numeracy support.

### Community business

A social enterprise with a social purpose of benefit to the community.

### Community interest company (CIC)

A type of company and legal entity within the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004 that is designed to meet the needs of social enterprises, including special features designed for enterprises established for a social purpose.

### Co-operative

An autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

### Disabled

The term 'disabled' is used in this report as defined within the social model of disability, encompassing people with sensory impairment, physical impairment, mental health difficulties, long-term health difficulties or learning difficulties, disabilities or difference who may be disabled by societal, environmental and attitudinal barriers.

### Experiential learning/training

A form of learning by doing and reflecting on what you have done.

### Employer responsive team

The team of staff within a learning provider that delivers work-based learning for employers and employees.

### Foundation learning

The new flexible curriculum and accreditation framework that aims to underpin effective, personalised learning programmes for learners working below Level 2, and which addresses vocational skills, functional skills and personal development needs.

### Holistic support

A full range of support interventions provided to address every type of need including those that may indirectly hinder the achievement of an objective, e.g. addressing practical and emotional support needs relating to adjusting to and maintaining employment as well as comprehensive support relating to work tasks.

### IAG

Information, advice and guidance, which generally refers to learning, employment and careers advice.

### Integrated workforce

A workforce in which there are both disabled and non-disabled staff working together on an equal basis.

### Learning provider

An organisation that delivers learning programmes, e.g. FE colleges, universities, private sector training providers, independent specialist providers, adult education colleges and organisations that deliver learning as an element of their work such as social enterprises that have a training centre.

### NEET

Not in education, employment or training.

### Personalised budget

An allocation of funding given to users of community care services to meet their assessed needs and which can be taken either as direct payments or passed to a local authority to commission services. Recent announcements have confirmed that personal budgets can be used to cover the costs of activity undertaken to support a transition to employment.

### Progression

The process by which someone may develop themselves in order to advance to, or be promoted to, a new role, often involving the application of different skills and having a higher status.

**Real employment**

Employment that is not sheltered in any way and has standard employment terms and conditions.

**Reasonable adjustments**

Changes that an employer has a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act to make to ensure that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage by employment arrangements or any physical feature of the workplace.

**Skills for Life**

The name of the national strategy in England for improving adult literacy, language (including English as a second language or ESOL) and numeracy skills, and the term often used when describing course delivery of these skills.

**Social enterprise**

A business that trades for a social purpose and reinvests its profits for that purpose. The social purposes of social enterprises can vary considerably, for example, their social purpose may be to protect the environment, to provide employment for disadvantaged people or to provide care for older people. They can also have more than one social purpose, for instance, a social enterprise café could aim both to provide employment for disadvantaged people and to provide affordable meals for people on low incomes

There are several different types of social enterprise:

- development trusts
- credit unions
- community businesses
- co-operatives
- social firms.

Of these community businesses, co-operatives, and social firms are most likely to have a stated social aim of employing disabled people.

**Social firm**

A social enterprise that has a social purpose of creating good-quality jobs for people disadvantaged in the labour market.

**Social purpose**

The constitutionally stated social aim of a social enterprise.

**Social return on investment**

A measure, in financial terms whenever possible, of the social value created through enterprise and voluntary activity, which is generally additional to the funders required outputs.

**Supported employment**

A process of helping people with learning disabilities (and other disabled people) to access and retain employment through the core components of: vocational profiling; job

finding; job analysis and placement; job training; and follow-along services.

**Train to Gain**

The main programme through which work-based learning is delivered for employers and employees.

**Work-based learning**

Learning that takes place at a workplace and equips people with skills that are helpful to them at work (see Train to Gain).

## Annex B:

# Social Enterprise Development Agencies

Co-operatives UK  
[www.uk.coop](http://www.uk.coop)

Community Development Finance Association  
[www.cdfa.org.uk](http://www.cdfa.org.uk)

Development Trusts Association  
[www.dta.org.uk](http://www.dta.org.uk)

School for Social Entrepreneurs  
[www.sse.org.uk](http://www.sse.org.uk)

Social Enterprise Coalition  
[www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk)

Social Enterprise London  
[www.sel.org.uk](http://www.sel.org.uk)

Social Enterprise Training and Support (SETAS)  
[www.setas.co.uk](http://www.setas.co.uk)

Social Firms UK  
[www.socialfirms.co.uk](http://www.socialfirms.co.uk)

## Annex C: Directories of Social Enterprises

Many online national, regional and local directories of social enterprises exist. To find your local directory, do an internet search adding the name of your town, city and region and the words 'social enterprise directory'. Examples are listed below.

CAN (previously Community Action Network)  
[www.can-online.org.uk/social\\_enterprises\\_directory.php](http://www.can-online.org.uk/social_enterprises_directory.php)

CaSE-da (the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Development Agency)  
[www.case-da.co.uk/directory/socentdir.php](http://www.case-da.co.uk/directory/socentdir.php)

SEEM (Social Enterprise East Midlands)  
[www.seem.uk.net/home/articles/seem/directory/47](http://www.seem.uk.net/home/articles/seem/directory/47)

Social Enterprise Coalition  
[www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/member-directory.html](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/member-directory.html)

Social Enterprise London  
[www.sel.org.uk/directory.aspx](http://www.sel.org.uk/directory.aspx)

## Annex D: References

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