



SocialFirms UK

**Report of one-day seminar on
Mental Health & Social Enterprise Solutions**

held on 23 March 2007

RBS, Bishopsgate, London

Supported by



CabinetOffice
Office of the **Third Sector**



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Contents

	Page
1. Executive Summary	3
2. Seminar Programme	4
3. List of Delegates	5
4. Presentation Summaries	
i. <i>The Crisis That We Face.</i> Dr Marcus Roberts.	8
ii. <i>Setting Mental Health In Context.</i> Ian Grant.	9
iii. <i>Outlining Social Enterprise.</i> Jonathon Bland.	10
iv. <i>Social Enterprises Doing The Business.</i>	
• <i>Forth Sector</i>	11
• <i>IMBY</i>	12
• <i>MillRace IT</i>	14
• <i>Core Arts</i>	15
5. Creative Time	21
6. Pulling The Strings Together	26



1. Executive Summary

This seminar aimed to bring together two areas of current interest and debate - mental health and social enterprise. The context for the seminar was the knowledge that despite the majority of people with mental health problems wanting to work, only 20% are employed, and they are more than twice as likely to lose their jobs than other workers. In addition, fewer than 40% of employers would consider employing someone with a history of mental illness.

A number of papers were presented that explored the challenges around mental health, recovery and employment, and considered various potential solutions, including social enterprise. Case studies of successful social enterprises were presented and recent research to identify and measure the benefits in respect of health gains and long term cost savings was discussed. Delegates were also invited to participate in a 'creative time' session by responding to six topical questions.

Speakers covered the following topics:

- seriousness and extent of the problem of mental health
- cost to individuals and to society of mental health problems
- benefits of employment to individuals with mental health problems
- nature and role of social enterprise (any business that trades for a social purpose) and Social Firms (set up specifically to create jobs for severely disadvantaged people in the labour market)
- four case studies of social enterprises, illustrating how they can work productively with employees or volunteers with mental health problems
- developing the evidence base, using the methodology of social return on investment (SROI).

The seminar was also addressed by Lord Adebawale, CEO of Turning Point, who offered a personal view of what radical action was required.

The main issues and recommendations that emerged through the day were the need to:

- reform the benefits system to remove uncertainties and address the 'benefit trap' that means people with mental health problems are disadvantaged by losing housing and council tax benefits if they find work
- apply greater flexibility on benefits making it easier to come off (and go back on)
- create sustainable employment opportunities for development and progression promote social enterprises and Social Firms - through improved marketing; appropriate procurement procedures together with education and training of relevant staff; financial incentives and favourable financial packages; and by grants and loans for business start ups
- develop closer alliances between skills services and employment services (as proposed in the Leitch review)
- create shared objectives between Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council, recognising the significant culture change required by both organisations required to achieve this
- restructure Remploy in a less risk-averse manner by government, putting more money into job placement activity and less into sustaining Remploy factories implement a new funding model of open market, outcome-based contracting with third sector involvement at the centre (following David Freud's recent report to the Department for Work and Pensions).

The event was chaired by Dr. Bob Grove from the Sainsbury's Centre For Mental Health.

The following pages provide a summary of papers presented to the seminar.

2. Seminar Programme

- 9.00 – 9.30am: Registration and coffee
- 9.30 – 9.40am: Welcome from the Chair
Dr. Bob Grove, Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health
- 9.40 – 10.00: The Crisis That We Face
Dr Marcus Roberts, Head of Policy, MIND
- 10.00 – 10.20: Setting Mental Health In Context
Ian Grant, CEO, Mental Health Matters
- 10.20 – 10.40: Outlining Social Enterprise
Jonathan Bland, CEO, Social Enterprise Coalition
- 10.40 – 11am: Building The Capacity Of Social Enterprise
Simon Hebditch, CEO, Capacity Builders **
- 11 - 11.30: Coffee & Exhibition
- 11.30 – 1pm: Social enterprises doing the business:
- Forth Sector
 - IMBY
 - MillRace IT
 - Core Arts
- 1pm – 1.45pm: Lunch
- 1.45 – 2pm: Buying From Social Enterprises – another way of having impact.
Sally Reynolds, CEO, Social Firms UK
- 2pm – 2.25pm: A Compelling Case For Cost Savings In The Long Term
Sheila Durie, Haldane Associates
- 2.25 – 2.45pm: Radical Action Required
Lord Victor Adebawale, CEO, Turning Point
- 2.45 – 3.25pm: Creative time.
- 3.25 – 3.45pm: Pulling The Strings Together & Next Steps
- 3.50 – 4pm: Conclusions from the Chair

3. Delegates

Delegate

Organisation

Aisha Henry	
Anna Young	
Jenny Soulsby	
Lorna Peters	
Martin Walwyn	
Michelle Tyler	
Nana Osanti	
Patrick Stoupe	
Robert McSorland	
Gwyneth Marichi	Aaron Angel Artiste Management
Jonathan Staal	Abertay Dundee University
Andrew Voyce	Activ8
Norman Sterritt	Alternative Angles
John Lloyd	Anthony Collins Solicitors
Kay Sookun	Bedfordshire and Luton CP NHS Trust
Stephanie Delahey	Boosters Business
Adrian Ashton	Burnley Enterprise
Catherine McLeod	Cabinet Office
Rachel Catford	Central North West London Mental Health Trust
Gavin Eastly	Clarendon Day Centre
John Nurse	Client Development Worker for Sutton Mental Health Foundation
Roger Powell	CSIP
Tony Kirk	CSIP West Midlands
Mary Dunleavy	CSIP West Midlands
Bill Atkin	CSV Lindon Training
Edward Scully	Department Of Health
Rupert Lown	Department Of Work and Pensions
Athena Bakalexii	Department Of Work and Pensions
Andy Wilde	Department Of Work and Pensions
Lis Robinson	Department Of Work and Pensions
Sanchia Bailey	Department Of Work and Pensions
Christine Oliver	Devon NHS Trust
Steve Johnson	DISC
Dorothy Thom	East Kent Enterprise Gateway
Suna Halil Panayiotou	Enfield CAB
Lyn Yeatman	Enterprise Plymouth
Dave Nicholson	Ex-cell Programme
Susan Burdo	Focus To Work cic
Bob Wallis	Fredericks Foundation
Niall Maxwell	Fredericks Foundation
Aloyse Raptopoulos	Fredericks Foundation

Delegates Continued.

<u>Delegate</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
Alice Thacker	Fredericks Foundation
Janet Lane	Gofal Cymru
Terry Brenig-Jones	Gofal Cymru
Ewan Hilton	Gofal Cymru
Mark Knowles	Hertfordshire Joint Commissioning Team
Patience Seebohm	Independent Researcher
Jayne Couchman	JCCS LTD
Steve Carpenter	Jobcentre Plus
David Lewis	Kensington and Chelsea Mind
David Scoffield	Kensington and Chelsea Mind
Lynn Jackson	Kent and Medway NHS
Janice Woodruff	London Borough Of Haringey
Diane Clark	London Borough Of Haringey
Bill Slade	London Borough Of Haringey
Jacky Hammond	MCCH Society
Richard Hockett	MillRaceIT
Lewis Walsh	MillRaceIT
Darren O`Brien	Network For Change
Chris Bayliss	New Horizons
Sara Nicholls	New Horizons
David Parker	New Sector
Rodrigo Alvarez	Newham Adults, Culture & Community Services
Stephanie Coleman	Newport City Council
Sean Tarry	NHS Mental Health Nurse
Hilary Colston	North East London Mental Health Trust
Henrick Stojack	Oaklands Community Center
Nick Smith	Oaklands Community Center
Mukesh Gohil	Open Mind Consultant
Martin Davies	Pluss
Bill Hande	Pluss
Eric Munro	RBS
Esther Deshaut	RBS
Tracy Axten	RBS
Ann Peckham	Renaissance Café
Julie Connell	Resources For Mental Health
Cath Cooper	Resources For Mental Health
Steve Oglivie	Rethink
Joan Penrose	Rethink
Joan West	Rethink
Gloria Wright	Rethink
Ruth Phillips	RFET
Terry Thorp	Rochdale and District Mind

Delegates Continued.

Delegate

Organisation

Joan Geany	Rochdale and District Mind
Sean Duggan	Sainsbury Centre For Mental Health
Chris Morgan	SEDC
Andrew Harrison	SHUSH
Leona McDermid	Social Firms Scotland
Kathy Baker	Social Firms UK
Maria Kenyon	Social Firms UK
Natalie Spencer	Social Firms UK
Veronica Hwang	Social Firms UK
Claire Price	South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
Phil Waters	South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust
Nicholas Campell-Watts	Southside Partnership
Philip Benge	Southwark Works
Mark Dale	Sunrise
Colleen Weedon-Skinner	Sunrise
Alison Jones	SUSSE
Mark Mazzariello	SUSSE
Andrea Gavin	Sussex NHS Trust
Phil Ruthen	Sutton Mental Health Action Group
Anne Brennan	Sutton Mental Health Action Group
Agnieszka Kwasnieuska	The Friends Of The Disabled - Poland
Marzena Bednarkiewicz	The Friends Of The Disabled - Poland
David Lamb	Triodos Bank
Eryl Foulkes	Tudor Trust
Wendy Mitchell	Turning Point
Patsy Telford	Turning Point
Carole McHugh	United Response
Doug Foster	University Of Surrey
Valerie Pinkerton	W2W Mind In Mid Herts
Vicky Harris	Walsall PCT
Allen Foster	Wellbeing Initiatives cic
Brian Graham	West London Mental Health Trust
Alison Hoble	West London Mental Health Trust

4. Presentation Summaries

The Crisis That We Face

Dr Marcus Roberts, Head of Policy and Parliamentary Unit, Mind

This presentation made clear that access to employment for people with mental health problems is a key issue, and covered the following topics:



- the extent of mental health problems
- the cost of mental ill health both to individuals and to the economy in general
- discrimination against people with mental health problems in the workplace
- issues around workplace mental health.

Dr Roberts started by noting that mental health is 'everyone's issue' as current statistics indicate that around one in four people in Britain will experience mental health problems every year. For every 1,000 people in Britain, around 300 will experience mental health problems. Of these, 230 will visit a GP and 102 will be diagnosed with a mental health problem; 24 will be referred to a psychiatric service and six will become hospital in-patients [Mind statistics].

Crippling depression and chronic anxiety are the biggest causes of misery in Britain today....which shame keeps out of sight...According to the respected Psychiatric Morbidity Survey, one in six of us would be diagnosed as having depression or chronic anxiety disorder, which means one family in three is affected. [LSE Depression Report, June 2006].

The World Health Organisation claims that depression affects about 121 million people worldwide and by 2020 it is projected to reach second place in the ranking of world health problems. For the 15-44 year age group, it is already the second highest problem in world health.

Dr Roberts then demonstrated the cost of mental health problems. In England, annual costs are £77 billion, comprising £12.5 billion in care and health costs, £23.1 billion in lost economic output and £41.8 billion in human costs. In Scotland, the costs of mental health problems are £8.6 billion per year, 9% of GDP, with human costs estimated at £4.7 billion. [Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health]. A recent EU Green Paper claims mental health costs the EU 3-4% of GDP, mainly in lost productivity.

Mental health problems are responsible for 40% of Incapacity Benefit [IB] claimants, with a further 10% having these as a secondary factor, and this is despite the UK having one of the most stringent disability benefit gateways in the world [OECD]. He noted that IB fraud is less than 0.5%.

Dr Roberts stressed that access to employment in Britain was a key issue, quoting evidence of discrimination against people with mental health problems. [Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) survey indicated more than 60% of employers disregarded applications from people with mental health problems].

In addition, workplace stress was an issue, with the Health and Safety Executive finding that 20% of recent survey respondents described their work as 'very' or 'extremely' stressful. Mental health problems account for the loss of over 91 million days each year, yet these problems may not be recognised by employers: a survey was quoted that indicated 45% of surveyed employers believed none of their staff suffered from mental ill health [Shaw Trust].

Dr Roberts ended by noting other important issues to be considered. These were the quality, availability and choice of treatment; rights and discrimination; social inclusion and marginalisation and environmental issues.

Setting Mental Health In Context

Ian Grant, CEO, Mental Health Matters

Ian Grant's paper examined the context for mental health providers and set the scene for an expansion of opportunity for social enterprises and Social Firms by looking at examples of other employment models. He also examined best, and less good, practice.



He started by noting the need to provide additional investment in mental well being and the current context of public services being run in a mixed economy of private/independent sector providers. The present UK Labour Government has expressed a genuine desire for the 3rd sector to take an increasingly important role in service delivery. However, there were both warnings and lessons to be learnt from other countries. In the United States of America, health care is tightly managed and non-governmental organisations [NGOs] live in a contract culture with little investment in health promotion. In the countries of Australasia, covering Australia, New Zealand, and neighbouring islands in the Pacific Ocean, he noted the existence of real partnerships tackling health and social care alongside issues of ethnicity and social inclusion.

Ian Grant acknowledged three types of employment model that work for those at a distance from the labour market:

- individual placement and support – also known as ‘place and train’
- Social Firms – a sub-set of social enterprise (businesses that trade for a social purpose) these firms are set up specifically to create jobs for people severely disadvantaged in the labour market
- micro enterprise – or self employment.

He noted the need to support such employment initiatives. Mental well being, recovery and employment are common aims in both social enterprises and the 3rd sector. In the USA, social enterprises can rely on contracts to run public health infrastructure, e.g. records repositories. In the UK, social enterprises and the 3rd sector employ ‘champions’ and he argued that *Pathways to Work* should do this too. In his view, currently this initiative has not touched those at a distance from the labour market.

Social enterprise was seen as the preferred model because it is a solutions-based sector, it offers added value and it provides a means of tackling social injustice with ‘a built-in social inclusion policy’ of employing disadvantaged people.

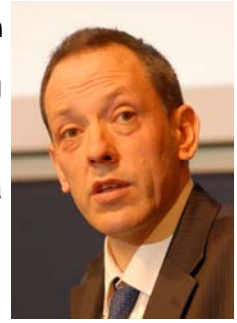
Ian Grant's recommendations on what is needed generally included:

- widening opportunities for the 3rd sector in providing public services
- ensuring commissioners appreciate the value of social businesses
- increasing investment in ‘talking therapies’ or cognitive behaviour therapy to tackle the underlying growth in mental health problems.

Outlining Social Enterprises

Jonathan Bland, CEO, Social Enterprise Coalition

Jonathan Bland's paper presented social enterprise as a successful means creating empowerment and securing employment through trading in the marketplace. He described the sector as wide and varied, coming in all shapes and sizes with a wide range of legal and organisational forms. All social enterprises, however, traded for a social and/or environmental purpose whatever ownership and governance structures such enterprises exhibited. Social enterprises could be born out of private businesses, the public sector and the voluntary/charity/not-for-profit sector.



Currently in the UK there are 55,000 social enterprises, having a turnover of £27 billion and employing 500,000 people. These social enterprises share certain key aims:

- they are market led and value driven
- they provide both empowerment and opportunity
- they are innovative
- they provide better value services in real terms.

Jonathan Bland identified a number of ingredients he felt were critical to success for social enterprises. These were:

- the right quality of leadership in the organisation, to provide strong vision and values for the enterprise
- the right business models, with form following function
- the right kind of support and training for staff
- appropriate investment in the business
- getting the timing right to enter the market
- in public sector markets, an alignment with commissioning objectives was also seen to be key.

Forth Sector

Kevin Robbie, Chief Executive



Forth Sector is one of Scotland's leading social enterprises. The company creates supportive employment for people with mental health problems through running small commercial businesses, trading to high standards. These Social Firms operate in a range of markets, including tourism, catering, laundry and embroidery services and manufacturing/retail. Forth Sector also provides business development services to the social economy through Forth Sector Development. These include mentoring, visits and business replication. Originally called Edinburgh Community Trust, the organisation started in 1981, run and managed by a group of trustees who distributed small scale funding to innovative or 'riskier' projects that was unable to access mainstream funds. By 1990 Edinburgh Community Trust had evolved into a company delivering its own services. Its focus was to establish small businesses that could be self-financing while providing supportive employment opportunities for people with mental health problems.

These businesses are wholly owned by Forth Sector. Customers can expect the standards of service and product to compare favourably with any other commercial business. Each is run as a social firm with the aim of maintaining a successful business while providing training and supported workplace opportunities for people who have experienced mental health problems.

Current businesses are:

- Edinburgh Embroidery Services - supplier of embroidered corporate, leisure, school and work wear
- Parkview Laundry - specialists in laundering duvets, sports kits and work wear
- Rolls On Wheels - outside catering and roll delivery
- Six Mary's Place Guesthouse - VisitScotland three star award-winning guesthouse centrally situated in Edinburgh
- The Soap Co Edinburgh - Scottish traditional handmade soaps and gifts
- The Wood Works - rescued wood for reuse
- Forth Sector Development - which uses Forth Sector's experience in running Social Firms to assist others develop their own social enterprise initiatives
- Forth Sector Restart - a successful back-to-work initiative for clients with depression or stress-related problems.

Forth Sector sees itself as supportive, professional and enterprising. Care is taken to provide individual support and training, and in placing people in the right working environment. The opportunities provided within the real working environments of the Social Firms offer the opportunity to do real work of value, and to work in teams, thus reducing isolation. It is a flexible working environment, with planned adjustments as appropriate. Critically, the working environment provides structure with required job coaching as necessary.

The impact of these Social Firms to employees with mental health problems can be seen in health gains, employability, reduced social isolation, cost savings and having a job title which brings with it self esteem and confidence.

In summary, the aims of Forth Sector are to support people to:

- recover from the impact of their mental ill health
- increase their employability
- regain or retain employment.

"Forth Sector's central aim is to create work. It is through work that most of us find our way of contributing to the world we live in." Andy Hunter, Founder and Chair of Forth Sector

IMBY

Mark Powell, CEO



IMBY is the Social Firm development agency for Yorkshire and the Humber. Its main objective is to create employment for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market, for health-related and social reasons, through the development of businesses that will maximise their opportunities and cater for their needs. IMBY was established in 1996 as a logical progression from Reclaim, a Social Firm formed in 1992, to provide employment for adults with a learning disability in the Sheffield area. It is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, employing in excess of twenty full and part-time staff, and governed by a Board of Trustees/Directors, all of whom are disabled people. Turnover for the last two years, which consists largely of income and expenditure associated with project grant funding, has been around £600,000.

Mark Powell decided to present a tour of Social Firms in South Yorkshire as a means of illustrating what social firm employment means to many of the people who work in them. Firstly, he introduced us to the driver of our vehicle, Brian. Brian worked for fifteen years as a lorry driver for Reclaim, a plastics reclamation Social Firm, but was laid off on health and safety grounds. At about this time Brian's wife died, and he became depressed. He recovered when the opportunity to drive a Social Firm bus became available when IMBY piloted a Transport Social Firm in Sheffield in 2005/6. It now operates six vehicles profitably across South Yorkshire.

Projects visited on the tour were:

- The Quadrant, a £12million social enterprise investment that houses government departments, public and private sector businesses, and a number of social enterprises and Social Firms. IMBY and the Sheffield arm of the successful Fair Chance initiative are also based in the building, together with an IMBY Social Research department, the Centre for Employment and Disadvantage Studies (CEDS). CEDS has turnover in excess of £1million a year. It carries out government research on social issues, employing people who are seriously disadvantaged in the labour market to do much of the work.
- also at The Quadrant is the 1-1 IMBY data base, providing a wealth of accessible and up-to-date information on organisations that work with disadvantaged groups of people across South Yorkshire - homelessness, crime prevention and rehabilitation of offenders, drug and alcohol related organisations, BME groups, lone parent groups, and disability sector bodies. This data base grew out of a small, Sheffield based piece of work that Voluntary Action Sheffield handed over to IMBY in 2007, and it has proved to be a very popular and much used resource for making links between organisations and avoiding duplication of services. Also at The Quadrant is Dead Earnest Theatre, which has a national reputation for its Forum Theatre work focused on teaching and awareness raising around health issues, particularly mental health.
- Here too is Viewpoint, a successful telephone based Social Firm that is contracted to local authorities and to Housing Associations to provide information on the level of satisfaction experienced by tenants when refurbishment work, such as work on the Decent Homes initiative, is carried out on their homes. Eight staff work on ViewPoint, five of whom are disabled and two of whom have never worked before.
- Doncaster Business and Innovation Centre (DBIC). Based here is DBIC Café, a profitable Social Firm that employs eleven people. The business exists to create employment for people who are seriously disadvantaged in the labour market and is very successful. Staff include Rita, an experienced caterer who is recovering from a breakdown, who is building up her confidence and her hours gradually. There is also Rachel, a formerly shy young girl who arrived three years ago with a label of learning disability and now calls out orders, chats with customers and operates the till with competence and charm. Paul is busy in the back kitchen – a man with an autistic spectrum disorder who astonished family and carers by asking for more paid hours at the café two years ago, and who is now a key member of the café team. Several of the newer café staff have been hired through the Temps arm of Yes2Work, a national employment agency that specialises in placing people in Social Firms.

- Yes2Work has changed a lot since its six years as a New Deal for Disabled People job broker ended last year. Instead of just accepting disabled people, Yes2Work now takes everyone. This change of approach has made an enormous difference to who signs on at Yes2Work because people with mental health and social issues often do not wish to be labelled but welcome tailored support.
- the house where Yes2Work have their office is big, and houses a befriending scheme, with a video production unit allowing under confident people to put on record that they have skills and hopes and dreams just like everyone else. These 'cv-roms' were piloted by Deploy in Sheffield, with funding from job centre plus. It also houses 'Clean Break', a programme that links offenders with custodial sentences with jobs on release, and it lends itself well to providing training for jobs that are coming up in the area.
- In development is Wholefood Planet, a Social Firm providing a very wide range of wholefoods – in bulk for the trade customer, and in retail packs for the family shopper. Ten people will be employed at Wholefood Planet in warehousing, packing and customer service, and most of them will have experienced mental health problems in recent years.
- Wakefield MBC has shared in promoting Social Firms – Petra (the information and guidance agency), Aalto, the wood recycling business, Pack-It North, the packaging and fulfilment business, and Catering Plus, a range of high quality catering operations. Leeds has Broomby's Leeds Social Business Centre that houses 'Out of Print', a design and print Social Firm, Gillan's Treasure Chest, a jewellery design and manufacture business, and the Vale Gardening Crew – three full-time employees who used to attend a local day centre for people with mental health problems.
- in Sheffield, 'Sweets'n Treats' serves staff, patients and visitors in Northern General Hospital. It employs several users of long-term psychiatric inpatient services. Employees may only work for a few hours each week, but research has demonstrated a significant reduction in psychotic symptomatology, a reduction in readmission rates, and increased engagement in services. Supported by one to one job coaches, there is strong evidence that having a job is beneficial to these employees, giving them income, social identity and status, social contacts and support, and a way of structuring and occupying time. One employee used only to be capable of rearranging items in the shop fridge, but now she serves customers confidently and efficiently.
- Buster's Coffee Company in Neepsend, where the coffee for the Doncaster cafe and other outlets is ground and packaged by a Social Firm team. Amongst the workforce are three people who have never worked before.



Siobhan Pierce, CEO, and Anne Pleasant, Deputy CEO

MillRace IT Ltd is a social firm in Essex specialising in IT disposal, secure data eradication and providing training and employment for the long-term unemployed. It developed from a project run by InterAct Chelmsford, a registered charity, and InterAct remains the parent company. MillRace IT also works in Partnership with RDC, an IT asset management company.



MillRace IT's aims are to:

- enable local people with mental health problems or learning difficulties to transform their lives
- create paid employment for disadvantaged people, particularly those recovering from mental ill health
- actively encourage community and commercial participation in the social and environmental aspects of the firm's work.

InterAct had products and services to offer, with established customers and resources and capabilities as an established organisation. It also had a desire to create employment opportunities for vulnerable people, as well as people with IT knowledge and expertise. MillRace IT was formed in 2000, as a social firm and private limited company, with one share. It has increased its turnover by over one-third to 2006 and other measures of success were presented, including a measure of the social return on investment [SROI] being £7.40 of social value created for every £1 invested.

Siobhan Pierce and Anne Pleasant noted a number of factors that made MillRace IT a successful social firm. They included:

- a supportive environment
- social activity, interaction and networks
- seeking the involvement of families
- potential for, and achievement of, social inclusion
- confidence building through teamwork
- firm but fair assessment processes with signposting and reasonable adjustments
- staff team are task and people focused
- atmosphere of inspiration and enthusiasm
- recognition of chaotic lifestyles.

They also noted that commitment had to come from all managers and staff, as in any business. The diversification of activities created more opportunities for employment and the back up from the InterAct team provided useful business management and mental health expertise.

Core Arts

Paul Monks, CEO



Core Arts is a registered charity that exists to promote the artistic and creative abilities of people who experience severe and enduring mental health problems, freely and without prejudice.

Core Arts aims to:

- use the arts to break down many of the prejudices associated with people with mental health problems and promote access and participation
- provide an environment in which members are able to express themselves and their ideas and know they will be heard and respected
- respond to members' creative assets, drive and imagination and celebrate their talent and abilities through exhibitions and events.

Core Arts was set up in 1992 by an artist using vacant space in the old Hackney Hospital. His studio became a haven for artistic expression. With limited funding, an open studio was created. Several successful exhibitions later, Core Arts was officially born, gaining charitable status in 1994. After using temporary accommodation, it obtained the lease for a vacant building where it continues to thrive and expand in a variety of directions.

Core Arts is now well-known as an innovative leader in mental health creativity, cultural diversity and social enterprise. With no analytical or clinical agenda, the expansive programme and member led ethos focuses on what people can achieve, supporting them to increase their capacity for innovation and learning, problem solving, confidence and leadership skills. Run by professional artists, writers and musicians in their own right, some of whom have been through the psychiatric system themselves, Core Arts creates a genuine, exciting atmosphere of mutual learning and shared experience.

Core Arts has experienced more people wanting to take part in activities every year. Targeting disabled people, black and minority ethnic people and women with mental health problems means we are reaching those who face the toughest barriers. The organisation regularly engages in open dialogue, and our methods have influenced many others, including statutory services, to improve the potential for equality and lasting change for people who are generally regarded as having little to offer society.

Core Arts offers free access for members to fully equipped music rehearsal and recording studios, art studios and computer areas with internet access, complemented by weekly creative workshops, personal development programmes and work experience. It also offers graphic design, horticulture, complementary therapies and more through associated social businesses.

Buying From Social Enterprises

Sally Reynolds, CEO, Social Firms UK



Sally Reynolds presented a guide to how people could have social impact as consumers of products and services produced by social enterprises and Social Firms.

In terms of place to look, she recommended websites as follows:

For both: www.nearbuyou.com or www.shopsocialenterprise.com

For Social Firms in particular: www.socialfirms.co.uk

For social enterprise; www.supply2.gov.uk

The Social Firms Trade Directory is currently being developed by Social Firms UK. Social Firms rely on their business income in order to be able to create sustainable employment for people severely

disadvantaged in the open labour market. Sally Reynolds explained that by buying from Social Firms you can help them to do this, whilst receiving as professional and good quality a service/product as you will elsewhere. The directory of websites is currently only for products and services that can be supplied by Social Firms and Emerging Social Firms to anywhere around the country. The register will be added to on an ongoing basis.

She urged people who run a Social Firm or Emerging Social Firm and would like to apply for the organisation's website to be added to this list, to contact Kathy Baker on **01273 890 333**.

Illustrative current entries were referred to:

Travel agency – www.travelmattersuk.com

Printers – www.netherneprint.co.uk

Soap manufacture and retail – www.thesoapco.co.uk

In order to provide quality assurance to purchasers, a Social Firm 'quality mark' is being developed and will be launched publicly on 7 February 2008. It is designed to reassure purchasers about the genuine, independently verified social impact of Social Firms and the aim is to create more business income for Social Firms that meet the standard. The quality mark will be awarded after a rigorous assessment against the values of:

- enterprise
- employment
- empowerment.

A logo for the quality mark is in production and consultation is now taking place. Discussion is also progressing on the potential transferability of the quality mark quality assurance standard across UK, social enterprise in general and also across other countries.

Sally Reynolds ended her presentation by identifying some ways and means by which increased consumption from social enterprises and Social Firms could be encouraged. They were:

- ensuring the awareness of procurement staff
- initiatives from central government
- use of social clauses
- use of reserved contracts – although this only applies to companies employing >50% of disabled people.

A Compelling Case For Cost Savings In The Long Term

Sheila Durie, Haldane Associates



This paper presented interim results of a pilot study on Social Firms' social return on investment (SROI) carried out in Scotland. Sheila Durie started by explaining the concept of SROI, developed by Jed Emerson of Harvard Business School for the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund in San Francisco. She described the concept as:

- a way of representing the value of social, community and environmental impacts in financial terms
- a methodology based on standard accounting and commercial investment principles
- a way of combining economic, social and other results from an investment into one index of 'blended value'
- particularly appropriate in measuring social enterprise impacts, but can be applied in other sectors, including the private sector.

A European SROI network has been formed to develop peer review and benchmarking, currently between six country members. In the UK, some independent researchers and the New Economics Foundation are developing and using the concept. Around 16 case studies have been carried out in the UK to date, with 15-20 studies elsewhere in Europe.

SROI as a framework is attractive for the following reasons:

- supports performance measurement – allowing effective programme planning and improved evaluation of outcomes
- demonstrates the importance of work on activity
- improves communication of the value of work to internal and external stakeholders
- relates value creation to individual stakeholders
- focuses attention on social enterprises as organisations that create social and economic value
- develops a new concept of sustainability based on wider than financial impacts.

Sheila explained the SROI evaluation framework, which is composed of a standard process and a series of stages, with performance standards or set options.

The Equal SROI pilot study was funded by the European Equal programme through the Social Economy Scotland Development Partnership, and match funded by Communities Scotland. It developed a number of innovative methods, including proxies and benchmarking to evaluate impacts across a range of types of activities:

- employability and 'distance travelled'
- individual mental well being and quality of life
- social networks/social capital/social inclusion
- impacts on referral agents and partners
- methods for engaging young people in the SROI evaluation activity.

Case studies of two Social Firms (Solstice and Six Mary's Place Guesthouse) were then presented to illustrate the application and development of the SROI framework, where the aim of the SROI analysis is to identify the social added value delivered compared to another private sector business.

Methods for measuring mental health improvement were developed by:

- workshop with participants to establish their reporting of outcomes and attribution
- individual questionnaires and 'spider' diagrams to establish patterns of consumption of health etc. services before and after joining
- examination of participant records
- calculation of savings through research into unit costs of services in NHS and social services.

In comparing the interim results from the two case studies some issues emerged and were discussed:

- the two firms offer similar opportunities but mental health savings were estimated to be much higher in one so interviewing methods may vary
- potential savings to the NHS by these two Social Firms are estimated to be between £11,000 - £21,000 per annum per participant
- these will be recurring annual savings, suggesting that investment in Social Firms/enterprises could deliver long term benefits and savings for the NHS and government, or at least the opportunity to shift resource allocations over time
- employment gains appear outweighed by mental health gains
- recent research by David Freud for the Department for Work and Pensions suggests a different basis for calculation of value for moving someone from IB to employment. This would increase the value generated and therefore the social return from Social Firms. For Six Mary's Place, their social return would increase by 35%.



Radical Action Required

Lord Victor Adebowale, CEO, Turning Point



Lord Adebowale spoke about the experiences of Turning Point as illustrative of what he felt was required in respect of radical action. He then offered a personal view of what changes were necessary. From Turning Point's experience of helping around 5,000 people with mental health issues, he noted the evidence that most people have complex needs, manifest in a dual diagnosis of co-existing substance misuse or a learning disability, and/or in housing issues, unemployment, a history of (re)offending. For this reason, he argued that mental health should not be considered in isolation. For example, housing is a recurring problem and he noted that services like Turning Point's Housing Link offer practical support for people who when depressed, fall behind on their rent and risk losing their home as well as their job.

He argued that mental health and employment problems are inseparable: 80% of people with a severe mental health problem are unemployed and employment rates for people with mental illness are around 50%. He noted that there is some evidence that the UK may be behind other EU countries in this respect. In a study of people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia in five European countries, the lowest employment rate was in England (5%), compared with 20% and 23% in Spain and Italy. There are now 1 million people on incapacity benefits resulting from mental illness.

In addition, Lord Adebowale noted that the problem may be self-perpetuating: mental health problems as an initial cause of short-term unemployment may result in long-term health problems by unemployment itself, which can exacerbate the severity of mental illness, or bring to light other problems such as financial or housing issues, or low feelings of self-worth. He argued that in order to sustain employment, support in other areas is important, for example, Crisis Point run by Turning Point in Manchester has a six-bed unit and also a non-residential service enabling those who work to access similar support.

Turning Point has been the largest provider of Progress2Work services to support recovering substance users back into work, reaching over 4000 clients. It has also supported learning disability clients into a variety of both voluntary and paid positions. This has given a unique understanding of supporting often low-skilled people with multiple barriers back into work. A key part of Turning Point's recent strategic plan was to extend the employment model to other groups, such as offenders, alcohol users and those with a dual diagnosis.

An important feature of the P2W initiative is that clients typically face other challenges and a range of other social care needs which affect the likelihood of people finding and keeping work. Lord Adebowale stressed that until public service delivery offers an holistic approach rather than focusing on one problem, it will be impossible to get people with complex needs, who are often furthest away from the labour market, into employment. His point was that attempting to stabilise one problem in isolation will not stabilise the person. He saw the recent Freud report as a welcome step-change away from the Government's "client group" approach towards supporting unemployed people with multiple needs who have a broad range of social care challenges.

Getting the most disadvantaged people into work

Lord Adebowale stated that an approach was required which would deal with individuals as well as their problems and he said that radical restructuring of existing arrangements may be required. The Leitch review had attempted to provide solutions reaching the most disadvantaged, by creating a closer alliance between skills services and employment services. But Lord Adebowale noted that its recommendations were actually quite modest when it came to accessing the hardest-to-reach. For example, co-locating Jobcentre Plus and a national careers service would not, in his view, be enough to reach those who are furthest from the labour market.

Lord Adebowale further argued that introducing 'shared objectives' of sustainable employment and progression opportunities between Jobcentre Plus and the LSC would be impossible without more radical restructuring. He stressed that a culture change was required and this would be challenging for these large organisations. The LSC has a budget of £10.2 billion and employs about 4,500 staff. JobCentre Plus, despite downscaling, will retain around 68,000 employees, with a budget of £3 billion. What is needed, according to Lord Adebowale is a radical review of how funding is used at a local level

which will meaningfully assist the most disadvantaged back into work.

Lord Adebowale then turned to the Government's strategic review of Remploy. He felt this provided another opportunity, but again is unlikely to be successful if a risk-averse approach is taken. A recent Pricewaterhouse Cooper (PwC) analysis explored different scenarios for restructuring Remploy. The most successful outcomes were given by putting more money into job placement activity and less on sustaining Remploy's factories; in their words, "the more radical the scenario implemented, the greater degree of delivery achieved against the Government's objectives". He noted that PwC pointed out that all options except the status quo had delivery risks, sometimes very high ones. But Lord Adebowale stressed that a move from a risk averse to a risk aware attitude in public service delivery was vital.

Why social enterprise? Freud as a potentially radical solution

Lord Adebowale noted that many social enterprises reach the most disadvantaged and are already embedded in the community. This gives them a unique understanding of the complex needs of the most disadvantaged. Their attitude to risk should also make them a real asset to public service delivery, combining a real understanding of need with a business-like attitude assumed not to exist in the voluntary sector.

In reality, however, Lord Adebowale admitted that social enterprise fights an uphill struggle across the board in public service provision. Short-term contracts, an inability to recognise the true cost of service provision, and problematic commissioning were noted as hampering innovation and dynamic provision. A recent Charity Commission report said that only 12% of charities delivering public services reported that they obtain full cost recovery in all cases.

He argued strongly that commissioners are still risk averse in practice: not just because of organisational culture or a resistance to change but owing to competing financial pressures and a lack of incentives and support to implement it. In his view, they too often only involve social enterprise when they are engaged in a cost-cutting exercise, which hampers them having a dialogue about the added value that such organisations could demonstrate. As evidence, he quoted Turning Point Scotland, who last year pulled out of several contracts because, despite the Scottish Executive's budget of £27 million to support third sector involvement in public service delivery, the money was not ring-fenced. Local authorities used their statutory status to go for a cheaper, private alternative. That cheaper alternative now provides minimal support at best for people with a learning disability in Glasgow to interact with their community.

Lord Adebowale stated that the only way to solve this kind of contractual inequality –and the resulting patchy service provision– is to think big: about contracts, meaningful and sustained outcome assessment and rational restructuring of the huge number of networks at national, regional and local levels attempting to provide an integrated service. In his view, David Freud is right in his report to focus on the most disadvantaged, and to write about third sector involvement in delivering this. Lord Adebowale agreed with Freud's radical view of employment reform based on restructuring and rationalising a flawed system.

He supported Freud's support for flexibility in an open market, outcome-based contracting approach – based on the New Deal for Disabled People and Employment Zones. He also agreed with Freud's recommendation that the funding model recognise some groups will be more expensive to help than others, as it would benefit organisations that have been working towards stabilising people with very chaotic lives but struggling against a 'numbers through the door' attitude to remuneration.

For Lord Adebowale, the crucial point was that the right outcome indicators are identified and used. In his opinion, basing assessment on job entry and retention for 13 weeks of current Employment Zones reflected an inadequate understanding of stabilised employment, and the three year sustainability regime that Freud proposes in contracting would be a much more appropriate timescale for those with complex needs.

Lord Adebowale noted the main danger to be a more open market becoming a private sector monopoly, with organisations like Turning Point being the 'acceptable face' of reform at a Government level while on the ground commissioners continue to operate in the same old ways. He stressed that for Freud to be taken seriously, an outcomes framework and the rationalisation of contracting must be implemented and structural reform embraced. This reform needs to be based on an awareness of risk in balance with potential long-term value, both social and economic. Lord Adebowale concluded that, if 80% employment is to be a realistic Government target, people furthest away from the labour market must be adequately supported into sustainable employment. He stressed that the third sector must be ready and organised to shape these policies, or the opportunities will be lost.

5. Creative Time

This was the opportunity for delegates at the event to pass comment and discuss in small groups questions posted on various flip charts around the seminar.

Please note that the comments here are only opinions of the delegates that took part and do not reflect the views of Social Firms UK.

1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in the social enterprise sector for people with mental health problems?

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><i>Economic benefits</i></p> <p>Most comments focused on earning money by having a job, which provided economic independence and flexibility. The stress in many comments was on the need for the work to be 'real', providing a valid role. Other comments noted the importance of producing a valid product, with 3rd sector values also seen as important by some delegates. The provision of training and vocational development was also mentioned, as were the levels of creativity, enthusiasm and energy found in social enterprises. The possibility of such employment being a stepping stone to open employment was referred to by several delegates.</p>	<p><i>Economic</i></p> <p>Delegates referred to low wages and the poverty trap such employment creates, the use of volunteers in addition to paid employees, potential exploitation of employees and the general lack of good employment opportunities, and poor choice available, for people with mental health problems. Other comments noted the higher risks of potential redundancy, lack of business expertise in the sector, and the limited business development opportunities. Some saw the provision of training rather than paid employment in some Social Firms as a disadvantage.</p>
<p><i>Social inclusion and networking</i> Friendship and support from colleagues, and the benefits of social networking and not having to hide personal needs were referred to.</p>	<p><i>Stigma and stereotyping of the sector</i></p> <p>The danger of 'ghetto-isation' was noted by several delegates. Others noted the problems of not being taken seriously as a business and other prejudicial perceptions of the jobs not being 'real'.</p>
<p><i>Self esteem</i></p> <p>Delegates referred to the advantage of having an identity and therefore increased confidence and well being. This could result in decreased hospitalisation and other health benefits. The structure of a working role was also seen to be beneficial in encouraging a sense of self control.</p>	<p><i>Dependency, isolation and insecurity</i></p> <p>Related to the previous comments on stigma and stereotyping, there were a number of comments that noted the difficulties of the sector in respect of segregation from mainstream work opportunities. Some focused on people with mental health problems being in an apparently sheltered environment and perhaps being 'too comfortable'.</p>
<p><i>Support</i></p> <p>Social Firms were seen as more likely to offer appropriate support, having a greater awareness of mental health problems, with approachable and less judgemental staff and management. Flexibility was mentioned by a large number of delegates, with many noting the advantages of a supportive and inclusive environment, where individuals are valued for all skills, no matter how great or small. The lack of stigma in the workplace was also seen as important.</p>	<p><i>Other</i></p> <p>Others feared workers are isolated in a 'culture where people don't progress'. The difficulties of moving on were the subject of many comments.</p>

2: How could we make the Disability Discrimination Act work better for people with mental health problems?

Comments can be grouped into three areas: operational issues, training for employers and education/public awareness.

Operational issues

Comments included stricter enforcement of the Act with perhaps a high profile test case to prove discrimination in the recruitment phase; greater clarity on eligibility criteria; appointing a DDA ombudsman to investigate complaints and allegations, and encouraging public bodies to be more accountable. One delegate suggested a specific mental health DDA. Other comments included using funding to provide support for employees with mental health problems, ensuring Tribunal members had training in mental health issues and creating an assumption that all job applicants will have mental health issues.

Training

The need for mental health training for employers was mentioned by several delegates, some feeling that employers should be encouraged to see the benefits of taking a different approach and others noting that an employer guide (Employers Forum on Disability were mentioned) was very important. Others noted the need for more information for employees and workers to assert their rights and better publicity of case law.



Education and public awareness

Changing attitudes was seen as crucial with better public awareness of the DDA central to improved attitudes and understanding. More positive media coverage and the role of the education system in raising awareness were also noted by many delegates as important.

Comments can be classified under three headings:

3: What involvement should the government have in supporting social enterprise and the employment of people with mental health problems, and how can this be achieved without stifling the sector?

financial actions; supportive activity; and structures/models.

Financial actions

The most common comment recorded by delegates was the need to encourage individuals to participate in social enterprise without the fear of losing benefits. The relationship between permitted earnings and housing benefit, Council tax support etc was seen as highly problematic by a large number of delegates. One delegate specifically suggested raising the limit of permitted earnings from £20/week to £50/week. Other comments in respect of financial actions included encouraging the purchase of services/goods from social enterprises by creating demand; reinvesting Treasury savings back into the sector; providing tax incentives; changing the nature of funding to reward employability development and promote social value rather than targets; and providing help with start up and support costs. One delegate suggested funding enterprise solutions supporting services that work both top-down (eg Social Firms UK) and bottom up (eg Fredericks, Laughing Buddha).

Supportive activity

Comments here ranged from providing positive support for Social Firms by being flexible and listening, to better publicity and educating the public about Social Firms. Raising awareness through information, advertising and advice generally was noted by several delegates. Others saw the need to change procurement systems and value small, local services. Many noted the benefits of the public sector leading by example and contracting with Social Firms, and employing disadvantaged people in government.

Structures and models

One delegates suggested that a local procurement model should be developed in partnership with local providers, users, statutory sector providers and commissioners, with a bidding period longer than the usual three weeks. Another agreed with a speaker that more flexible and longer term supported work

partnerships were needed. Other comments included balancing an allowance of organisational autonomy with service integration and developing a risk-aware attitude.

Comments recorded in response to this question fell into six areas: employers; employees; public; culture

4: What needs to be done to enable people with mental health problems to move into mainstream open employment?

change; need for improved co-ordination; and the benefit system.

Employers

Many delegates noted the need for better links with employers, improved mental health training for employers and the need to address discrimination against applicants with mental health difficulties in general. One delegate suggested a conference for mainstream employers to discuss Social Firms. Another suggested a national mental health helpline for employers.

Employees

Several delegates referred to the need for training and support for employees, many others noted the need for protection and systems to take care of crises. Early intervention was seen as important to prevent job loss and to help maintain confidence. Projects that enabled people to build skills, increase confidence and boost self esteem were seen as of particular importance.

Public

Educating the public, by providing information specifically to carers and ensuring access to good news stories at local, regional and national level, was seen as key. Champions and peer support to challenge the stigma were also seen as important.

Changing the culture

The need to challenge the culture of expectation of what employment should offer employees, and changing work cultures to embrace models of healthy, inclusive organisations were noted.

Improved co-ordination

The need for joined up working between service users and providers to provide co-ordinated provision of vocational support was noted. Delegates also suggested that bespoke support packages, much quicker crisis management and proper care plans between agencies with regular assessment were needed.

Benefits system

As with topic 3, a revision to the benefits system was seen to be necessary, so that people could retain some benefits when starting a job. Many delegates also commented on the need for greater flexibility on benefits making it easier to come off (and go back on).



Comments fell into three areas: organisational structures and working conditions; people-related issues; and the physical work environment.

5: What are the key features of healthy workplaces, whether that's in mainstream open employment, self employment situations or social enterprise?

Organisational structures and working conditions

Delegates focused on the need for clear direction and purpose, flexibility in working hours, good support structures, opportunities for training and development, sound non-discriminatory policies and procedures, and good managerial skills. Good communication and the ability of employees to influence and innovate were also mentioned, and several delegates stressed the need for a sound work-life balance.

People-related issues

These included the opportunity to fulfil individual potential, feeling valued, diversity and honesty in the workforce. The importance of mutual/peer support and respect, together with a blame-free culture, was also noted by several delegates.

Physical environment

Several delegates noted the importance of a spacious environment, ideally with natural light, clean and dry so that people did not feel crowded. Other noted the need for breakout areas and quiet spaces in which to relax. Generally an environment that promotes well being, confidence and self esteem was seen to be important.

6: If you held a national budget of £150 million to assist those furthest away from the labour market and into work (in all capacities including self-employment, social enterprise, open labour market etc) how would you spend it?

Responses can be classified into three areas:

financial initiatives, individual/people related initiatives, and structural policy initiatives.

Financial initiatives

Once again, the need to overcome the problems of the benefits trap, easing the transition to employment while reducing the risk to people no longer eligible for benefits was stressed by many. One delegate suggested having a graded benefit system when people with mental health problems go back to work so that they could keep some of their benefits eg housing benefit. Other suggestions were start up funding for Social Firms, incentives for employers to employ people with disabilities, an endowment fund to ensure ongoing positive marketing of the potential of using people with mental health problems in employment, and providing risk capital to fund innovative ideas. Another delegate suggested ring fencing grants to user-led organisations.

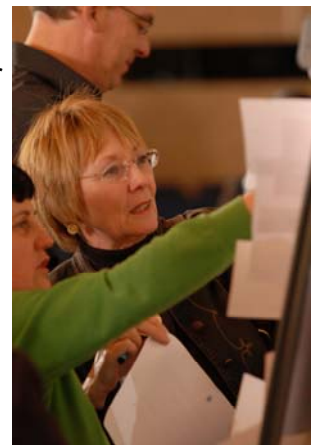
Individual/people related initiatives

Comments were quite wide ranging and included employing workers with knowledge of mental health problems to provide support to those starting work; tailoring assistance to individual needs; wider availability of talking therapies and cognitive behaviour therapy; identifying individuals who are not currently supported, and encouraging them by assessing their skills against job vacancies. Several delegates noted the importance of building networks of support at work, together with social networks outside of work. One delegate added that there was a need to train people to set up their own businesses. Another noted then need to 'have a clear target pathway for those furthest away based on an initial holistic/individual assessment'.

Structural/policy initiatives

A number of ideas were suggested, including ensuring benefits can be re-claimed and services reinstated at short notice; civil servants being encouraged to have a can-do attitude and be more risk aware; developing partnerships with services working with people who have severe mental ill health; a joined-up set of disability employment programmes, with higher funding for individuals with greater support needs; creating an overarching body to develop closer working with all relevant agencies, and developing and advice and guidance programme. One delegate recommended working with local communities to find solutions within existing models of Social Firms, social banks, employment advisers, bridge builders and mental health training agencies. Another suggestion focused on the need to develop occupational health initiatives, linking the Department of Health with the Health and Safety Executive regarding mental health in the workplace.

Further suggestions were to replicate successful Social Firms, with the aim of creating Social Firms in every town and city; marketing to promote the Social Firm sector; including targets for supporting and capacity-building local community-led businesses and organisations into local authorities' comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) process, and working with employers to change attitudes by 'selling the benefits' of employing staff with mental health problems.



Advantages/disadvantages of Social Firms

Advantages were seen to be flexibility; acceptance; and the chance for employees to earn a real wage and become socially and economically empowered. Perceived disadvantages cited by delegates were stigma associated to what were seen as sheltered working environments; low pay and potential exploitation; and weak business foundations.

Spending £150 million

Points noted from this discussion were growing the number and quality of Social Firms so that they can be considered as a real option for anyone with a disadvantage seeking work around the UK; ensuring people could maintain their benefits whilst working; and doing more on mental health generally.

One final suggestion in respect of policy was:

'Create a system where the notion of recovery is understood as an ongoing process, with jobs that suit individuals in their respective stages and levels and helps them to move on progressively'.

Economic

Delegates referred to low wages and the poverty trap that this creates, the use of volunteers in addition to paid employees, potential exploitation of employees and the general lack of good employment opportunities, and poor choice available, for people with mental health problems. Other comments noted the higher risks of potential redundancy, lack of business expertise in the sector, and the limited business development opportunities. Some saw the provision of training rather than paid employment in some Social Firms as a disadvantage.

Support

Social Firms were seen as more likely to offer appropriate support, having a greater awareness of mental health problems, with approachable and less judgemental staff and management. Flexibility was mentioned by a large number of delegates, with many noting the advantages of a supportive and inclusive environment, where individuals are valued for all skills, no matter how great or small. The lack of stigma in the workplace was also seen as important.

6. Pulling The Strings Together

Liz Sayce, CEO Radar and Dr Bob Grove, Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health

(Chair of the seminar)

Liz Sayce stated that her aim in the final session was to draw themes from the workshops and the seminar presentation together and offer some comments that would feed into policy. She was concerned that the conclusions of the day should focus on how to make things happen, as there had been considerable energy expressed for radical reform in many contributions.

Summarised below are Liz Sayce's comments on the Creative Time session.

Involvement of government

Points noted were the need expressed for small government, investing in start-ups; marketing of Social Firms: and changes to the benefits system that would address benefits disadvantages in respect of taking up employment.

Healthy workplaces

Points noted here were Social Firms' approach to supportive working environments and model, healthy workplaces, and the opportunity for Social Firms to provide these positive role models as an opportunity to influence all sectors in the economy.

Supporting open employment

Points stressed from this discussion were the need to provide individual support to the employee; corresponding requirements to support employers; and the need to challenge assumptions and discrimination against people with mental health issues.

Improving the Disability Discrimination Act

Liz Sayce noted here the difficulty of proving discrimination, particularly in respect of recruitment, and the need for high profile test cases; publicity and promotion to ensure disabled people were aware of their rights; and better information dissemination for employers.

From these headlines coming out of the Creative Time, Liz Sayce then offered a personal view of what would take the Social Firms debate to the next level and truly influence government policy. She made a number of observations:

- the Freud report was important and should open up thinking for how this government can invest in Social Firm creation; its recommendations should be implemented, as Lord Adebowale had already noted
- Ed Miliband, Minister for the Third Sector, had already commented that social enterprise can start making inroads into tackling social injustice and he should be encouraged to maintain this view and raise the profile of the debate at the ministerial level
- the Social Exclusion Taskforce had a key role to play and the Leitch review on skills had made an important contribution

- debate and discussion on healthy workplaces and wellbeing of those at work should be encouraged; work is clearly good for people and open access to employment and healthy workplaces should be the proper aim of government; Social Firms should be at the forefront of this debate and their success and achievements should offer positive role models
- as part of the mixed economy, Social Firms provide choice and choice is central to the government's agenda; government should be encouraged to act as a catalyst to raise social enterprise up the policy agenda
- there is a role for commissioners of social care services who can start to change attitudes and cultures without waiting for changes to government policy
- there is also a role for the private and public sector in respect of purchasing services/products from Social Firms.
- Liz Sayce ended by saying the discussion during the seminar had clearly focused on a number of win-wins.
- The Chair, Dr Bob Grove, then made some concluding remarks. He noted that there appeared to be two key themes coming out of the presentations:
- people who procure and commission services need to have a better understanding of the social enterprise sector
- government needs to focus on what is going to be effective – there are many policy initiatives and studies, but more than money is required; there needed to be a clearer idea within government about what other support is required.

The Chair then opened up the seminar to comments from participants in the audience. The following points were made:

- a vehicle was needed for the voice of people with mental health issues to be heard so that their experiences could be better understood – perhaps a reality TV show, or a version of *The Apprentice* called *The Entrepreneur*
- the large number of agencies involved in mental health, employment, social enterprise and related areas needed to be better co-ordinated and communication improved
- there were legitimate fears about exploitation in the social enterprise sector and the challenge of paying a decent wage in the sector were noted – people working in Social Firms should be employed under best practice with measures taken to alleviate such perceptions and fears.
- enterprise needs to be encouraged in the charitable and voluntary sector, with fewer bureaucratic requirements; it was difficult to innovate within narrowly defined targets.

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