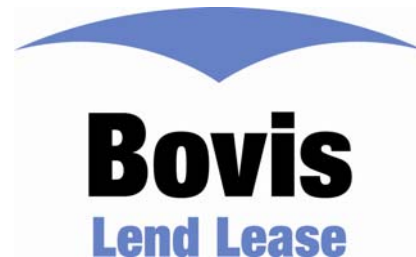
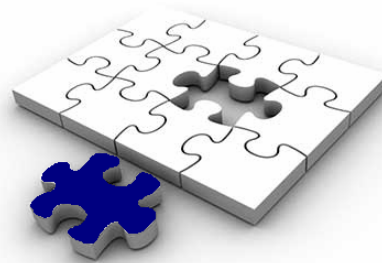


# Employment and skills for disadvantaged people. **Social Firms: a solution**



**CabinetOffice**  
Office of the **Third Sector**





# The role of Social Firms

Sally Reynolds

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

*SocialFirms UK*

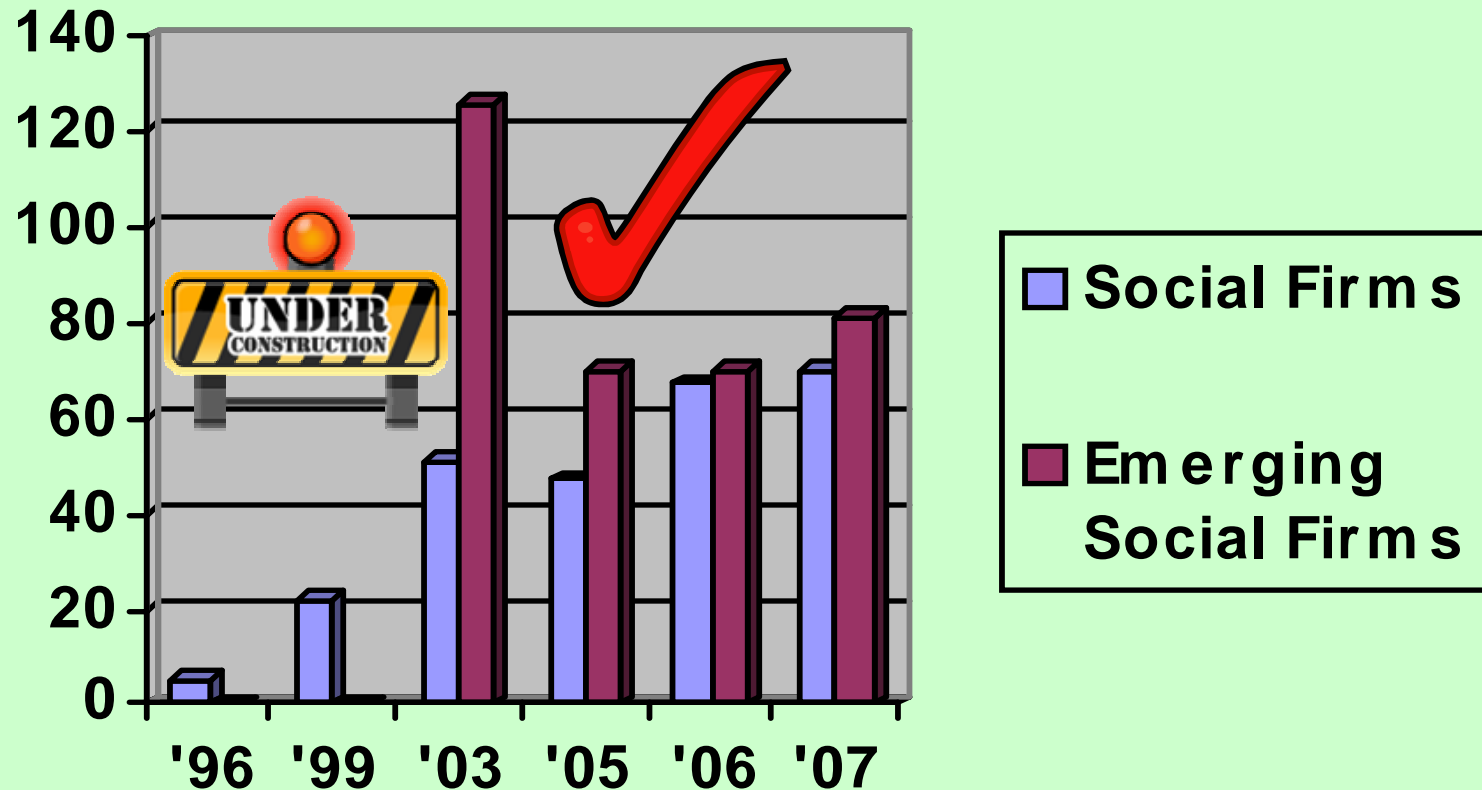
# Context

- Social Enterprise is any business that trades for a social or environmental purpose e.g. Café Direct, Eden Project etc.
- Social Firms are one type of social enterprise that have a very specific social purpose of creating paid employment for a minimum of one quarter of the workforce who would otherwise struggle to get a job e.g. disabled people, people with mental health issues, homeless and ex-offenders

# Progress



- Growth: 5 to 151 businesses over 10 yrs



# Impact (using '06 mapping)

- 1652 FTE jobs created, 52% held by severely disadvantaged people
- An average of:
  - 841 trainees
  - 729 service users
  - 159 volunteersBenefited from Social Firm placements EACH WEEK!
- 57 individuals moved into jobs outside the Social Firm sector through the year

These numbers will have increased – mapping currently being undertaken for 2008

# The value of Social Firms

- They tackle stigma against severely disadvantaged people
- They create jobs for those who are furthest away from the labour market
- They offer cost benefits to society & social added value to investors
- They merge employment & health improvements for disadvantaged people
- They will strive to protect their social & economic missions at time of economic downturn
- They offer volunteering & training opportunities as well as paid employment

# Proving that value...and changing lives

- Example: Six Mary's Place Guesthouse saves the NHS alone average £21k pa per person with a MH problem employed



- Estimate approx. sector benefit savings £6.4m/yr (see article in conference brochure)

# Focus on Training & Skills

- Social Firms are businesses in the market place; skills have to be transferable
- Social Firm Values-Based Checklist expectations clear
  - Trainees, work experience candidates & volunteers have different programmes & responsibilities to employees. Training should be time-limited & should lead to an award once competences are achieved
  - The firm has an added emphasis on training for disadvantaged staff

# Opportunities to do more

- Train to Gain (England)
- Voluntary skills pledge (England)
- Apprenticeships initiative (England)
- Local Employment Partnerships (GB)
- Use national benchmarking of support costs (1:1 hourly support cost calculated of £21.21) in Social Firm placement negotiations (UK)
- Attain Star Social Firm quality standard

# What can Social Firms UK do?

- Lobby for:
  - Investment in smarter start-up with capital finance & specialist mentoring intertwined
  - Waiver of PAYE & NI for ANY company that employs >25% of disabled staff
- Map, research, inspire, promote and publicise
- Provide support and guidance
- Bring in business for Social Firms
- Take direct intervention with start up
- Provide tools and resources
- Bring members together

YOU TELL US!

***SocialFirms UK***

**Our aim is to strengthen & grow the  
Social Firm sector in the UK**

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# Employment and skills for disadvantaged people. **Social Firms: a solution**

