

Working Together to Create Social Enterprise in Devon and Somerset

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PETROC™



Summary

This report explains how the project partners worked together to explore ways that learners in Devon and Somerset could develop appropriate work skills through Social Enterprise activities. By working collaboratively and bringing such activities together at the Liberty Centre, Petroc the partnership planned to expand the number of opportunities for learners within these rural counties.

What we wanted to achieve

The key aims for the partnership were to:

- Explore the potential for integrated delivery across providers in Devon and Somerset and develop collaborative enterprise activities to ensure young people with autism are better prepared for adulthood.
- Consolidate the existing social enterprise work taking place in the area and extend this model of working to enable more young people to access this across cluster providers as well as enable other local organisations to understand and emulate models of good practice.
- Work specifically as partners in sharing social enterprise ideas and working together at each site (Petroc & Broomhayes) to develop enterprise provision which is delivered by both sets of students using the extensive facilities available across the sites.
- Explore the potential of social enterprise to cater for off site provision such as café shack, market stalls.
- Explore the potential of social enterprise to develop into small, financially viable businesses managed and run by those with disability i.e. printing press business, car wash franchise.
- Work with businesses in our community to enable us to develop the right employability skills in our students to prepare them for future employment.
- Consider where the future lies in developing on from social enterprise by looking at how social enterprise skills can create sustainable employment for the future via self employment, online selling, traineeships and internships.

Planned Outcomes

The outcomes we hoped to achieve included;

- Defined models of working together to deliver social enterprise activities for young people in the area.
- The identification of a range of social enterprise activities which can take place within the new Petroc build to ensure local delivery is implemented.
- The approaching and engagement of key organisations in order to define how each organisation can contribute to the delivery of activities within the building.
- Close working arrangements with key employers so that through social enterprise activities students can develop the required skills for employment with these companies.
- Beginning to realise the potential of the Liberty Centre in developing social enterprise into more sustainable business models.
- Setting the foundations for future partnerships between local education providers and businesses to develop opportunities for employment for those with disabilities.

Providers involved

- Broomhayes School – An NAS School and adult provider offering a range of existing vocational and social enterprise opportunities.
- Lampard Community School – A LEA School offering a range of existing social enterprise opportunities.
- Petroc College – Offers a range of existing vocational and social enterprise opportunities. Additionally completing new build project 'Liberty Centre' focusing on vocational training and social enterprise opportunities for learners with severe learning difficulties and or disabilities.

Other potential partners

Attempts have been made to engage a number of local adult providers; although response has been slow, work is still on-going; some providers will be involved in joint working as outreach and at Broomhayes Centre.

This includes:

- One provider (Northam Lodge) who has joined a project to make paper logs in collaboration with Broomhayes Centre.



Student making paper logs

- We worked to develop partnerships with PLUS (supported employer) and Devon County (Disability employment lead) creating a disability advisory steering group to the employment skills board (17 main local employers). This will enable us to develop the right employability skills in partnership with a variety of employers.
- Local community employers providing 'local' produce as a business model
- Jigsaw Project – Charitable social enterprise organisation who are running furniture restoration and horticulture skills training projects.
- Larger employers such as Tesco, B&Q, National Trust etc. to advise on skills development for sustainable employment.

In addition, further work will be undertaken with other NAS School FE departments to create models of good practice and supporting materials.

Key considerations

In undertaking this work, we identified some key considerations that we needed to address.

These included:

- Quality assurance standards to ensure manufactured goods met required grades.
- Allocated time within Schools, Colleges and adult providers to engage in production.
- Ensuring sufficient supply of manufactured stock to meet demand levels.
- Addressing logistics related to joint working venues (travel time) and student anxieties related to change of known environments.
- Staffing community sales venues outside of School/College hours.
- Access and engagement at Petroc Liberty Centre once complete.
- Sustainability of the social enterprise to enable future developments and possible employment opportunities, to make sure that the ideas we had could be sustainable and could develop if and when required.
- How the skills set which was being developed would enable the student to progress from social enterprise to employability – how the social enterprise activities would help in the achievement of employment for individual students.
- How we could develop our social enterprise into franchising and small business development, eventually into employment opportunities for some students.

What we did

We met with Lampard Community School to share existing models of delivery and agree actions and working practices. It was agreed that each Centre should define product lines and any potential shared lines. We also collectively agreed to approach and attract wider partners (SEN Schools + Adult providers) and engage with Petroc College once new build complete May 2013.

In addition, Petroc & Broomhayes met to:-

1. review facilities, plans & expertise each establishment had
2. review current social enterprises
3. discuss possible partnerships for students, staff and shared resources

4. construct a progressive working partnership plan

As a result of these meetings we have:

- Planned the use of the Liberty Centre for social enterprise partnerships and how we could develop for the future.
- Created future plans for the development of higher level social enterprises into business model to provide opportunities for all and to stretch and challenge the more able
- Began to create a progression plan – where could the students go having acquired their social enterprise skills, the next step on the ladder i.e. employment (by business or self), traineeships or internships
- Created working partnerships with key employers ie Tesco, B&Q to make sure the skill set we developed in our social enterprises were sustainable employment skills. Our aim was to use employers as skill ‘sponsors’
- Created partnerships with key specialist agencies such as PLUS (supported employer); Devon County disability employment lead, CSW, and Jigsaw project.
- Created a disability steering group on employment skills board – creating a feedback loop to ensure the right skills are developed and quality assurance is in place.

Key Challenges

This project has not been without its challenges, which have included:

- Engaging other providers outside of their own establishments.
- Attempting to cover a large geographical, rural area (Devon + Somerset).
- Transporting students between establishments
- Timetabling access to our social enterprises across establishments
- Costs incurred in resourcing social enterprises and transport
- Selling produce outside of the educational environment
- Liberty Centre not available until September
- Finding common time for key staff members to meet
- Staff having the knowledge and time to develop the social enterprises into more sustainable businesses
- Having the time to develop the links with specialist agencies and employers
- Attracting funding to develop the enterprises into more sustainable businesses

Next steps

This has been a successful partnership and project to date, but we realise we are on the first part of a long journey. There is much more we want to do in order to continue to build links and increase options for our learners. This includes:

- Working in partnership to realise the potential of the ‘Liberty Centre’ for both Petroc and Broomhayes social enterprises and other cluster partners
- Developing a succession plan (over 3 years) from social enterprise to business development to employment (Internships, traineeships) and how it will be achievable. This will enable us to stretch, push and develop our students to future employment
- Exploring what businesses and franchises we can develop into sustainable paid employment for our students i.e. printing business (grant applied for), car valeting franchise, cleaning business, market stall

- Working in partnership to construct timetables to allow the student from both sites to work together
- Pooling some financial resources to allow us to develop some social enterprises to a higher level
- Researching and applying for grant aid to develop successful social enterprises
- Developing partnerships with key employers
- Continuing to develop key partnerships with PLUSS, Devon county employment lead for disability, CSW, Jigsaw project and North Devon Plus
- Developing the disability employment steering group to involve key players
- Further exploring joint social enterprise initiatives between Petroc College and all cluster partners.
- Attracting more additional local provider partners to establish social enterprise co-operative, running a small range of product lines.

Other relevant information

Petroc College Liberty Centre will be an education environment but also serve to foster higher levels of engagement with the wider community and provide an 'all inclusive' facility for training, business, recreational and social needs. The Centre will be developed around five adjoining areas, each with their own unique design and functionality to suit specific learning and social needs

The five areas are:

1. Independent living space
2. Workshop
3. Multimedia business centre
4. Commercial kitchen and
5. Café/shop.



Petroc Liberty Centre

The focus is to provide a range of opportunities ranging from social enterprise to one year employment opportunities on the college site and within the community as small businesses. The aim is employment which can be developed through social enterprise, internships, traineeships, small business development, franchising, self-employment and online selling.

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