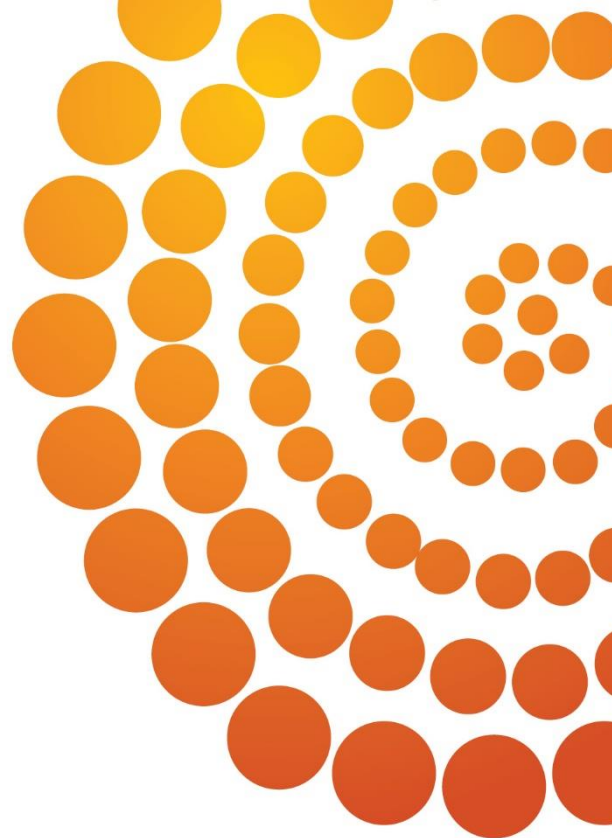




**Social
Firms
Scotland**

Briefing Paper

Year of Young People: The role of Social Firms



This Briefing

In the Year of Young People, the aim of this briefing is to showcase how Work Integration Social Enterprises support some of Scotland's most vulnerable and socially excluded young people on their transition into work.

Year of Young People 2018

Year of Young People 2018 aims to inspire Scotland through its young people, celebrating their achievements, valuing their contribution to communities and creating new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally.

It is a platform for young people (8 to 26), to give them a stronger voice on issues which affect their lives, showcase their ideas and talents, and ultimately, aim to challenge status quo and create a more positive perception of them in society.

More info: [Year of Young People website](#). Search #YOYP2018 and share your views with the world using #YOYP2018 and/or tag @YOYP2018 on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

About Us

Social Firms Scotland is the national support agency for Social Firms and we operate as part of the wider social enterprise support landscape. We are a membership organisation and have been supporting, representing and serving the interests of our members since 2000.

We also facilitate the national Employability Social Enterprise Network (SEN), a wider network of social enterprises delivering employability support services, particularly for people furthest from the labour market. See www.socialfirms.org.uk to find out more.

Social Enterprise and Young People

A social enterprise (SE) is a business that trades to meet a social purpose (please see the [code](#), the voluntary code of practice for social enterprises in Scotland for more information).

A Social Firm is a specific type of social enterprise, its social mission is to create employment and meaningful work *within the enterprise* for people furthest from the labour market – in particular, people with a disability (including mental ill health and learning disabilities) a substance misuse issue, a prison record, a homelessness issue **and young people**.

Social Firms operate in many market sectors and offer an inclusive workplace environment – where people are valued for their abilities, encouraged to participate and supported to achieve. Social Firms contribute to social inclusion, economic activity and health improvement. As a business they earn a proportion of their income through trade, aiming to be a sustainable vehicle and an effective and cost-efficient solution to delivering significant employment and employability outcomes for people furthest from the labour market.

This Briefing Paper focuses on Social Firms which specifically create pathways to work and real jobs for young people furthest from the labour market.

Their success is founded on a number of factors:

- Genuine person-centred support, flexible enough to adapt to an individual's unique circumstances, allowing them to progress at a pace they can sustain
- An asset-based approach that recognises an individual's abilities, aspirations, interests and motivations
- Local, specialist provision – with the trust of a community (of interest / location), responsive to the needs of the local economy
- Longer term support for both the individual and the enterprise, to allow them to develop and adapt their service to ensure the best possible outcomes for the young person
- Additional social and economic value – going the 'extra mile' to provide support out with the constraints of 'employability funded programmes' or contracts because 'it is the right thing to do'
- Social Firms, in particular, highlight how crucial a real work environment is for an individual, and the positive difference it makes to them and their employability journey

SE Strategy and Action Plan

The Social Enterprise Strategy 2016-2026 recognises that social enterprises are making a particular contribution to inclusive growth, and improving the lives of Scotland's citizens including young people. It acknowledges the key role that Work Integration Social Enterprises play in promoting equality and tackling inequalities; stating '*social enterprises have been shown to deliver fair work and well-paid jobs*' highlighting the ability of social enterprise to '*unlock the full potential of people furthest from the labour market*'.

Scottish Government expects social enterprises, through the effective implementation of the actions outlined in the '*Building a Sustainable Social Enterprise Sector in Scotland Action Plan 2017-2020*', to make a positive contribution to National Outcomes. Focusing specifically on improving the employment prospects of young people furthest from the labour market are:

- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society

Census

The Social Enterprise Census 2017, the second comprehensive mapping of the sector, demonstrates the scale, reach, and contribution of social enterprises. It also reveals the extent to which social enterprises actively work with and seek to extend opportunities to ***people often considered furthest from the labour market***. This is important in harnessing productive capacity, nurturing talent and boosting long term economic performance. The SE Census tells us that:

- 18% have a main aim of creating employment, training, work experience and volunteering opportunities within the social enterprise
- 41% employ people formerly disadvantaged in the labour market
- 63% provide training or support intended to boost employability
- In almost 4 of 5 cases (79%), social enterprises draw more than half their workforce from the local labour pool

Specifically, in relation to young people the census highlighted that:

- 49% employ previously unemployed young people (under 25)
- 70% work with young people leaving care; 30% seek to employ
- 78% work with young parents; 22% seek to employ
- 44% have a main social aim of providing opportunities for young people

Policy Context

Scottish Government's commitment to improving youth employment is evident. In the 2014 [Developing the Young Workforce - Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy](#), states 'it is right that our ambition is to improve youth employment levels beyond where they were pre-2008. This requires a fundamental examination of how we provide, promote, and value a range of learning which leads to a wide variety of jobs. It also means, ***'ensuring that all young people, whatever the barriers they face, have fair access to these opportunities.'***

Government set the target of reducing 2014 levels of youth unemployment by 40 per cent by 2021 and, at the halfway point of its 7-year programme, this headline target was achieved. Scotland also performs better than other nations across the UK - Scotland's youth unemployment rate sits around 9.8%, lower than the [11.3% rate in the UK](#) as a whole. The rate of youth employment in Scotland is 57.3%, higher than the UK which sits at 53.9%.

Government however acknowledge in their 3rd annual progress report on the Strategy that the 'challenge going forward will be to ensure that we ***prioritise those young people who continue to face barriers*** in an improving labour market, to enable them to achieve within an evolving employability and apprenticeship landscape'.

Social enterprise can have a key role to play here; please read the short case studies below to get a flavour of the work our members do.

YESWORKS



YES Works is an award recognised Social Firm that delivers premium quality landscape gardening services to local authorities, housing associations, businesses as well as private homes in the West of Scotland

Its mission is to **provide quality employment opportunities and work experience for vulnerable and social excluded young people across Greater Glasgow.**

Problem

Youth employment remains at very high levels (13.7% of young people aged 16-24 are unemployed compared to just 6.2% aged 25+).

The unemployment figures for young people are even higher in the Glasgow area at 16.6% and young people from the poorest areas are 8 times less likely to be in employment, education or training than those from more affluent areas.

Impact

Evaluations show that young people who were furthest removed from employment now have: increased responsibility and commitment to engage; improved self-esteem; a more positive attitude; increased work-related skills and are more ready for employment.

Solution

YES Works provides quality supported, accessible and person-centred employment and work experience. We know, from consulting with young people, that intensive engagement and practical experiences are key to success

YES Works recruits young people who have previously engaged with their parent charity Young Enterprise Scotland; they use excellent links with referral partners to engage young people facing the most severe disadvantage.

Result

Over the past year, YES Works has provided highly supported employment to 5 young people and work experience for a further 20 – all from the most disadvantaged communities. Of the young people taking part in work experience in 17/18, 57% went onto a positive destination (college, employment or volunteering)

The logo for YESWORKS, featuring the word "YES" in white and "WORKS" in white with a stylized diamond shape between the two words, all on a teal background.

YES, Works is a Limited Company and the social enterprise arm of Young Enterprise Scotland.

100% of its income is generated from the provision of commercial landscape gardening services

Testimonial – Young Person

Current employee Ryan, 21, sees a huge change in himself, which he attributes to YES Works showing faith in him and giving him an opportunity.

“I’ve learned how to communicate with adults, work in a team and my confidence has grown. I don’t even like taking holidays now, whereas before I was just staying in my bed til 1pm.”

Testimonial – Customer

“The quality of work, professionalism of staff and reliability of service has been the main reason for the volume of work increasing. We are keen to develop this relationship further as it fits perfectly with our commitment to support local businesses employing local people”

James Ward, Director, Barrhead Housing Association

Vision for Future

Following a successful first 2 years of trading, YES Works has identified additional demand from a range of clients for their services. We would like to grow and diversify our range of services to meet this demand – and most importantly – increase our social impact by offering more employment and training opportunities to young people facing poverty and disadvantage.

What do you need?

Greater recognition by Local Authorities and other public agencies that we, and other similar Social Firms, do not just impact on one life when we commit time, effort and energy through a real job – we impact on families, communities and create roles models for others.

More partnerships with community based organisations who have challenges within their area through unemployed youth, derelict community areas and deprivation.

What advice would you give?

- ✓ Focus on quality of service and customer needs
- ✓ Treat and support your team, whether they are paid or volunteers, with respect, dignity and individual needs-based solutions.

Social Firms play a key role in promoting equality, significantly contributing to social and economic inclusion, health improvement and improving people’s lives. Because they are a business and earn a proportion of their income through trade, they are one effective solution for the employability and employment of people who experience significant barriers to work



FareShare Glasgow and West of Scotland (FSGWS) works with the food/drink industry to minimise good quality food going to waste, redistributing it to organisations working with the most vulnerable people. As part of the business, FSGWS offers a variety of employability training courses, within a live working environment.

FSGWS helps highly vulnerable young people (aged 16-25) from Glasgow make the difficult transition from the care system or homelessness to a stable adult life.

Problem

For vulnerable young people from changeable backgrounds, additional flexible support is required to enable them to develop the skills and confidence employers look for.

As well as qualifications and work experience, this includes changing attitudes towards work, setting goals, raising aspirations, building self-esteem and confidence and establishing good work habits.

Impact

Young people achieve positive destinations, report increased confidence and self-esteem and sustain appropriate accommodation.

As a result of providing food for the most vulnerable, food waste diverted from landfill, number of equivalent meals distributed and how many people access food are also tracked.

Solution

FSGWS's approach defines a clear series of stepping stones which enable young people to transition to employment or other positive destinations. Their unique programme equips young people with vocational/SQA qualifications and practical work experience within a warehouse. Staff also assist participants to access and sustain appropriate accommodation (including financial inclusion support).

Result

In 2017/18, 40 young people were equipped with vocational and SQA qualifications (e.g. food hygiene, forklift licences, SCQF awards), practical experience of working in a warehouse, learning food management and distribution.

650 tonnes of food were distributed to Community Food Members (CFM), the equivalent to 1.5million meals. Around 17,700 people access food via FSGSW each week.



FSGWS is the Social Firm operated by Move On Scotland, a registered charity and Limited Company.

It has multiple incomes streams – operating a business to business model, it charges CFM's an annual fee; delivering employability contracts (eg Employability Fund) and grants. In 17/18, 51% of income was generated through trade.

Testimonial – Young Person

Current employee Grant, 22, who started on the 12-week employability programme says

“Move On has taught me so much. I’m now employed as a trainee warehouse operative, a huge achievement for me. I’ve developed teamwork and leadership skills and have a lot more confidence in myself and of what I am capable of. I love my job now. I love assisting volunteers and knowing that I am helping vulnerable people. I can give back and teach them what I have learned. They gave me a chance at a difficult time in life”

Testimonial – Customer

“FSGWS food feeds 60 local children every day, and provides meals for participants on a 12-week Princes Trust employability course for young people (16-25) who are unemployed, unable to find work and disadvantaged in some way. It ensures that children and young people in the community get at least one hot, nutritious meal a day...without it we would have to consider far more expensive alternatives”

Community Central Hall, Maryhill (CFM)

Vision for Future

Increase the number of young people moving into training, education or employment, increase the number of CFMs and increase the volume of food distributed. We have a clear development/growth plan in place (including investment) to achieve full sustainability through earned income by 2021.

What do you need?

Improve our links with the corporate sector, to enhance our employability offering for young people by providing work experience in their industries and widening the choice of training offered

What advice would you give?

- ✓ Listen to the young people - to improve your service and offer genuinely person-focused and flexible services and achieve the best outcomes for as many people as possible
- ✓ Experience in a live working environment is key to helping people feel ready to work
- ✓ Continuously review your model as your organisations develops, ensure it is still fit for purpose

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Stirling Community Enterprise

(SCE) specialises in high amenity road and footpath reinstatement and repair works; in addition to ground care and facility management contracts. This allows local people to access regular volunteering and SCE to create paid employment.

SCE supports young people with a **variety of a barriers including convictions, health conditions (incl mental health), learning needs, homelessness, and care experience.**

Problem

A shortage of opportunities for young people to take part in life and vocational skill development that fits with the needs of the local labour market. Opportunities through Employability Fund do not always work for the young people we support as they are not flexible enough. The wider needs of young people can be lost as employers' and providers can view work skills as the main priority, rather than aiming to support young people who have complex social or learning needs.

Impact

SCE approach enables young people to change their own lives and realise their potential – increasing confidence (90%), motivation and skillset, helping them feel valued, whilst also improving their health and wellbeing (80%). When support is over a prolonged period, young people report improved resilience and ability to cope.

Solution

Blend long-term practical skill development within a real business with ongoing in-work mentoring support, attractive to both young people and local businesses. Support young people to achieve qualifications (incl CSCS). All young people - whether volunteering or paid - are treated as permanent staff, ensuring they are supported as they experience 'bumps' in the road. SCE also removes financial barriers (eg by providing clothing and covering travel).

Result

In 2018, SCE has allowed over 50 people to access supported work experience and skills training. In the last 6 years, 12 young people with barriers to work have been employed. Of these, 9 have progressed; 8 into sustainable employment, 1 into education, and 3 are currently still employed.



SCE is a Company Limited by Share, wholly owned by charity, Raploch Urban Regeneration Company. It has multiple incomes streams – 70% of their income comes from SLA with Stirling Council, 18% is generated through sales of skills and employability training (incl ITA income) and 12% through their road works, ground maintenance and facility management activities.

Testimonial – Young Person

“This was not just a place to learn practical skills but a place with a real family like environment, everyone wanted to help me with anything they possibly could.

My mentor was the first positive male role model I’d ever had. I was taken aback with the support. My mum had depression and I had to take my little sister to school, my shifts were changed to accommodate this.

I could not have asked for a better place to start my journey and will always be grateful I had the privilege to work here”

Testimonial – Customer

“SCE has become our ‘go to’ agency when seeking employability support for some of the more chaotic young people who struggle to engage with mainstream services such as Skills Development Scotland”

Stirling Criminal Justice Service

“SCE has offered individual support programmes designed specifically to build confidence, self-belief and employability skills for our school learners. Staff are highly supportive, professional and get to know our young people individually”

Chartershall Secondary Education

Vision for Future

We want to diversify services offered by our road team to be more cost effective to customers; consulting with buyers to identify gaps in services, particularly those requiring minimal capital investment. We need to grow our core team, currently at capacity, to allow us to manage further commercial work. We are looking to develop a training café and kitchen within the newly opened Kildean Enterprise and Business Hub to create a pathway for volunteers into customer facing industries and create more jobs for those who need a more supportive employment experience first.

What do you need?

Financial support to secure additional staff that support more young people and increase our self-generated income. Access to specialist industry support to help us kick start new business ideas. Opportunities exist but can be difficult to develop due to small management team and tight budgets.

What advice would you give?

- ✓ Balance work rules and policies with supportive practice, be flexible to the young person’s needs
- ✓ The best support is practical meaningful work, skills development (through accredited training), ongoing support and mentoring
- ✓ Create a peer group – friendship and the feeling of care/safety within a working context is vital

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