

START YOUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The Social
Enterprise Guide



Social
Enterprise UK



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Sponsor of This Guide

NatWest

Supporting the social enterprise sector is an integral part of NatWest's strategy to make a positive difference to local communities.

Supporting enterprise is not just about providing banking products and services. It is about taking a longer-term view of how we work with customers and their communities to help them become more sustainable.

That's why we work with a range of partners and networks to create opportunities for businesses which have traditionally struggled to access financial services. In helping to unleash the talent of the UK's social entrepreneurs, we achieve a more sustainable economy and a stronger society too.

Our long-established Community Banking team exists to support enterprise with a social purpose and help to promote sustainability, and develop the social finance & investment marketplace by working with groups and organisations facing particular challenges in accessing finance and starting up or growing their businesses. These activities also help to support the professionalisation of the sector and open up access to financial services for socially-excluded groups. We recognise that our health as a bank depends on the health of the economy and our local communities too.

We also support the NatWest SE100 Index because, like any other part of the economy, it is important to gather as much market intelligence as possible. This information is invaluable in helping the social enterprise sector to demonstrate its growing size and impact.

NatWest provides a range of banking products for charities and social enterprises. These organisations can also benefit from the wide ranging support provided by our Community Banking team. We also offer more business support, through our local network of business growth enablers across the UK.

Social Enterprise UK is working with NatWest to help strengthen the social enterprise sector in the UK and make it easier to set up and run a social enterprise.



NatWest

www.natwest.com/scc

About Social Enterprise

WHAT IS IT & WHY MIGHT YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

What is social enterprise?

Social enterprise is all about combining business with social justice, and using business and enterprise as a force for good and a way of making change. It is estimated that there are over 70,000 social enterprises in the UK, ranging from new start-ups at the grassroots through to large multi-million pound organisations with thousands of employees.

It is a diverse and exciting movement to be part of, and they change people's lives in lots of different ways: through creating jobs; through preventing environmental waste; through reinvesting profits into community activity; through developing new services to help the most vulnerable. Well-known examples of social enterprises include the Big Issue, Belu Water and Divine Chocolate.

Social enterprises exist in the space between traditional charity and mainstream business.

They are different from traditional charities in that they:

Make most of their money from selling products or services

Don't rely on volunteering, grants or donations to survive

They are different from traditional businesses in that they:

Have a primary social mission or purpose similar to that which a charity may have

Don't exist to maximise profit for shareholders

Don't exist to make owners very wealthy

Measure the social impact and difference they make

Social enterprises come in all sorts of types and forms (more on this later), but what connects them are these five characteristics:

- 1 They have a social mission written into their company
- 2 They make more than 50% of their money from trading
- 3 They reinvest or give away more than 50% of their profits to further their social mission
- 4 They are independent: owned and controlled in the interests of the social mission
- 5 They are transparent in how they report their social impact and how they operate

If you tick all five of these, you are a social enterprise: these are exactly the five things we ask organisations when they join Social Enterprise UK as members.

For more on social enterprise definitions, how you 'prove' you are one, and who regulates them, please see the [Social Enterprise UK website](#).

Why social enterprise?

There are lots of reasons why we are seeing the number of social enterprises grow. Some of the reasons we hear are:

Someone has experienced or identified a problem they want to solve (and then solve it for other people)

All businesses should operate this way, and put people and planet on an equal footing with profit

Charities needing to earn more of their money to survive and thrive

Not wanting to rely on handouts or donations or volunteering to be sustainable

Being inspired by examples of successful social enterprises

There are lots of organisations out there to support social enterprises

Whatever has brought you to this point, this guide is intended to help you think through the key things which are important for starting a social enterprise.

A note on this guide: *lots of people want to jump to writing their business plan or choosing a legal structure. Both of these are important and they feature later in this guide, but we think there are lots of important questions to think about first. Some of these questions you may already have a good idea about or have clear answers for; others might require more thinking. We have used a made-up social enterprise, Furniture Recycling CIC, to translate things into practice throughout.*

1.0 MISSION

Social mission is another way of saying the central purpose of the social enterprise you are setting up. It is important because it helps social enterprises with planning, in making sure they are on course and in knowing whether they are achieving what they set out to do. It is also what makes social enterprises different from mainstream businesses, whose central purpose is to make as much money as possible.

For example, the mission of Furniture Recycling CIC might be: "To reduce the amount of waste which goes to landfill and to provide local people with work." You will see that this talks about the problems the organisation wants to tackle: the lack of employment for local people, and the environmental waste currently happening.

Lots of business plans have 'Vision, Mission & Values' at the start. The vision is simply 'how you see the world ideally in future'; so for Furniture Recycling CIC, this might be "a zero-waste, full-employment economy." Values are about how an organisation operates, which is more about the culture you want to create: honest, transparent, enterprising, authentic, collaborative and so on. This tends to be more useful and relevant as you build a team around you.

"SOCIAL MISSION IS WHAT MAKES SOCIAL ENTERPRISES DIFFERENT FROM MAINSTREAM BUSINESSES."



It may be that you have started a project prompted by an opportunity or a gap that you have noticed needs to be filled, and not thought about your mission. That doesn't matter—but being able to describe your mission will help in the future, because lots of people will want to know about it. That includes people who might buy your products and services, people who might work at your enterprise or people that might support it in some other way.

Your mission will also go in documents you create when you establish your social enterprise company (more on this later). It's important to achieve a balance in your social mission to ensure it is sufficiently tangible whilst also allowing scope for your business to develop. It may be appropriate, for example, for some businesses to reference a particular geographical area (if you're focused on a particular community) whilst for others this may create a limitation that you'd rather avoid as the business expands.

Case Study:

Fair for You

Angela Clements spent 5 years leading the largest community based credit union in the Midlands after an early career as a qualified banker. After hearing stories from members of the credit union about their experiences with high cost credit, it became clear that some of the high cost lenders had developed business models that targeted vulnerable households. It was equally clear that a new approach was needed.

Fair for You is the result of intense consumer research to ensure the solution would meet the needs of households with low consumer power. After hours of listening to countless mums of young children in low income households, the Fair for You team created an efficient, accessible, and supportive credit service that strives to put customers first.

Fair for You Enterprise is a Community Interest Company, wholly owned by a charity, that has carefully developed a brand that is trusted by its customers. As a social enterprise, Fair for You generates revenue by providing credit that is affordable and structured to meet the modern borrowing needs of their customers. They make an impact by helping families save money and afford essential appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators. In addition, the health of customers is improved as their financial stress is reduced, and 1/3 report their children's health has improved as well. Fair for You reports on its social impact regularly to inform the wider credit community of its work.

Innovation in consumer credit is difficult to get funded and struggles to be viewed as a credible mainstream alternative. However, high cost credit needs an alternative that has social benefit at its core. Now Fair for You is a growing team that hopes they can inspire others to find creative alternatives to the high cost credit sector.

fairforyou.co.uk

Case Study:

hiSbe Food

In 2010, after years of feeling discontent with the way big supermarkets conduct business, Ruth and Amy Anslow decided to create a company to change that. Inspired by ethical consumerism and the fair trade movement, they envisioned a new way of supplying food that prioritized the health, happiness, and wellbeing of people and their local communities. They set out on a mission to transform this vision into a store. While they had to work hard to prove the feasibility of this innovative new business model, they raised over £30,000 in a crowdfunding campaign, in addition to money from various funds and social investors. Their successful fundraising campaign allowed them to garner the support from people in Brighton and all over the country for a better kind of supermarket.

In December 2013, the Anslow sisters co-founded the hiSbe Food pilot store in Brighton with their friend Jack Simmonds. hiSbe stands for "how it Should be." hiSbe Food embodies fair, responsible and sustainable trading practices and is dedicated to making a positive contribution to the local community. By putting people before profit, hiSbe is reinventing the way supermarkets do business in a beneficial way. hiSbe is a social enterprise, so rather than prioritising delivering short-term profit like the big supermarkets do, they focus on making a fair profit while supporting



the local economy, creating a happy community and standing up for a responsible food industry.

Since 2013, the hiSbe pilot store has become commercially viable and is delivering measurable social impact. Ruth, Amy and Jack are seeking to scale their business concept to other areas. They are propelled by tremendous support from the local Brighton and Hove community and social enterprise investors CAF Venturesome, UnLtd, CIVA and Here. In 2015, hiSbe was invited to speak at the Social Enterprise World Forum.

hisbe.co.uk

2.0 MARKET

For people setting up a social enterprise, who have spotted a problem that needs addressing, there are a couple of key questions to ask early on:

- a) Is that problem being tackled by anyone else?
- b) Who is going to pay (or who are the customers)?

Both of these require some market research. This doesn't have to be a long and expensive exercise but it is important. The first of these questions is important to find out about other organisations that might be trying to tackle the same problems as you: these organisations might be competitors, potential partners or they might be people you can learn from. Either way, it is worth some work to find out who is working in the same space in the same place as you.

For Furniture Recycling CIC, they know there are some similar organisations in the next county, but nobody is doing exactly the same thing. There are organisations focused on changing people's behaviour on the environment, and other organisations focused on getting people into work. But these look like potential partners rather than competitors.

The second question is even more important and fundamental. All social enterprises are businesses and need to earn their money, even if they might get some help while being set up. More important than any conversation about legal structures, mission statements or measuring social impact is the question: 'who will pay for my product or service?'. This will depend on the nature of your business, and there may be several different customers, but unless you can answer this question well, you will struggle to make ends meet and a social enterprise might not be the right route to take.

**“WHO WILL
PAY FOR MY
PRODUCT OR
SERVICE?”**



Furniture Recycling CIC have decided there are a few different types of customers who might pay them. There are private businesses who will pay for them to take the furniture away. There is the council which has a contract for a bulky waste service. There are housing associations interested in getting their residents employment (and refurbished furniture). And there are individuals who can buy furniture from the shop they hope to set up on the high street.

It is really important that you do not conflate social need with commercial opportunity. Too often, we hear from entrepreneurs who assume that as there is significant social need in the area they are looking to address, there will automatically be people willing to pay for it. This is often not the case, and indeed (unfortunately) those most in need are often unable to pay themselves and not valued by others.

It's also important to note that you don't need to tackle both of these alone. Look at your own skill set and understand where partnering may enable you to provide better outcomes. For example, if the founder of Furniture Recycling CIC has a background in getting people to work, they may look to work with a commercial furniture business to get furniture from, whereas if they have a more commercial background it may be that working with a local charity supporting young people is more appropriate.

3.0 MONEY

In the last section, we talked about customers and the key question - who is going to pay for your social enterprise's product or service? Finding and growing the number of those customers will be really important to making the social enterprise sustainable in the long term.

We should say again here that social enterprises are businesses and that they want to make a profit. What makes them different from other businesses is what they do with that profit: putting it back into their social mission. So profit is important and that also means that being able to **manage your finances** is important:

Can you do a basic budget?

Do you know about cashflow?

Do you have a good handle on the current financial situation?

This might not be as important when you start, as the amounts of money may be small and easy to track, but be aware that as things progress, you will need to be able to have a grip on the finances. There is lots of support out there to help, and lots of specialist accountants and advisors who can assist you as your enterprise grows.

It's also helpful to have some understanding from the start about costs, prices and margins. If you want to make a profit, you will have to make more money than it is costing you to deliver the service or create the product you are selling. This difference between how much money you bring in and how much it costs you is the profit margin.

For example, if Furniture Recycling CIC has a contract with the council to train people who are long-term unemployed, then they will need to look at the support and training they provide. This might include staffing, building costs, transport, and equipment, for example. If they know this costs them on average £1000 per individual, then they need to be charging the council at least £1000 to break even. If they charge them £1100, they have a profit margin of £100 (or 10%) on each individual trained. If they train 10 people, they will have £1000 profit to reinvest back into their mission or supporting others.

Finally, it is worth knowing that there is money available which is specifically intended to help social enterprises at different stages of their journey. There are plenty out there, but some of the best known include:



School for Social Entrepreneurs - provides learning programmes of support for social entrepreneurs, usually accompanied by a small grant - the-sse.org

UnLtd - provides a range of grants and support for social entrepreneurs at different stages, even before they have a legal structure or an organisation - unltd.org.uk

There are also lots of trusts and foundations in the UK: mostly these organisations support more traditional charities, but an increasing number (including the Big Lottery Fund) will also fund social enterprises. Good places to find information on these include:

The Directory for Social Change - runs training courses and maintains databases and information on trusts and foundations - dsc.org.uk

Funding Central - website and email service run by NCVO which provides information about funding opportunities (free to smaller organisations) - fundingcentral.org.uk/

NatWest Social & Community Capital is an independent charity, supported by NatWest, which provides loans of between £30,000 and £750,000 along with business support to viable social enterprises who make a positive impact to their community but who are unable to access mainstream funding - natwest.com/scc

As your organisation grows and becomes established, and has a proven business model, social investment may also become something relevant to you - social investment ranges from peer-to-peer lending to repayable finance (e.g. loans) which can help organisations grow or expand or manage their business. You can explore social investment at GoodFinance.org.uk which is designed for charities and social enterprises; or read the [Social Investment Explained guide](#).

4.0 SOCIAL IMPACT

Every social enterprise is trying to make a difference: to a community, to particular individuals, to the world at large. So it is important to think about how you might know that your enterprise has made a difference. This positive difference or change you have made is often referred to as 'social impact'.

You might be able to see already that your enterprise is making a positive difference - but it is important to think about it more for a few reasons:

So that you can plan what you hope to achieve

So that you can prove to others who support you that it works (including potential funders and investors)

So you can get better and improve your product or service

For example, for Furniture Recycling CIC, they aim to keep waste out of landfill and get local people back into employment. So they might plan for the year ahead, saying they want to achieve:

15

young people supported in training

3

of these, at least, back into employment / into a job

2

tonnes of waste recycled, reused or kept out of landfill

They could then think about how they might know this has happened, and how they might collect the information.

Measuring social impact is a big area to get into, and you can find lots more information on the websites below. We advise when you are starting out to pick the two or three things that are most important to you and central to your mission - and to start collecting information and data about those. Don't overcomplicate.

Useful Links

[Inspiring Impact](#), [Social Value UK](#), [Charities Evaluation Service](#).

5.0 PEOPLE

Often when you are starting out, it may just be you running the social enterprise. As things continue and grow, you may need to add to the team and recruit people. There are a couple of key things to think about here:

Making sure you have the administration ready (payroll, contracts, tax and national insurance, and so on)

Finding the right people: how to recruit?

Your accountant or bookkeeper will be able to help you with the first of these. With finding the right people, it is normally important when starting up to have people who can turn their hand to lots of different things, and to have people who bring different skills and experience to add to yours.

You can recruit people through your networks, through social media, or through local newspapers and websites - depending on how much money you have to spend. Members of Social Enterprise UK can post any jobs up on our jobs board - you can also use the hashtag #socent on Twitter for anything social enterprise-related. Try and think about the balance of skills in your organisation and what will be required to ensure success - if your background is in a commercial role you may need someone with more social sector skills, and vice versa.

Depending on which legal structure you choose (see below), you may also have a board of directors or trustees. These are the people that provide strategic direction and governance for the organisation. They can help by bringing a good mix of skills, experience and networks to an organisation, including people who use the product or service - and in both supporting and challenging you (and your team) as you try to achieve your goals. Good governance is important to keep the social enterprise to its mission in the long-term, and to ensure the enterprise is properly run.

There are some good guides to governance around - see here for ones specifically aimed at those with a community interest company or charity structure.

[Bates Wells Braithwaite Community Interest Company Guide](#)

[NCVO Governance Guides](#)

[NCVO Governance Resources](#)



Case Study:

Vi-ability

Kelly Davies, a former footballer, wanted to find a way to use sports not only for fun but also as a creative way to address social problems. This led to the idea for Vi-ability, a Wales-based social enterprise that aims to engage young people and help them achieve positive life outcomes.

In 2009, Vi-ability started in Colwyn Bay in North Wales. Their mission is twofold: 1) to reduce the number of disengaged young people by motivating them to contribute to their communities, and 2) to help sports clubs be run like businesses and thus create more jobs within local communities. They generate revenue through their “Run the Club” programme, in which they win contracts to deliver sports programmes. They also work with corporates to challenge them to engage more with youth. Being financially sustainable has been important to Kelly since the beginning because it allows Vi-ability to be more competitive for the future and therefore grow and help more young people.

After Vi-ability’s initial success in Wales, they expanded their work to London in 2014, showing an example of how social enterprises can scale successfully. While expanding into a new location was challenging, it also offered more opportunities to find financial support from like-minded investors such as Nesta, a foundation that seeks to tackle inequality and help marginalised young people.

Since winning the “Social Enterprise of the Year” award in 2015, Vi-ability’s reach has continued to grow. They have engaged with thousands of young people and have run programmes on the international level, in places such as Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Italy, and India. They continue to seek opportunities to scale, always searching for new ways to reach more sports clubs and more young people.

vi-ability.org

Case Study:

Time to Change

Time to Change, a Community Interest Company (CIC) supported by NatWest, provides emergency accommodation to homeless people.

Founder Rachel Holliday was 19 years old when she became one of the “hidden homeless.” She developed a drug and alcohol addiction and went into rehab but after leaving there, with nowhere safe to live, she relapsed. “It got to the point where I realised that unless I did something, I was going to die,” she emphasises. Rachel moved in with her parents, went back to college, and eventually found paid employment, allowing her to save up to buy a house.

In 2007 Rachel began working as a housing support worker in homelessness. She then learned that there wasn’t a homeless hostel in West Cumbria. Rachel knew that in the months it takes for homeless people to find housing, they can lose their job, relationships and self-esteem. She developed an idea to convert an empty government building into a hostel to help people from the very day they became homeless.

At the time, figures from Shelter estimated there were 1.4 million empty properties in the UK and 400,000 hidden homeless. Rachel wrote a business plan for a CIC but needed a business bank account.

“No bank would touch me because of my history,” she emphasises. “But NatWest had helped me when I was homeless and provided a personal account, so I went back to them. The bank opened a Business Account for me. I could see they really cared about what I was doing.”

Next, Rachel leased the disused Egremont Police Station in an agreement that would prioritise homeless ex-military personnel and minimise soldiers on the streets. Rachel raised over £500,000 in grant funding and opened the new hostel in 2015.

Since then, Time to Change (West Cumbria) Project was named in the NatWest Top 100 UK Social Enterprises of 2015, and Rachel has been working every day to get more people off the streets.

ttcwestcumbria.org

6.0 SALES, MARKETING, BRANDING

By now, if you have a good sense of your mission, of what activities you want to do, and of the market you are operating in, you are in a good place to think about how you communicate this to others. Depending on what activities you are planning to undertake, you may be trying to reach different types of people with your marketing.

It is useful to think about:

Your unique selling proposition (USP) - what are you offering that others aren't? How does what you are offering compare to other organisations?

Different audiences - you may want to reach the potential users of your service but also potential supporters

Channels of communication - where are people going to find out about you, and how?

All of this can also feed into the development of a 'brand' or 'identity' for your organisation. You may have already thought of a name, but a brand isn't just about a logo on your website but about the mission and values of the organisation. Think about how the name and brand will come across to others - is it professional, understandable, clear, different?

For example, Furniture Recycling CIC decided that its USP was its combination of waste reduction, reduced-price furniture and giving people jobs in the local area. Their name was clear on the environmental aspect, so they added a key message to their marketing: to – Furniture Recycling CIC: creating opportunities for local people. They also knew they had to reach different audiences, so they did the following:

An A5 flyer to be handed out to housing residents and at local job centres to find recruits

An article in the local paper to raise their profile with local businesses and the council

Set up a simple website and social media accounts with clear information about their plans and services for people to refer to

In terms of communications channels, think also about how you can piggyback on existing activity here, for example [SEUK's Buy Social](#) or [Social Saturday](#) campaigns. These are also good places to look at how others in a similar field to you are articulating and marketing what they do.



7.0 LEGAL STRUCTURE

Now we come to the legal structure for your social enterprise.

Many social enterprises start off just from trading without a company structure (sole trader or unincorporated) and this can be fine when the income and activities are small. However, if you wish to win contracts, apply for funding, get investment, and hire people, you will need a legal structure of some sort.

The reason it is important to think about all the other aspects first, is that they will help you choose the right sort of legal structure for you. Your decision should be influenced by:

The type of activities you are going to do

Where you think your money will come from (now and in future)

What sort of governance you think will suit your enterprise (how much control do you want? Who else do you want to participate?)

Who your potential customers and partners may be

On the next page is a table which outlines the differences between various options for social enterprises - at a glance. At the end of this chapter, we also link to some other specific information to help in choosing a legal structure.

Here is a bit more information about legal structures:

Companies can either be Companies limited by guarantee (CLG) or Companies limited by shares (CLS); CLGs have no shareholders, only 'members' who cannot profit personally from the company. A CLS can be a social enterprise, but will often require adaptation (eg stating what will happen with profits, putting social mission in governing documents).

The Community interest company (CIC) is a structure specifically created for social enterprises in 2005; there have been about 1000 registered each year since then. A CIC can either be a CLG or CLS, and it has additional protections in place: every CIC has to report on its social mission ('community interest') each year, there are limitations (for CLS) on profit distribution, and all CICs have a clause which means any assets are retained for community benefit. Because of these additional protections, CICs can often get access to some grant funding and are understood as being clearly a social enterprise.

To register or find more information see

cicregulator.gov.uk or companieshouse.gov.uk



Registered charities can be social enterprises, as long as the amount of income they earn from trading is more than 50%; the main difference from CICs or companies is that they are more heavily regulated (by the Charity Commission), you have a board of voluntary trustees (rather than directors), and there are some limitations on trading - it generally also takes longer to register. On the positive side, because of the heavier regulation, charities have greater access to tax reliefs (for example on business rates) and grants from foundations.

See charity-commission.gov.uk for more information.

Co-operatives are the other most common form for social enterprises; co-operatives are more participative and democratic in their ownership models. As can be seen from the table below, there are two main types of co-operative, the community benefit society (CBS or 'BenCom') and the more standard industrial provident co-operative society (IPS). The CBS has social objectives built into its governing documents, so is often chosen, but an IPS can be a social enterprise too. Co-operatives are regulated by the [Financial Conduct Authority \(FCA\)](http://Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)).

Often you will be able to do much of this work of choosing and registering on your own. If you need specialist help, there are lawyers who specialise in social enterprise, and Social Enterprise UK can recommend people. We also recommend the Get Legal website for good information and simple legal documents and templates.

As you can see from the information, there is no one place that says 'you are a social enterprise' and regulates that. Joining an organisation like Social Enterprise UK is one way to demonstrate that you meet the criteria (and get a badge to display that), and another is by the legal structure you choose and your own communications. Many choose to do both.

	Company limited by share (CLS)	Company limited by (CLG)	Industrial and provident community benefit society	Industrial and provident community cooperative society	Unincorporated association	Community interest company / CLG	Community interest company / CLS
Incorporated with own legal ID?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Limited liability for members?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Limited Liability for directors / trustees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Constitutional document?	Memorandum and articles of association	Memorandum and articles of association	Rules	Rules	Rules or constitution	Memorandum and articles of association	Memorandum and articles of association
Objects?	Any	Any	Must benefit the community	Must follow co-operative ideals	Any	Community interest	Community interest
Charitable Status	Not usually	Can be	Can be	No	Can be	No	No
Regulator Companies House	Companies House	Companies House	FCA	FCA	None	CIC Regulator and Companies House	CIC Regulator and Companies House
Fees for registration	£20	£20	£100-1,000	£100-£1,000	n/a	£35	£35
Debt financing available	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equity financing	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Protection of social purpose	Not guaranteed unless charitable	Not guaranteed without charitable status	FCA has to approve changes	FCA has to approve changes	None/ safeguards in constitution	As CLG	As CLS
Membership Voting	One vote per share	One member one vote	One member one vote	One member one vote	As per the constitution	As CLG	As CLS

8.0 THE BUSINESS PLAN

A business plan can be useful as a way of bringing all the things into one place - for you, your team and anyone who might be involved in the organisation. Especially when you are starting up, it really doesn't need to be very long - it is only useful if it is helping you do what you want to do. It's often a good way of clarifying your ideas and making sure you've covered all the key areas outlined above - although things will change very rapidly in the early days of any organisation. It is much more important to test out your ideas and plans with potential customers and users than to spend hours on a piece of paper which might go out of date very quickly.

But a plan will be useful, more so as you grow, and generally it would include the following:

A) ORGANISATION - your mission, vision, values, structure, history, governance

B) STRATEGY - your overall objectives or goals, and what you think the key success factors are; your USP

C) PRODUCTS / SERVICES / ACTIVITIES - the types of activity you intend to do to achieve your goals

D) MARKET - what is the need or demand for your enterprise? Who benefits? Who are the competitors? What is the broader environment that your organisation is operating in?

E) SOCIAL IMPACT - what are your aims on this, and how do you intend to collect information to prove what you do works and to improve its effectiveness

F) OPERATIONS - staffing plans, management, systems and processes, sales and marketing plans

G) FINANCIALS - current status, forecast / budget for the year ahead

There are different variations on this format, but this gives you a rough guide to the key areas to cover. Generally, for a start-up, this need be no longer than 3 or 4 sides of A4 in total. As an enterprise develops or changes or plans to grow, you can revise and update this plan to keep it relevant.

9.0 LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Social entrepreneurs tend to be very passionate about their cause: often they or someone close to them will have experienced the problem they are seeking to solve. This passion is important - when things get difficult and a business hits bumps in the road, passion and persistence is often what sees you through.

Sometimes, though, this passion and commitment can mean that people can overwork, feel isolated, and burn out. And in the early stages, if the entrepreneur burns out, then so does the enterprise.

A few key tips on this:

Pay yourself properly - as soon as is practically possible, pay yourself properly; some social entrepreneurs pay other people first in the organisation, but everyone needs to live

Find a mentor - a mentor is someone independent outside your organisation to talk to who can provide advice and support to you; organisations like UnLtd and the School for Social Entrepreneurs will often link you to mentors as part of their support, but you may be able to identify your own

Be part of networks - there are lots of local, regional and national groups and networks for social enterprises, from national bodies like Social Enterprise UK to the Social Enterprise Places across the country to local and regional networks like SELNET in Lancashire or SEEE in the East of England; they will often run events, send newsletters with information, and provide connections to others

Don't neglect family and friends - take time out, spend time with the people you like and love, and you will be better refreshed, more focused and more productive when you return to the enterprise

Keep learning - this is a fast-moving world, and there are new developments, opportunities and information to find out about; events and newsletters can help with this, as can podcasts or books on business and social enterprise

10.0 SUMMARY

Here is a summary of the top tips and key actions for you to refer to from the guide:

- ① **Get clear on your mission** - it will help you plan and communicate what you want to achieve.
- ② **Check the market** - is there a problem or need for what you are proposing? Who is going to pay for it?
- ③ **Keep an eye on the money** - most businesses that fail do so because they lose sight of the money: don't avoid this, and get a handle on it from the start.
- ④ **Measure your social impact** - but keep it simple at the start, and make sure it's useful to you to grow and improve.
- ⑤ **Find the right people** - the best social entrepreneurs build great teams of supporters and staff, rather than doing it by themselves.
- ⑥ **Good governance is important** - think about who you want involved and what you want them to bring.
- ⑦ **Sales and marketing aren't dirty words** - they are just ways to reach people so that you can win business and create more change. Know what your USP is.
- ⑧ **Pick the legal structure after you have thought about your mission, activities, money, impact and governance** - all are important factors in picking the right one for your enterprise.
- ⑨ **Write a plan** - but keep it simple and short. More important is starting to try out things in reality, and see if people will use your product or service...and pay for it.
- ⑩ **Get networked in the social enterprise movement, locally and nationally.**

Go to: socialenterprise.org.uk/Pages/Category/Practical-guides for access to more guides and resources to help you as you start your social enterprise.

Social Enterprise UK

We are the national membership body for social enterprise. We offer business support, do research, develop policy, campaign, build networks, share knowledge and understanding and raise awareness of social enterprise and what it can achieve. We also provide training and consultancy and we develop bespoke business and information packages for clients of all kinds.

SUPPORT FOR STARTUPS

Social Enterprise UK offers very low-cost or free membership to most start-ups. Joining Social Enterprise UK means you get access to our networks, heavily discounted products and services, free information and advice about your business.

If you are interested in joining please visit socialenterprise.org.uk/membership. To order copies of this guide, please email publications@socialenterprise.org.uk

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