

DEVON SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT VOUCHER SCHEME

What is the Devon Social Enterprise Development Voucher Scheme?

A scheme to provide subsidised business support through vouchers to existing social enterprises in Devon (excluding Plymouth & Torbay). The Scheme is being managed by Co-active on behalf of Devon County Council, and forms part of the wider support package available via the Social Enterprise 'Information, Diagnostic & Brokerage' (IDB) gateway operated by Co-active on behalf of Business Link.

A total of £35,000 is available for business development vouchers through the Scheme, which, subject to demand, will be open for applications until 31st December 2010.

What are the aims of the Scheme?

To facilitate access to, and take up of, business support by social enterprises in Devon in order to help support sustainable growth of this sector of the economy. In the wider sense, the Scheme has been devised as a means of contributing towards the Devon Local Area Agreement outcome to "*work towards the economic inclusion & social integration of vulnerable populations*", and to further key priorities of the Devon Economic Strategy to unlock the economic potential of disadvantaged communities, tackle worklessness and economic exclusion, and encourage business growth.

Who is eligible to apply?

Existing Devon-based social enterprises that are already trading, and where the proposed support would enable a step change in the business. For the purposes of the Scheme, a social enterprise is defined as "*A business or service with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.*"

Applicants must demonstrate a need for this financial assistance and a commitment to quality, equal opportunity, and the environment.

What can we apply for?

Up to £2000 (at a maximum intervention rate of 50%) towards the total cost of business support identified as appropriate and beneficial through the IDB service. Vouchers can be used to fund a wide range of business support needs to help enable a step change in the growth of the enterprise, including feasibility work, business planning, developing on-line sales, marketing activity, etc.

Vouchers cannot be used to support business as usual; items of capital expenditure; retrospective work; or legal requirements.

How are applications assessed?

Co-active will assess eligibility and suitability for the Scheme. Devon County Council will make the final decision on applications, in consultation with a panel drawn from experts with an interest in social enterprise development in Devon.

Applications will be prioritised where the support given would lead to benefits for:

- disadvantaged areas of Devon (particularly Ilfracombe, Barnstaple (parts of), Bideford, Exmouth, Exeter (parts of), Teignmouth, Princetown, rural Torridge, Dawlish, Westward Ho!, Seaton, Tiverton and Newton Abbot);
- disadvantaged populations (particularly people with health problems and disabilities, lone parents/carers, people aged 50+, unemployed young people (up to 25 yrs) and NEETs (not in employment, education or training); black and minority ethnic groups);
- priority sectors of the economy (food and drink, marine technologies, environmental technologies, tourism, creative industries);
- and where applicants demonstrate innovation and excellence in their field and potential for tendering for public sector contracts.

A decision can normally be expected on applications within 10 working days.

How do we apply & what help is available?

Through the Social Enterprise IDB Service gateway (see contact details below). From here, enterprises will receive tailored support from a specialist social enterprise advisor from Co-active. This will include assistance to identify support needs, assess eligibility for a voucher, work up the proposal, complete the application, find and commission a suitable provider and also to review the outcome. The process is intended to be simple and straightforward, and the support from Co-active is free of charge.

What will we have to do in return?

Successful applicants are required to pay up-front for the support and claim with receipted invoice from the voucher scheme when delivery is completed. Delivery of the approved business support should commence within 3 months of approval and be claimed for in full by 31st March 2011. Applicants will need to provide feedback on the impact on their enterprise and on the quality of the service/support received from the Scheme. By applying for the Scheme, applicants agree to be used in publicity associated with the promotion of the Scheme.

What do we do next?

Call Business Link on 0845 600 9966 and ask to speak to a specialist social enterprise advisor, or,

Contact Co-active direct on 01752 500888 or email contact@co-active.co.uk