

Unlimited Potential

Unlimited Potential is a social enterprise that specialises in social innovation for happiness. It aims to help people fulfil all of their rich potential through leading happier and healthier lives. It also helps people to develop their skills and abilities to fulfil their potential, and aims to be a happy and healthy enterprise with the best possible impact for people and a sustainable world. Unlimited Potential is a social enterprise founded in 2002 as a company limited by guarantee and changed its status to a community benefit society in 2009. The same year, it reached financial independence.



As a business operating to achieve a social purpose, it was important for Unlimited Potential to prove financial accountability to all key stakeholders as well as measure, monitor, and communicate about the social, economic and environmental benefits of services provided.



For each of its services, Unlimited Potential uses a range of tools: reporting the quantitative outcomes produced; providing qualitative evidence in the form of quotes and case studies from clients (under the responsibility of service managers); and preparing audited social accounts annually by using the framework provided by the Social Audit Network. The organisation has also been involved in social return on investment and other measurement processes.

The added social value (social, economic and environmental impacts) of the organisation in 2014-2015 were:

Social impact:

There were 56 members at 31 March, 2015, a decrease of 11.1% from 63 at 31 March, 2014. 24 Supporters attended the Annual Meeting on 23 October, 2014, a 7.7% reduction from 26 on 24 October, 2014.

There were 4 Advisory Council Members at 31 March, 2015; a decrease of 50.0% since 31 March, 2014. The Advisory Council held 5 meetings in 2014-2015, compared to 6 in 2013-2014.

Economic impact:

In 2014-2015, the proportion of non-direct/staffing expenditure spent with ethical suppliers was 40.36%, a decrease from 41.52% in 2013-2014.

At the end of 2014-2015, 84.6% of employees (22 out of 26) were local residents (living within five miles of their normal work base), an increase from 80.0% at the end of 2013-2014.

Environmental impact:

The Society's environmental impact against its key performance indicators in 2014-2015 was:

- energy efficiency: 0.451 tonnes CO₂e per person; an 11.6% reduction on 2013-2014 (0.510 tonnes CO₂e per person equivalent)
- waste and emissions:
 - total bins – 54.5 per person; an 8.6% decrease on 2013-2014 (59.6 bins per person)
 - total CO₂e travel emissions –
 - commuting: 0.625 tonnes CO₂e per person; a 7.3% decrease on 2013-2014 (0.674 tonnes CO₂e per person)
 - business-related travel: 0.213 tonnes CO₂e per person; a 3.7% decrease on 2013-2014 (0.221 tonnes CO₂e per person)

Unlimited Potential's success factors are: the capacity of providing innovative solutions by attracting resources that others may miss; reinvesting surpluses in high-risk social innovation projects. Existing customers see Unlimited Potential's ability to involve marginalised people, develop person-to-person contacts with all stakeholders, and maximise employment of local people as some of its critical success factors.

Unlimited Potential believes that if other organisations across the NHS / health system implemented the changes reflected in this case study, the impact could be huge. Adopting social accounting and audit as an integral part of an organisation focuses activity and measurement on both core and added social value and each year helps towards continuous improvement in social, environmental and economic impact. If Unlimited Potential can make the difference that it has on a relatively small annual budget of under £1 million, what difference might the health and social care system make with its budget of around £100 billion?

“Everyone has been so supportive and helped me give up. Mum’s been smoking 50 years and now she’s given up as well.” (Smoke-Free Spaces client).

“It’s helped my confidence and helped me get back into a social life. It’s been my medicine to make me better. They’ve all helped and I’ve found myself as a person.” (Time Bank member).

“I was underweight, and now I have put on weight so I’m feeling better in myself.” (Young client of Re-Energise).

CONTACT DETAILS

Further information can be found at Unlimited Potential's website www.unlimitedpotential.org.uk