

Supporting Social Enterprise

In Hampshire the focus for the SECC project has been on supporting social enterprises. The Southampton Solent University (SSU) project was designed to provide mentoring, training and support to community projects in their ambition to become sustainable social enterprises.

The legacy of the project is the development of the James Street Social Enterprise hub, located in St Mary's, one of the city's most deprived areas. Created in partnership with the West Itchen Community Trust with funding from a variety of sources, it opened its doors in early 2011 after a year of planning.

The hub houses both established and new student/staff start up social enterprises. On the ground floor is a public access community resource for a range of services and support organisations including the Social Enterprise Foundation (SEF).

The hub is a place where social enterprises can work and learn together. It includes incubation space, a meeting room and social area for social enterprises, SSU staff and students to rub shoulders.

With the SECC dissemination funding we have:

- Further developed work with the Social Enterprise Foundation to deliver a range of introductory course for social enterprises.

(The University has agreed to additional funding to transform the SEF curriculum into personal development units which carry SSU credits.)

- Worked in partnership with the SSU e-learning unit to develop the skills, expertise and infrastructure to deliver a range of online teaching and communications tools to support the courses and wider social enterprise community.
- Run an opening event and mini briefing at James Street, which brought together many of the local community organisations to meet each other and get involved in the James Street hub.
- Produced a summary report based upon the project evaluation report to further communicate the valuable lessons and work that has been done to a wider audience.
- Rolled out a series of 'beer and pizza events' bringing together the University,

social enterprises, the Social Enterprise Foundation and other organisations to provide a social focus that should be self sustaining in the longer term.

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