

BIRMINGHAM & SOLIHULL SOCIAL ECONOMY CONSORTIUM

c/o Alun Severn BSSEC Secretariat, Studio 721 The Big Peg
120 Vyse St, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham B18 6NF

Tel 0121 233 0278 alun@bssec.org.uk www.bssec.org.uk

BSSEC CO-CHAIRS

Sarah Crawley sacrawley@btinternet.com

Tony Clabby tonyclabby@digbethtrust.org.uk

working together for the Birmingham and Solihull social economy



Publication date: 31st January 2012 • Vsn 1.8

From: <http://www.bssec.org.uk/blog/?p=2016>

Support for social enterprises and VCOs in Birmingham & Solihull

Thank you for your interest in BSSEC's guide to support for social enterprises and voluntary organisations. We hope you find it helpful.

The provision of business support is changing quickly at the moment. Many services that were previously free-of-charge have now ended due to lack of funding. Others services have come on-stream but in some cases there is now a charge for these.

This is not a list of every provider but focuses on services close to Birmingham and Solihull and those with a regional coverage. It describes the business support services available from BSSEC members and (where we are aware of them) those from some other providers too.

Where possible, it indicates which services are free of charge and which are paid for.

If you are looking for providers elsewhere in the country there are other online directories of providers that can be referred to (see section 2).

Because we receive a lot of enquiries about legal structures for social enterprise, section 4 brings together the best sources of information we have found.

If you need further signposting, ring Alun Severn at BSSEC on 0121 233 0278 or alun@bssec.org.uk.

1: SERVICES PROVIDED BY BSSEC MEMBERS

ANTHONY COLLINS SOLICITORS LLP

134 Edmund Street, Birmingham B3 2ES

Simon Lee

Tel. 0121 200 3242

simon.lee@anthonycollins.com

<http://www.anthonycollins.com/>

Birmingham city centre-based solicitors undertaking a wide variety of work for social enterprises

Paid for services

Anthony Collins Solicitors is an active member of BSSEC and has carried out training sessions for social enterprises in conjunction with BSSEC, iSE, and SEWM (Social Enterprise West Midlands). We are a member of the national body for social enterprise, the Social Enterprise UK (formerly the Social Enterprise Coalition), and liaise with SEC on policy matters and have also produced guidance for SEC.

We provide a range of advice to social enterprises including advice on legal structures, advice on procurement issues and contracts, employment advice, property and dispute resolution. With all of the changes in public service provision, we are also experienced in advising on the Right to Request, the Right to Provide, and on providers taking cooperative or mutual form (mutualisation), providing advice and guidance throughout the journey, from start to finish.

ART (ASTON REINVESTMENT TRUST)

69 Aston Rd North, Birmingham B6 4EA

Andy King

Tel. 0121 359 2444

ART@reinvest.co.uk

www.reinvest.co.uk

ART is a Birmingham-based Community Development Financial Institution, established in 1997. It exists to fill gaps in the conventional finance market and occupy a niche between bank lending, grant funding and charitable donations. ART's remit is to help create local jobs for local people.

ART lends between £10,000 and £50,000 to businesses and social enterprises in Birmingham and Solihull which need funds to survive or grow, but have been unable to secure them from conventional sources. The loan could be for cash flow or to support a capital investment project. It could be part of a finance package with other financiers, or stand-alone. Repayment terms vary from 6 months to 5years. ART is also able to provide support, advice and guidance to its borrowers and in some cases can also offer pre-loan advice.¹

BIRMINGHAM VOLUNTARY SERVICE COUNCIL

138 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6DR

Nora Darby, Special Projects Co-ordinator

Tel. 0121 678 8819

norad@bvsc.org

www.bvsc.org

One of the largest voluntary sector support organisations in the UK, BVSC champions the voluntary sector as an influential force for positive change.

¹ **Please note:** a full list of finance institutions providing specialist loans and investment for social enterprises is available on the BSSEC website: <http://www.bssec.org.uk/sourcesoffinancialsupport.html>.

Free services

Sector development 'Ask BVSC' – offering a first-stop-shop for new volunteers and voluntary and community groups. Also 'Enterprise and Business Development' – a next step advice, support and resources service to help you develop your organisation.

<http://www.bvsc.org/development>

Policy and Communications services A range of information and communication services for the third sector and its partners, including key third sector networks such as the Third Sector Assembly Network and VCS Matters. <http://www.bvsc.org/Policy>

Volunteer Centre Birmingham Citywide volunteering opportunities for individuals; placement service for organisations and facilitating the BRAVO Volunteering Network.

<http://www.bvsc.org/volunteer>

Arts for Change Gallery space exhibiting work with a social message.

<http://www.bvsc.org/Policy/arts>

People First Birmingham A user led self-advocacy organisation which promotes the rights of learning disabled people in Birmingham. <http://www.bvsc.org/peoplefirst>

Paid for services

Conferencing services Extensive facilities for meetings, events and conferences with special rates for the voluntary sector.

Support to develop your organisation – e.g. strategy, governance and leadership etc.

<http://www.bvsc.org/consultancy>

Coaching – one to one support for career and personal development.

<http://www.bvsc.org/coaching>

Back Office services – payroll, accountancy and HR Management. <http://www.bvsc.org/corporate>

brap

9th Floor, Edgbaston House, 3 Duchess Place, Hagley Rd, Birmingham B16 8NH

Emma Wright, Community and Enterprise Lead

Tel. 0121 456 7400

emmaw@brap.org.uk

www.brap.org.uk

www.thecollectivenetwork.org.uk

We deliver support through training courses, one-to-one sessions, mentoring and social media. brap is a SFEDI Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Development, has SFEDI accredited staff and recently achieved the Investors in Excellence standard.

Free services

Business development workshops Thinking about starting a business but not sure if you have the skills or the time? We offer bi-monthly workshops that cover: your USP and vision; the key elements of a business; the characteristics of successful people; the need for a business plan.

Good to Go – bid review service a bid review service offering objective feedback from experienced bid-writers without having to leave your office.

The Collective network The Collective is a union of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) third sector organisations in the Midlands. We influence policy and decision makers, create partnership and networking opportunities and provide services to help raise the sector's game.

Saturday Enterprise Club Come and network in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. Held the second Saturday of every month (excluding August).

Paid for services

Crystal ball gazing How well do you know your markets – and your *future* markets? Who will your service users be in three years time? We'll provide you with your own personal guide and recommendations to help you stay ahead of the game.

Business plan writing We can design business and strategic plans bespoke for your organisation, including market research and key issues relating to your unique selling point.

Developing your income generation plans We work with organisations to review their track record and develop new income generation strategies – complete SWOT analysis and recommendations for future development and action.

Don't get caught on the back foot brap will analyse your project's monitoring and evaluation requirements and provide support in developing appropriate systems.

Swoop Managing grants and contracts means organisations have to be meticulous in collecting monitoring data – but what happens if a project manager leaves, or monitoring criteria change? brap can swoop in and either strengthen or maintain existing systems.

Project evaluation Our team of expert researchers offers an objective, insightful and thorough evaluation service.

Bid review service A non-biased view of applications. We suggest improvements and even proof-read your documents, increasing your chances of being successful. Bids can be reviewed by email in a matter of days, so there's no need to wait for an appointment.

Board; not bored Whether visioning or strategic planning, an external facilitator can support you to make the most of the time available, ensure that the meeting goes to plan and you leave with the outcomes intended.

Impact measurement brap takes the pain out of impact measurement and monitoring, giving organisations the evidence they need to widely market their services and help to secure the next round of funding.

Equalities training Voluntary and community organisations delivering public services have to meet requirements under the Equality Act 2010. Make sure you're up to date with the Act. From training to creating equalities policies, this service will help you deliver fairer outcomes for everyone.

Changing the world from within A bespoke package of staff and organisational development to support you in meeting the needs of your communities in an ever-changing social, political and economic environment.

Workshops brap's new calendar of training courses for social businesses is now ready. Choose from a mix of taster sessions and intensive workshops (for Collective members, taster workshops are free and intensive workshops are discounted).

COLEBRIDGE TRUST

The Priory, Church Hill Road, Solihull, B91 3LF
Charles Rapson – Operations & Enterprise Manager
Tel. 0121 770 8222 or 07500 081 219

charlesr@colebridge.org

<http://colebridgecommunications.co.uk/>

Supporting social enterprise in Solihull

Paid for services

Colebridge Communications Marketing Services and consultancy to help you put together an effective Marketing Strategy and implement it with Print & Web Design, Video Production and even a Mobile Exhibition Bus. Affordable and effective solutions for all your marketing & communication

needs from a Social Enterprise based in the West Midlands. Websites from only £800. 3-minute video from only £1,500. Mobile Exhibition Bus (including driver) from as little as £200 per day. All other prices on application.

Websites We also offer websites from just £500 (+vat) in three options – Starter, Main Course and Full A La carte.

Our Starter sites provide organisations with the essentials for an effective online presence. Built with a simple Content Management System, they are easy to update, need no specialist skills or software and are able to grow with your organisation.

Contact Charles Rapson on 0121 770 8222 or 07500 081 219 or email charlesr@colebridge.org
www.colebridgecommunications.co.uk
<http://www.exhibitionbus.org>

Calling All Training Providers Do you want to reach more learners with affordable advertising? **Learn Something New** is a new website that's simple and effective. Not-for-profit and voluntary & community organisations advertise for free. Public, Private & Statutory providers for only £150 per annum. Visit <http://learnsomethingnew.org.uk/members/register> to get started.

ENTA CIC

Mill Wharf, 10 Mill Street, Aston, Birmingham, B6 4BS
Pamela Wood
Tel. 0121 380 4800
pamelawood@entapeople.com
www.entapeople.com

A leading training provider offering training, advice, guidance and support to hard to reach young people in Birmingham. Enta also has five social enterprise business ventures and offers support to start up enterprises

Free Services

The **Erdington Enterprise project** helps new businesses by providing a link to a board of experienced volunteers in the area who can offer support and guidance in areas such as finance, marketing and sales initiatives whilst also advising new entrepreneurs of the pitfalls they may face in launching a business.

Social Enterprise mentoring is also available so that you can meet with an experienced social enterprise manager who can offer support with starting up or expanding your business.

Visit a long established social enterprise centre and see how we have overcome the challenges of working in the third sector and experience for yourself the rewards that can be achieved in working in and for the community.

Paid for Services

Enta provide a range of commercial services, please visit our website for further information
www.entapeople.com/works.aspx

All profits raised through our Enta Works ventures go towards improving lives and communities in Birmingham.

ISE (INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS)

Avoca Court, 23 Moseley Road, Digbeth, Birmingham B12 0HJ
Elizabeth Barker – Business Consultant
Tel. 0121 771 1411
elizabeth.barker@i-se.co.uk
www.i-se.co.uk

iSE is based in Birmingham and delivers social enterprise support locally and regionally

Free services

Shop for Change Directory <http://www.shopforchange.info/> A website dedicated to helping third sector organisations source business products and services from other social enterprises.

Social Enterprise Start-up Our ERDF programme provides support to those wishing to start and develop social enterprises in the West Midlands. As this is a funded programme, please speak to one of our advisors as an eligibility criteria applies.

Paid for services

Start Up Support Our support includes one to one advice, coaching and group activities for people with new ideas and business opportunities.

Training and Support Tailored training to meet the needs of the social economy sector, from social impact measurement and customer care through to social media, commissioning and procurement and bookkeeping.

Research and Consultancy Research and consultancy services for Local Authorities, Health Authorities and existing social enterprises in key areas including feasibility, business planning, social enterprise development, externalisation of services, and commissioning and procurement.

Social Enterprise Awareness Workshops Would you like the group or organisation you work for to become more enterprising? We run half or full day workshops on social enterprise awareness and skills for enterprise, tailored to the needs of your group. Past workshops have been run with young people and women's groups.

Prove your Worth A new impact measurement service to help organisations demonstrate the difference they make.

Toolkits and Resources Access to the iSE Social Enterprise manual covering everything involved in starting a social enterprise. Other toolkits include, 'An Enterprising Commissioning Toolkit', 'Building your Cluster' and the interactive board game, 'Social Enterprise Journey'.

Networking Themed Bi-monthly local networking events – a place to make great contacts and share ideas.

Room Hire and Hot Desks Located near to Birmingham City Centre, our high quality flexible training room can hold up to 18 people and has air conditioning, data projector and screen, free wi-fi connection, power-points, and printing facilities. Costs apply for hourly meetings, half-day bookings and full day bookings.

iSE has a number of 'hot desks' for social entrepreneurs who want to operate from a city centre location. Contact debbie.bailey@i-se.co.uk for more information.

THE JERICHO FOUNDATION

196-198 Edward Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B12 9LX
Richard Beard
Tel. 0121 440 7919 or 07801 397798
richard.beard@jericho.org.uk
www.jericho.org.uk

One of Birmingham leading social enterprises offering a broad range of products and services to new and existing civil society organisations through seven social enterprise business units

Free services

Social enterprise visits Come and see a flourishing social enterprise in action, learn from our successes as well as our challenges and hear about the rewards and the realities of starting up a new social venture.

Social enterprise mentoring Meet regularly with an experienced social enterprise manager who will help support you through the practicalities of your start up or expansion programme. Learn from someone who has been there, done it and got the tee shirt!

Paid for services

The Jericho Foundation's social enterprises also provide a range of commercial services which can be found here <http://www.jcp.org.uk/> and in the *Shop for Change* directory: <http://bit.ly/rncfpg>

ROOTS HR (CIC)

The Coach House, 30A Church St, Kidderminster, Worcester DY10 2AX
Jan Golding
Tel. 0845 543 8429 or 07968 826909
info@rootshr.org.uk
<http://www.rootshr.org.uk>

Roots Human Resources CIC is the UK's first social enterprise delivering human resources consultancy services to small and medium-sized civil society organisations

Free services

If you are starting, growing or running a social enterprise, we offer affordable, tailored support and advice in all areas of people management and employment law. As part of our social mission, we offer a free introductory 1-hour of email or phone support or advice to any civil society organisation so contact us and give us a try with no commitment and no obligation.

Paid for services

Subsequent work is priced and agreed with you in advance of any costs incurred. Our rates start from £50.00 per hour + VAT and we will deliver as little as 1 hour of work if that's all you need. Our services include:

COMPLY Our retained employment law and people management advice service.
<http://www.rootshr.org.uk/COMPLY>

PERFORM Scoping, planning, design, delivery, management and review of people-focused projects.
<http://www.rootshr.org.uk/PERFORM>

ADAPT Services to help civil society employees to move on after redundancy.
<http://www.rootshr.org.uk/ADAPT>

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MENTOR

At various locations

Mark Ellerby

Tel. 07740 359996

mark@cloudberry.org.uk

www.SocialEnterpriseMentor.com

Social Enterprise Mentor is Birmingham's leading networking event for social enterprises and offers social entrepreneurs and social enterprises somewhere to exchange ideas and swap best practice and expertise

Free services

Once a month our informal 'non sell' networking event provides the sector with an opportunity to work more closely together, develop partnerships and collaborate on large and small scale projects – a great way to build business relationships! Our social media services allow you to stay in touch with people and our website backs up the event with tips, advice and support.

Our networking events are open to all with an interest or an involvement in social enterprise – ideal for start-ups, entrepreneurs, enterprises, funders and supporters. The event is also a great way for people wanting to take their first steps towards social enterprise, such as, students, graduates, community projects or SMEs. Every 3rd Thursday morning of the month is your local networking event!

SPOT ON MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS CIC

321 Bradford Street, Birmingham B5 6ET

Sally Edwards – Director

Tel. 0121 733 1808

marketing@spotonmarketing.org.uk

www.spotonmarketing.org.uk

Affordable and accessible marketing and communications services to support civil society organisations across Birmingham and Solihull

Paid for services

Need help with finding a sustainable position in the marketplace, generating income, or being seen and heard in the right places?

Our highly experienced team offers a wide range of marketing, PR and design services, tailored to you. We'll carry out activities on your behalf, teach you how to do them yourself, or be there to offer advice and guidance when you need it.

We specialise in supporting social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations, charities and the public sector.

2: SERVICES FROM OTHER PROVIDERS

Business Link

Business Link is government's online resource for businesses

It offers essential information, support and services for you and your business – whether you work for a large organisation or are on your way to starting up.

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/home>

Community Enterprise for Success Programme (Solihull)

Tel. 0121 704 8097

info@disecic.org

<http://www.disecic.org>

The Community Enterprise for Success programme offers fully-funded business support to social enterprises and voluntary organisations based in and around the North Solihull Regeneration area

Development in Social Enterprise along with partners BEST Network, Business in the Community and Solihull SUSTAIN, have won a contract to provide community and social enterprise support in Solihull in the main to help community organisations develop and grow and improve the income generation/earning potential of VCOs. The contract provides tailored business support, [one to one and one to many] at generalist and specialist levels.

The Community Enterprise for Success programme, part funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), will help charities and community enterprises improve their business 'health' so they become more robust in the future.

Visit http://www.disecic.org/Solihull_Community_Enterprise.html to download an Expression of Interest form.

The Co-operative Enterprise Hub

Tel. 0161 246 3020

enterprise@co-operative.coop

Enquire about training/support: <http://bit.ly/p5dZjU>

Online application form: <http://bit.ly/mXbZOA>

The Co-operative Enterprise Hub works with regional and national groups of experts to bring you the very best advice, training and consultancy on how to set up, run and grow a sustainable co-operative business. If eligible, this support may be free of charge

The Co-operative Enterprise Hub offers support to co-operatives that are:

- Preparing to start trading
- In their first year of trading
- Experiencing rapid growth
- Planning to move premises
- Needing to buy equipment
- Developing a new product, service or market
- Wanting to change their management or structure

You can apply for up to four days support which includes business planning, financial, staffing, legal and governance advice. The advice and training is tailored to your business needs, whether you're a music centre in Bristol or a wind farm in Scotland. Complete the online application form and the Hub will arrange for an experienced co-operative business adviser to visit you and prepare a proposal. This might include business consultancy, management training, a finance package of a small grant and a loan...whatever the adviser and your co-operative think is the best

way of ensuring the sustainability of your enterprise.

Development in Social Enterprise

David Lane
Tel. 07889 773 182
info@disecic.org
www.disecic.org

Offers business support services to social enterprises and voluntary and community organisations in Birmingham and Solihull which are designed to help organisations develop and grow their trading activity and become independent of public sector funds

Free services

As part of its social mission, Development in Social Enterprise is able to provide free support to a small number of start-up social enterprises.

Paid for services

Bespoke developmental and consultancy services which include: feasibility studies; choosing the right legal structures and registering your enterprise; setting up a trading arm; business planning; market and competitor analysis; funding and financing; identifying investment and becoming investment ready; transitional and change management; impact measurement [SROI, SAA]; public Sector 'spinout' development; one to one advice and guidance for entrepreneurs; bespoke training workshops.

SETAS – Social Enterprise Training & Support

A national one-stop marketplace for social enterprise training and support

Online portal enables those looking for support to identify appropriate providers, and support-providers to register their services.

<http://www.setas.co.uk/>

Social Enterprise West Midlands

Tel. 0845 450 7515
<http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/>

The independent voice and business network for social enterprise in the West Midlands

SEWM is a membership organisation for social enterprises and exists to raise awareness of social enterprise, influence policy, and provide opportunities for networking and information exchange.

STRIDING OUT (CIC)

Birmingham and Black Country, North West, North East, London

Rosalyn Clare and Alison Richards

Tel. 0845 452 4085

rosalyn@stridingout.co.uk

info@stridingout.co.uk

www.stridingout.co.uk

Striding Out CIC is a leading provider of leadership, business and career coaching services, supported by training, networking and work placement services

Free services

Coaching If you are starting, growing or running a social enterprise, we offer a free introductory consultation or sample business coaching session. Please contact us to discuss.

Newsletter Striding Out's weekly newsletter includes a business article, sign up at www.stridingout.co.uk

Paid for services

Business support for social enterprises – Social Pioneer and Social Pioneer Academy

Our Social Pioneer programme helps social entrepreneurs maximise their social impact by providing them with leadership and business support tailored to the needs of social enterprises. The Social Pioneer Academy provides emerging social entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge to start their social enterprise. <http://bit.ly/ni1n42>

Coaching skills training As qualified coaches, we provide professional training courses in coaching tools and techniques to a range of clients, including youth advisers, workplace managers, and mentors. Our programmes are tailored to the needs of the client group and the learning can be accredited with an ILM Qualification. <http://bit.ly/qi361y>

Leadership development – Take the Lead We provide a range of programmes to emerging and established leaders to help them develop themselves as a successful leader. Our services include Leadership Training, Leadership Coaching and ILM Qualifications. <http://bit.ly/qolCsz>

Executive coaching We focus on helping you achieve your goals, by giving you the time to stand back, reflect and work 'on' the development of the business as opposed to 'in' the business. <http://bit.ly/mQbcln>

Graduate leadership programme – Aspire to Lead Aspire to Lead matches emerging young leaders with inspiring organisations looking to train and harness the next generation of business leaders interested in achieving a triple bottom line. <http://bit.ly/ndd284>

Training – ILM qualifications We offer a number of ILM qualifications in leadership, coaching skills, management and business enterprise. <http://bit.ly/qGhOHI>

Future 100 Awards The annual Future 100 Awards recognise the success of young entrepreneurs aged 18-35 who demonstrate entrepreneurial flair and innovation in progressing a responsible business venture. <http://bit.ly/quF4u3>

Research and Consultancy – Economic Change As a consultancy we work with a wide range of organisations to create, monitor and evaluate socio-economic change and impact. <http://bit.ly/pmBoXq>

3: BUY FROM SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

If you want to buy more goods and services from social enterprises there are a number of websites to help you do this.

Buy SE

<http://www.buyse.co.uk/>

Because most people have never heard of social enterprises or don't know where they are, this website has been created to make it easy for them to be found in one place. You'll be surprised at how many there are local to you.

Shop for Change

<http://www.shopforchange.info/why-shop-for-change/>

Searchable online directory for anyone wishing to buy more goods and services from social enterprises

By helping more businesses and people find social enterprise providers of the goods and services they need, Shop for Change is an exciting new way that you can help support the social enterprise sector and shop for change!

Think Venue

<http://www.tvtts.coop/>

A searchable online directory that advertises all of Birmingham's social enterprise and third sector venue providers in one location

If you're a third sector provider of venues / conferencing facilities you can register your organisation on Think Venue and generate new business!

Think Catering

<http://www.think-catering.org/>

Think Venue has also started a similar directory and marketing service targetted specifically at third sector catering providers called *Think Catering*.

4: LEGAL STRUCTURES FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE – SOURCES OF INFORMATION

We are covering legal structures here because in our experience most new enquirers about social enterprise tend to begin by wanting to know more about the legal structure they should adopt. Because social enterprise is a way of *doing business* (trading for a social purpose and applying the profits of the business to that social purpose) rather than a specific structure that is recognised in law, there is no single, simple answer to this question. Social enterprises that have incorporated (i.e. have adopted become companies) can use a variety of legal forms:

- Companies limited by shares
- Companies limited by guarantee
- Community interest companies
- Industrial and Provident Societies
- Limited Liability Partnerships

What we have tried to do is draw together some of the best resources we have found which will help you understand the various legal structures that are available and their relevance to you and your type of business. Because in the final analysis, the legal structure you choose has to be right for your kind of business (not the other way round!) and is best arrived at as part of the overall planning and development of your business idea.

Is social enterprise right for your business?

The first question to consider is whether social enterprise is necessarily the right business model for you. Social Enterprise London has produced a very useful booklet called *The Social Enterprise Starting Point Guide* and this includes flow-charts to help you consider whether social enterprise is the right business model for you, and whether Incorporation is advisable. Free download: <http://bit.ly/nmBgVh>

The Business Link website now has a very good section on considering setting up a social enterprise which will also help you understand whether social enterprise is necessarily the right approach for your business. <http://bit.ly/p7fGEY>

The Women's Resource Centre (<http://www.wrc.org.uk/>) has produced a helpful briefing paper on social enterprise called *A Guide to Trading & Social Enterprise*. While aimed specifically at women's organisations, the guide is generally applicable. Free downloaded: <http://bit.ly/pahRQW>

Comparing legal structures

Business Link has produced *Legal structures for social enterprise at a glance* intended to help readers compare the pros and cons and legal obligations of various legal structures. Free download from Scribd <http://scr.bi/nSyUmQ> or from Business Link (see link in right-hand column): <http://bit.ly/qgaPip>

The Business Link website also examines the pros and cons of *all* types of business structure, whether for profit or not-for-profit: <http://bit.ly/grAOGy>

Co-operatives UK has an online tool for helping select the best legal structure for the business: <http://www.uk.coop/sas>

Community Interest Companies

The newest legal structure dedicated to social enterprise is the Community Interest Company (CIC), introduced in 2005. The benefits of the CIC structure are primarily to do with credibility: it has an 'asset lock', which means that it cannot be taken over and its assets sold off, and is also a sector with its own Regulator: <http://bit.ly/nRuAnX>

The CIC website also offers six model Memorandum & Articles for different kinds of CICs: <http://bit.ly/o6koH6>

Companies Limited by Guarantee

The Company Limited by Guarantee legal structure is probably one of the most widely used. Specimen Memorandum & Articles for a CLG are available on the Companies House website: <http://bit.ly/pVY2MV>

There is also a list of FAQs regarding the Articles of Association: <http://bit.ly/o7nks1>

Industrial & Provident Societies

An industrial and provident society is an organisation conducting an industry, business or trade, either as a co-operative or for the benefit of the community, and is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965. The Financial Services Authority has a good section on its website about the IPS structure: <http://bit.ly/oHpwD2>

Publications

Social Enterprise London has produced a guide to legal structures called *Keeping It Legal* which can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/rqtWOH>

Social Enterprise UK (formerly the Social Enterprise Coalition), the national body for social enterprises, has also published a guide of the same name. It can no longer be downloaded free of charge but can be purchased from SEC: <http://bit.ly/qHMP9F>

Co-operatives UK has also published a number of advice booklets in its *Simply...* series (some of them very substantial) aimed at community enterprises. These cover finance, governance, and legal requirements. *Simply Legal...All You Need to Know About Legal Forms for Community Enterprises* is especially useful in comparing legal structures. All of the guides can be downloaded free of charge at: <http://www.uk.coop/simplyseries>.

Also available is a revamped version of the Co-operatives UK 'Select a Structure' online tool. Visit <http://www.uk.coop/sas>.

-Ends-