



Scaling Social Enterprise Innovation in Public Services

What works and what is needed to create more **effective, responsive, and sustainable** people-focused public services?

JANUARY 2026

E3M



Introduction

Public services face increasing demand and record pressures. Resources are stretched, 'dysfunctional' markets have failed many people-focused services, and extractive practices in areas such as Children's Residential Care are minimising resources and creating bigger problems for vulnerable people and service providers. With growing demographic pressures, new models are required in areas such as elderly care, neighbourhood based health, and support for the growing number of vulnerable people with complex needs.

We need to reimagine how people-focused services are delivered. Many innovators are already doing so. Services that meet communities' needs, delivered by organisations dedicated to the people and places they serve: this is no pipe dream.

This report demonstrates the innovation and impact which social enterprises bring to people-focused public services. This 'social enterprise difference' is boosting outcomes, maximising quality, and benefitting communities. Examples include:

A Primary Care Hub supporting 38,000 patients has increased call connection rates by

13%

Rise in young people attending a revitalised theatre's programme for 16-21 year olds:

96%

Days in care saved by a partnership which delivers an evidence-based family therapy:

1000 years

The Government created the new Office for the Impact Economy, in the Cabinet Office, in November 2025. Its purpose is to harness the potential of philanthropy, social impact investment and purpose-driven businesses to tackle some of the big challenges around boosting growth and public service reform.

Social enterprises are rooted in places, reinvest their profits for public benefit, are people-focused, and provide community-first services that people need. They represent a definitive model for purpose-driven business. Through them, philanthropic and private investment can make a difference. But for these purpose-driven businesses to support public service transformation, we need a partnership approach in how services are commissioned, investment is deployed and between organisations involved in delivery. This will involve changes: to how public authorities commission services, public procurement rules are interpreted, investment is structured and the wider role of key public institutions at local, regional and national level.

This report highlights the changes needed. It is based on a 12-month project, examining innovation across different services and convening discussions with social enterprise leaders, bold commissioners, social investors and legal and financial experts. We thank all the social enterprises featured, and everyone listed on the back page, for their extensive input.

With the right policies and support, we can harness the full potential of social enterprises¹ and other purpose-driven businesses in transforming public services.

¹More about social enterprises: e3m.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Imagine-Public-Services-Where-Every-Penny-Spent-Is-Used-For-Public-Good-FINAL-WEB.pdf
Cover images (clockwise from top left): Here, LWC, Tees Active, LEYF

Commissioning: key factors that can support social enterprise innovation in public services

Partnerships between public authorities and 'purpose-aligned' organisations are especially relevant for addressing complex issues and creating services which meet people's needs. E3M's work with bold, innovative commissioners who want to take a more collaborative approach and work more with social enterprises highlights many successful examples, but common barriers persist to doing this at scale.

The challenges include:



processes –

over ¾ of local authority budgets are spent on people-focused services through procurement systems that are designed for buying products, not complex people centred services. Lowest price is increasingly returning as the dominant determinant in procurement, rather than quality and impact within a determined budget.



contracts –

short-term, prescriptive and transactional contracts exclude many social enterprises and limit the possibilities to harness impact investment. No sensible business or investor will engage, based on uncertain, short-term income streams.



scoring –

tick-box frameworks to assess and score for social value reward promises, but don't account for the inherent value of a purpose-aligned partner. Some bidders 'game the system' by promising social value outputs they don't deliver and are never held accountable for; frameworks are blind to organisations which exist purely for social or public benefit and align with real local priorities.

Commissioning people-focused services is different from buying goods. People-focused services are not markets, they are publicly funded systems. Procurement is only one way to commission them.

Other routes include the use of grant subsidies, preferential loans, co-investment (and levering investment), community asset transfer, cross-service integration, and mobilising community resources. A decade since *'The Art of the Possible in Public Procurement'* promoted the flexible nature of the public procurement regime, and two years since *'Vitalising Purpose'*² did so, these routes remain underused. If we want better public services, we should use these tools.

Commissioning principles should cultivate healthy social ecosystems and value impact, flexibility, prevention (in line with the NHS 10 year plan), relationships, trust, and collaboration. This 'system stewardship' facilitates innovation, flexibility and better longer-term outcomes. It is distinctly different from the routine re-procurement of three-year service contracts and managing annualised budgets of siloed departments.

² e3m.org.uk/vitalising-purpose-book



Better commissioning: recommendations

Commissioners should:

- make more use of more collaborative commissioning pathways – grants, reserved contracts, joint venture partnerships, innovation partnerships, alliance contracting, bringing genuine co-production to systems
- enable 'market / system' engagement activities, strategic planning, and co-design / co-creation (not just co-production)
- streamline procurement processes and contracts with proportionate requirements
- commission for outcomes (not only for service specifications)
- use longer term contracts: social enterprises can't bid for contracts which are offered for too short a timeframe or are too large in scope; longer contract lengths give all partners the ability to plan and resource more effectively and can lever more social investment into areas and services previously starved of it
- create opportunities for larger social enterprises to take a prime contractor role while ensuring smaller organisations have fair opportunities to be part of such bids, and are supported to build their own capacity
- embed flexibility to enable the testing of new approaches and adaptation in response to local need and priorities
- understand that 'social value' is not about 'giving back' or 'donating' but is inherent to social enterprises, so,
 - » rethink weighting, valuing, and accountability (including recognition of organisations' governance and structure) in social value scoring
 - » reduce the use of mechanistic scoring frameworks and systems for the evaluation and procurement of people focused services
 - » reconsider how the Financial Viability Risk Assessment (FVRA) is used – it can (needlessly) exclude social enterprises without adequately protecting commissioners
 - » give more weighting to prevention and early intervention

Government should:

- issue clear guidance about the full range of options available through law, and models for how local public organisations can develop purpose-aligned partnerships with social enterprises, other purpose-driven businesses and social impact investors
- use this guidance to distinguish:
 - » stewardship of publicly-funded systems from market purchasing (to create an enabling ecosystem for the VCSE public benefit sector)
 - » partnership from procurement (to stimulate collaborative commissioning pathways)
 - » collaboration from competition (to clarify when a collaborative approach is needed to co-design and deliver more effective people-focused services)
 - » people-focus from profit-focus (to advance stewardship of publicly-funded systems)
 - » a relational approach from a transactional one (to advance co-designed and place-based solutions to complex societal challenges)
 - » Inherent social value from additional social value (because existing frameworks penalise social enterprises by only weighting a small percentage of social value in organisations wholly dedicated to public purpose)
- train and educate commissioners and procurement teams, so they can make full use of more proactive and innovative approaches, and joined up planning, instead of the (misplaced) fear that procurement is a barrier to partnership
- accelerate and amplify approaches which are already working – social enterprises are innovating in many key areas, including children's residential care, fostering, early years provision and nurseries, and supporting people into employment
- support local authorities to adopt a more nuanced approach to social value in procurements, building on the national model being applied to government departments, and end the misplaced mechanistic social value scoring of people-focused services
- legislate for a distinct regime for commissioning people-focused services, removing such commissioning from a commercial procurement framework and creating a mechanism for local public authorities to make direct award to purpose-aligned partners
- ensure that policy and funding initiatives and programmes relating to people-focused services are co-designed with innovative social enterprises

Photo: Cranstoun's ROUTES Youth Advice Hub





Funding social enterprise innovation: recommendations

Many of the case studies in this report show how social investment is a crucial enabler to effective delivery of people-focused services. Such investment is not only a funding mechanism, but can align incentives, share risk, drive innovation and bridge the gap between traditional public funding and innovative service delivery.

We recommend **commissioners** increase the use of grants to support innovation, which could catalyse scale. Commissioners could also make use of existing innovative and new financial products from **social investors**, who should:

- create debt finance products with interest rates linked to outcomes
- develop quasi-equity instruments for asset-locked social enterprises
- offer more flexible and patient capital, including
 - » revenue-based repayment models
 - » blended finance
 - » more use of Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) / Social Outcomes Contracts (SOCs), linking funding to measurable outcomes and which also encourage innovation
 - » supporting individuals can also enable the potential for social investment to support multiple departments
 - » SOCs can give service providers flexibility in how they deliver outcomes, allowing for a more user-centred approach and greater scope for service adaptation and innovation

Government could provide more streamlined, cross-departmental funding (there has been progress here and the new social outcomes fund, the Better Futures Fund, dedicated to supporting vulnerable children and their families, is a welcome development); and:

- offer matched co-investment for innovation pilots
- fund the startup of innovative social care and other people-focused service providers
- direct UKRI / Innovate UK to fund social enterprise innovation projects (and evaluation)
- increase awareness of Community Investment Tax Relief (CITR), which successfully supports investment into (and recycled within) local economies
- create a level playing field for all public service providers – currently, different regimes apply to different types of providers, for example relating to accounting for VAT, accessing education and development funding, contract variations and recovery in the case of national minimum and living wage uplifts

Institutions' roles: recommendations

We need to work beyond silos to scale up the role social enterprises play in delivering people-centred public services. Institutions should continue to foster respectful, mutually beneficial relationships, between commissioners, providers large and small, social investors, and everyone we exist to serve. In addition to the earlier recommendations, institutions should adopt the following recommendations.

Government

There are opportunities for purpose-driven business solutions that relate to the interests of most government departments. There is a need to foster a better understanding across departments, including the Departments for Business and Trade, Work and Pensions, Education, Health and Social Care and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, of social enterprises and purpose-driven businesses. There needs to be wider knowledge of their scale, impact and potential in order to double the size of the co-operative economy and harness the potential of purpose-driven businesses.

Combined authorities

- co-ordinate regional strategies to pool resources and scale delivery across localities
- connect stakeholders and partners; facilitate silo-breaking integrated service models
- build capacity by investing in and funding social enterprises
- support and champion innovative commissioning

Integrated Commissioning Boards (ICBs)

- engage with, rather than exclude, local social enterprise ecosystems

Local authorities

- change their commissioning approaches, as described on page 3
- embrace their responsibilities for system stewardship, by supporting the development of new purpose-driven providers, and nurturing existing ones
- continue being active anchor institutions: as convenors, co-commissioners, and co-funders
- champion social enterprise delivery, embed it in local economic and wellbeing strategies
- offer social enterprises flexible terms to use council-owned premises in service delivery
- facilitate silo-breaking integrated service models
- welcome and encourage partnership consortia of social enterprises to bid collaboratively for larger contracts, sharing risk and expertise
- the **Local Government Association (LGA)** can play an important role here by supporting its members to do things differently

Universities

- offer research, incubation and evaluation to social enterprises and skills development to social entrepreneurs
- evaluate public service delivery (bid for funding from UKRI and elsewhere) to generate independent and robust evidence of impact
- create Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) regarding people-focused public services and social enterprise

From bottlenecks to breakthroughs: a primary care hub is redesigning access in Liverpool and Sefton

A Primary Care Hub supporting eight GP practices covering around 38,000 patients is reducing avoidable hospital admissions, improving efficiency and optimising access across the care continuum.

Primary Care 24 (PC24) is a social enterprise delivering a range of urgent and primary care NHS services. It operates this service in partnership with NHS commissioners, using NHS England's Modern General Practice framework. The hub supports general practice teams through digitally enabled triage, clinical overflow support, and care navigation, with an integrated telephony system and multidisciplinary team co-location.

The service addresses the mismatch between rising patient demand and limited general practice capacity. Traditional delivery models have struggled to meet appointment targets. Inadequate call handling led to high abandonment rates, delayed care, and patient dissatisfaction. Practices were also unable to absorb telephone consultation overflow, resulting in unmet needs particularly in deprived clusters.

Service development followed extensive modelling using NHS England's Digital Triage Demand and Supply Calculator and local demographic adjustments. The model reserves continuity of care and aligns staffing to population needs.

Innovation and impact

PC24's key innovation lies in its 'Hub-first' care navigation system and integration of real-time operational control. The hub answers 1,400 calls daily, reducing average wait times and abandoned call rates. By co-locating admin and clinical teams, it enables a fluid response across the care continuum, optimising access, reducing duplication, and providing resilience akin to acute settings. Notable metrics include:

- a 13% increase in call connection rates
- reallocating 70 hours of Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) time weekly to manage overflow demand, mitigating telephone appointment backlogs, which allows practices to meet face-to-face demand targets while addressing appointment volume requirements

The hub's impact aligns with government priorities around improved access, digital transformation, and integrated care. It supports sustainable economic growth through local job creation and improved workforce efficiency. It reduces avoidable hospital admissions.



The hub has significantly improved patient access and allowed our clinicians to focus more time on complex care. It feels like a safety net rather than a compromise.”

- A Primary Care Network partner

Read more about this and all our case studies at www.e3m.org.uk/cases

Theatre's transformation brings dramatic impact

Tees Active is delivering a revitalised cultural and community service through the Forum Theatre in Billingham, in partnership with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

The Forum Theatre is a Grade II listed building owned by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. Like many standalone cultural venues it faced challenges around underutilisation, funding, and community engagement. Tees Active, a charitable trust dedicated to raising the physical and mental wellbeing of communities in Stockton-on-Tees, took over its operation at the start of April 2023.

Tees Active has embedded the theatre within a broader community-first ethos combining vibrant programming with operational expertise. It cross-subsidises cultural and community services through a sustainable leisure portfolio, reinvesting all surpluses into local wellbeing and embedding social value into every aspect of service delivery, from environmental sustainability to health equity.

The Forum Theatre is operated by Tees Active under a long-term partnership agreement with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. Tees Active has invested over £300,000 into improving the theatre since taking it on and created 21 new jobs. It has decorated and refurbished the front and back of house areas and dressing rooms, invested in energy and CO₂ reducing technology, replaced the stage lighting, installed a new PA system and other special effects equipment, and invested into staff training, branding and marketing.

Impact metrics – since Tees Active took on the theatre:

theatre tickets sold increased in 2024-25 by: **11%**

theatre school participants (young people from 16 to 21 years old) have grown by: **96%**

the number of community organisations and groups using the theatre increased by: **45%**

Tees Active's model

- improves access to culture and wellbeing
- contributes to inclusive growth by creating local employment and enhancing community cohesion as well as driving carbon reduction and sustainable operations
- supports growth of the day and night times economies in the town centre, attracting footfall and potentially increasing visitor spend



The impact Tees Active has had since they took over the operation of the Forum Theatre has been sensational. Their professional and sustainable approach has delivered enjoyable and inclusive cultural experiences for the wider community, whilst creating valuable jobs to help boost the local economy.”

- Councillor Nigel Cooke, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Culture

Better children's residential services with Social adVentures

A welcoming home built on a sustainable model that enables reinvestment back into quality care and direct support for children and young people.

Social adVentures is a multi-stakeholder cooperative specialising in public health, children's residential care, fostering and social care contracts that run alongside social businesses including childcare nurseries, training, a community gym and forest schools. Established in 2011, it works across all age ranges, delivering a wide range of services.

In 2022 Social adVentures led a partnership (The Fair Care Alliance) to commission a feasibility study into Children's Residential Care in Greater Manchester. The study highlighted gaps in delivery, showed how the third sector can make an impact, and set out a plan of action, leading to Social adVentures opening its first residential children's home (Oak View located in Salford), supported through a £405,000 investment from Social and Sustainable Capital's Community Investment Fund.

Impact and innovation

Refurbished to an extremely high standard, Oak View has become a welcoming home to three young people, all of whom are from local communities having been placed by Salford City Council. This contrasts strongly with the historical 17% local placement rate across Greater Manchester, showing what's possible when you design around relationships, identity and stability.

Oak View's recent, second Ofsted inspection sustained a rating of 'Good' in all areas. It's built on a sustainable model that enables reinvestment back into quality care and direct support for children and young people, and this has been evidenced with holidays and trips abroad, a clinical partnership with another local third sector organisations and an innovative pilot around wider family support.

Every year, over 2,000 children in Greater Manchester are brought into care, with 30% of placements breaking down within eight months. In 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority highlighted that prices and profits in this sector were excessively high, driven by large private providers burdened with substantial debt, putting both their stability and the welfare of children at risk. Social adVentures is also explicitly tackling placement breakdown by investing in workforce quality, including using immersive learning and supporting staff to Level 6 development via Kingston University's Graduate Diploma in Residential Work (Children's). This course is built around leadership and therapeutic practice, grounded in evidence-based approaches and social pedagogy.

Moving into foster care – welcome HOME

Identifying the desperate need for more foster carers in the UK, Social adVentures is now developing a trailblazing new fostering service, HOME (www.homefostering.org.uk). It's specifically designed to help 'would be' foster carers find and move into a property that has sufficient bedroom space to enable them to look after children and young people, and in particular to help keep siblings together under one roof. Supported with start-up investment from The Postcode Innovation Trust (People's Postcode Lottery) the service will open its doors in 2026.

Social adVentures is leading the charge to bring more third sector organisations into the children's social care market to ensure any surplus made from these services goes straight back into more high-quality interventions for vulnerable children.

Leading Lives' person-centred care services



Leading Lives provides high-quality services to a wide range of people, the majority being those with a learning disability and autistic adults.

Leading Lives' services are commissioned by Suffolk County Council, neighbouring local authorities and NHS partners. A small percentage are purchased directly by individuals.

Service design and delivery

Leading Lives offers goal- and outcome-focused support based around growing independence and relationships. An employee-owned, not-for-profit social enterprise, it exists to support people with a social care need in a person-centred way, taking pride in being "enabling" and not offering a service that "does for."

Contracts and funding

Leading Lives has various contractual arrangements with Suffolk County Council and other local authorities, and some arrangements with the NHS and private individuals.

Innovation and impact in people-focused service delivery

Leading Lives' creative teams collaborate to find solutions for people. One example is the temporary, replacement crisis prevention service it developed during the pandemic, which continues to be commissioned by the local authority as a safety net. This service supports individuals at risk of home breakdown, exploitation, debt, homelessness or breaking the law. It prevents and reduces the need for longer-term interventions too.

This approach aligns with the NHS 10-year plan and directly contributes to sustainable economic growth by reducing long-term costs to local authorities through preventative services that address risks such as homelessness, exploitation, and service breakdown.

“

Communication is central to the relationship between my son, us the parents, and the Leading Lives team. The house team chat through with us any new ideas or issues that arise; support him in a variety of weekly activities; work with us to plan bespoke holidays and carefully monitor his day-to-day needs making changes when needed. The team is always open to ideas and will frequently come up with suggestions to improve or develop his life.”

– Jill, a parent of a son with a Learning Disability

Gwynedd home care service improves outcomes and aligns with national priorities

The traditional model of domiciliary care does not align with new legislation in Wales, and is transactional rather than focused on helping people to achieve their preferred personal outcomes. Cartrefi Cymru Co-operative is delivering a new Home Care locality model, commissioned by Gwynedd County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board.

In a partnership between the service commissioner and Cartrefi Cymru Co-operative, the service was designed and developed using the Vanguard Method, a systems thinking approach for improving services and innovating, based on real data and context.

The contract is for a five-year minimum period with scope to extend it up to nine years. The annual cost of the service is based on the provider's assessment of the cost of the service in their locality for the level of care and support required by the local population. The provider is paid in 13 equal monthly block payments guaranteeing their overhead costs are covered.

Cartrefi Cymru's key innovation is flexibility. This locality patch based model of home care supports local employment, creates beneficial community

connections and is driving tangible increases in social value. Joint commissioning enables the best use of local resources. Its impact includes:

- improved outcomes for People we Support (PWS), the local community and the employed Cartrefi Cymru team
- community links between Cartrefi Cymru's Supported Living service, its Home Care service and its support service at Cae Garnedd Extra Care scheme, and with local community organisations

The design of the service aligns with Wales' *National framework for commissioning care and support* and with the re-balancing care agenda via the Section 16 requirements of the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act*.





CASE STUDY

Changing lives through water

Liverpool Watersports Centre (LWC) is more than a place for kayaking or paddleboarding – it's a space where lives are transformed. It has grown from a modest seasonal facility into a year-round social hub that welcomes over 12,000 people annually.

Operated by Local Solutions (a charity established in 1974) since 2004, the centre supports health and wellbeing, removes barriers, and builds skills, confidence, and connections.

For many, watersports provide a pathway to confidence and belonging when traditional learning environments have failed. Young people who arrive withdrawn and anxious can leave the water smiling, proud, and eager to return. A commitment to inclusion and accessibility is at the heart of LWC:

- its Wheelyboat ensures disabled users experience water sports on equal terms
- free and discounted sessions enable access to asylum seekers, survivors of domestic abuse, unpaid carers, NEET young people, and care leavers

- the centre has become a vital wellbeing resource, is constantly evolving to stay ahead of leisure trends, and is woven into Liverpool's community life

With every pound earned at LWC reinvested into social impact, the centre raises vital funds for Local Solutions' AIMS (Activities Intense Mentoring Skills) programme: empowering young people through mentoring, life skills, and safety education.

Concurrently, it plays a key role in Liverpool's tourism economy, hosting events from stag and hen packages to family days out and the Lord Mayor's Annual Dragon Boat Race, all while raising the city's profile nationally.

Agile stroke service saves clinical time and centres lived experience



A Stroke Health and Wellbeing Service Pilot brought agility, lived experience, and community connection to transform a service from within.

The service was co-delivered by Here (a social enterprise which exists to collaboratively tackle challenges in delivering healthcare), working with the Stroke Association, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and people with lived experience of stroke.

Traditional stroke care often stops at discharge. Survivors and their carers are left without holistic support, leading to poor recovery outcomes, social isolation, and avoidable health crises. Here recognised the gap and was able to act with agility, partnership working, and a person-centred mindset to design a more responsive model.

Here co-designed the service with stroke survivors, who became trained Health Builders supporting their peers. Together, they created a multidisciplinary model combining clinical expertise, stroke support workers, and voluntary sector input. The model prioritised continuity, emotional wellbeing, and practical recovery.

The service was funded through NHS England's SQuIRe catalyst programme. It was delivered over 15 months to evaluate an integrated model of post-stroke care.

Innovation and impact in people-focused service delivery

- people with lived experience were equal partners (Health Builders)
- a non-hierarchical, values-led approach removed organisational silos
- introducing non-clinical roles extended the reach and personalisation of care
- 92% of participants felt supported to return to their interests and activities
- clinical staff and other professionals gave positive feedback, noting the service saved clinical time and improved staff satisfaction:

“

The support Health Builders and Stroke Support Workers have been able to offer stroke survivors and their loved ones has freed up clinicians to do the work only they can. This has saved clinical time at the same time as improving experience and better meeting care needs.”

*- Dr. Ingrid Kane,
Consultant Stroke Physician*

This service supports multiple missions, including integrated, person-centred care; reducing health inequalities; workforce innovation; and efficient public service delivery.

King's Award for Enterprise recognises LEYF's sustainability and social justice in Early Years

LEYF is a social enterprise which runs 43 nurseries across 13 London boroughs, delivering high quality Early Years education and care to children aged from birth to five years old. 77% of its nurseries are located in some of London's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and it champions equal access to Early Years Education and Care. 100% of its nurseries are Ofsted Outstanding or Good.

Its innovative cross-subsidy model ensures that up to 35% of nursery places are fully subsidised for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. And in a sector where sustainability is often overlooked,



LEYF stands out for integrating sustainable practices across governance, leadership operations, and pedagogy. Its impacts include reducing carbon emissions, minimising food waste, eliminating single-use plastics, building sustainable partnerships and educating future generations.

LEYF was awarded the King's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development in 2025. Its commitment to sustainability, social justice, and educational excellence is shaping the future of the Early Years sector.

Cranstoun's ROUTES Youth Advice Hub removes barriers

ROUTES is a youth advice hub located at Merry Hill Shopping Centre in Dudley, designed as a walk-in, youth-friendly space for individuals aged 13–25. It provides integrated early intervention, harm reduction, and whole-life support to young people facing challenges such as mental health issues, substance use, sexual health concerns, and social isolation.

ROUTES addresses the decline in youth services across the UK (750 youth clubs closed since 2011) and the resulting gaps in mental health support, crime prevention, and wellbeing services. Traditional delivery failed because services were fragmented, appointment-based, and inaccessible. ROUTES removes barriers by

offering open-door, no-referral, stigma-free access in a high-footfall retail location. It was co-produced with young people, ensuring trauma-informed design and youth-led activities. It is delivered by Cranstoun in partnership with local authorities, Violence Reduction Units, Brook Sexual Health, Here4Youth, Reflexions Mental Health, and Job Centre Plus.

Social enterprise models like ROUTES deliver cost-effective solutions to complex challenges and align with national priorities on youth mental health and violence reduction. Cranstoun plans to scale ROUTES nationally through partnerships with shopping centre landlords and local authorities.

Prevention, action, support team (PAST) domestic abuse intervention

Talk, Listen, Change (TLC) is the UK's leading relationships charity supporting people through abuse, crisis and relationship breakdown. TLC's PAST intervention, delivered since January 2024, provides intensive case management to high-risk high harm perpetrators of domestic abuse who are identified via the Multi-Agency, Task and Co-ordination (MATAC) model.

TLC's cost-effective PAST programme focuses on those who are perpetrating high harm domestic abuse and who pose high risk to victims / survivors. Its aim is to protect victims and their families by working with the perpetrator, to stop them from continuing their abuse.

Typically, the programme works with perpetrators who are involved with the criminal justice system and have complex issues and needs, for example substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment, mental and physical health issues and trauma. The intervention takes a multi-agency approach,

bringing together all appropriate services, making sure key information is shared and there's collaboration and agreement regarding effective interventions, ensuring a co-ordinated response to address the abuse.

It was developed after previous funding for high-risk domestic abuse interventions ended in October 2023. Greater Manchester Police asked TLC to continue working in partnership across Manchester, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, Stockport and Bury to implement an approach based on MATAC. PAST combines the most effective elements of existing models and delivers greater value for money.

Impact

TLC uses the severity of abuse grid (SOAG) tool to track change in abusive behaviours over time, informed by intelligence / multi-agency information. Of cases closed in Q2 2025:

81% showed a reduction in risk of stalking and harassment

88% showed a reduction in risk of physical abuse

71% showed a reduction in risk of sexual abuse

The costs of domestic abuse – to individuals, families and society – are extremely high. By tackling those who perpetrate abuse, PAST aims to reduce societal costs, lost productivity, and costs to statutory services. There are also immeasurable individual impacts (emotional, mental and physical) on victims, their children and families.

This cost-effective model has been created in partnership with Greater Manchester Police and other statutory and non-statutory partners, taking learning and best practice from TLC's previous high risk / high harm work.

Self-guided digital support for family members affected by substance use

“Family 5-Step” is a structured, evidence-based brief intervention designed to support family members affected by a relative’s alcohol or drug use. Developed by the Addictions and the Family International Network (AFiNET), it recognizes the unique and complex set of stresses that family members face.

The original model is delivered face to face. Turning Point has adapted it into a digital version, designed to be flexible and self-guided. It empowers family members to make choices about coping strategies and increasing social

support. The material is brought to life using a range of culturally and demographically diverse personas to engage interest and promote continued reflection and skills practice.

The digital version of the 5-step intervention is easily accessed through the Turning Point website. Family members are encouraged to complete the questionnaires at the beginning and end of the intervention to establish changes in how they cope, their physical and psychological health, and social support.

Since its launch, over a thousand people have registered to use the intervention, and data reveals a reduction in physical and psychological symptomatology and a reduced impact of substance use on the family member. Feedback suggests that people benefited from thinking more about their situation and having information about further sources of support.

“ It can be really hard for a family member living with someone struggling with addiction. This resource has been produced by medical experts and will be of help to many people. We are delighted that it is available.”

- Chris Franks, manager, Herefordshire Recovery Service

Supported housing enables residents to achieve goals

Before he arrived at the Quo Vadis Trust (QVT), Ibrahaim was living in shared accommodation at a supported care home. After just seven months at QVT life feels completely different: “It has made my life easier,” he says.

QVT is an award-winning mental health charity providing supported housing in south-east London. Last year, QVT provided over 990 activities and events for residents, supported by their own fundraising efforts and funding from

the National Lottery, People Postcode Lottery, L&Q and others. Participating in these activities helps residents – Ibrahaim says he feels better day-to-day, and has “started volunteering to one day get a part-time paid job.” QVT’s Client Development Service provides extra support to people living with mental health diagnoses, care leavers and homeless people; encouraging residents to learn new skills, integrate into new communities and achieve their goals.

Self-referral platform reduces appointments and supports return to work

Allied Health Professionals Suffolk CIC provides musculoskeletal services, including self-referral access for MSK patients, podiatry, pulmonary rehabilitation, diabetes education, Sexual Assault services, pelvic health services, and physiotherapy.

AHP works across Suffolk, north-east Essex, Enfield and parts of Cambridgeshire. In Suffolk, AHP delivers musculoskeletal (MSK) services and self-referral, in partnership with the county's two acute hospitals and NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB).

Many primary care appointments are due to MSK problems. AHP's self-referral system means people can access support 24/7, make a referral without the need to see any primary care clinicians, and tell their story through an online portal or on the telephone to a trained team member. All referrals are triaged by a senior physiotherapist within one day.

Impact

The process enables clinicians to quickly work with patients to identify their outcome goals and target services to deliver them. For 20% of referrals, patients do not need to see a therapist (because they carry out exercises as prescribed). Those who do attend require fewer appointments than through primary or secondary care referral. This releases primary care clinical time to reduce waiting times. It also supports people returning sooner to work, and carers to continue caring.

AHP developed the service iteratively using clinician and patient feedback, with built in clinical algorithms to enable the patients to move through appropriate questions. The portal is an intrinsic element of AHP's MSK delivery and is linked to its NHS contracts.

The approach contributes to the goals in the Get Britain Working White paper and aligns with NHS England's digital first guidance, self-management approach and integration agenda.

Safe and decent homes transform lives in Gainsborough

Many people in Gainsborough's south-west ward have been living in poor-quality housing because of high deprivation levels and high dependence on remote private landlords. Tenancy churn and low availability of wraparound support to people housed by private landlords contributed to further instability. But a ten-year partnership between West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) and the 'people first' organisation P3, a charity, social enterprise and registered housing provider, is increasing the provision of affordable, high-quality, sustainable housing for Gainsborough's communities in the greatest need.

The partnership has enabled P3 to lever millions of pounds of social investment to purchase homes, refurbish them and rent them. A new, impact-focused lettings policy has been developed to let them. The initiative has reduced exploitation by private landlords, increased access to homes at affordable rents and will support other community initiatives.

The partnership was catalysed through a grant funding agreement which committed £1 million from WLDC, and the transfer of 11 properties to the charity. P3 also raised £4 million in social investment to purchase homes and refurbish them to a high standard.

Partnership saves one thousand years of care

A partnership which delivers an evidence-based family therapy has supported hundreds of children at risk of being taken into care to remain safely with their families, saving the equivalent of 1,000 years of days in care (cases are tracked for 18 months post intervention).

Stronger Families delivers a specialist clinical service, at home, enabling families in Suffolk and Norfolk to stay together. It provides children and adolescents identified by Children's Services as being at risk of being taken into care, and their families, access to a structured therapeutic

programme to address challenging behavioural and emotional issues and to build capacity for sustainable, positive change. The therapy can also enable reunification from care to return home.

Stronger Families Partnership is made up of Bridges Outcomes Partnerships, Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council, and Family Psychology Mutual, a social enterprise that delivers evidence-based interventions at the edge of care where risks may be of offending, safeguarding or exploitation.

High quality, self-contained homes for people with learning disabilities

Rochdale's Cherwell Village apartments were purpose-built by PossAbilities CIC, opened in 2022 and have been full since day one. This innovative development, co-located with other PossAbilities services, filled a significant need, giving people with learning disabilities the opportunity to have their own home for the first time.

PossAbilities was formed in 2014 as a spin-out from Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. Since then, it has increased staff from 220 to more than 600. It works with people with learning disabilities and young people leaving care so they can live the life they choose. It secured the land for Cherwell Village for one peppercorn using a Community Asset Transfer from the council. PossAbilities then invested £350,000 of reserves it had built up, topped up with a £1.5m low interest loan from the Public Works Loan Board, which can be accessed via councils, to fund the £1.8m project.

PossAbilities is now investing reserves into building 17 more homes in Rochdale, with a further 19 planned for Runcorn, addressing the shortage of this type of accommodation.



Scaling Social Enterprise Innovation in Public Services

About E3M

E3M is a strategic initiative to support social enterprise innovation in public services. We do this by exchanging knowledge and practice across three networks: a group of 30 leaders of social enterprises that collectively deliver over **£1 billion** of public services across a wide range of areas, a group of “bold commissioners” with senior roles in local public authorities and a group of social impact investors and funders.

Bringing their different perspectives together, E3M is a catalyst for change, to improve the way services are delivered and improve outcomes for people and communities.

This is done through a programme of learning and innovation events and activities, thought leadership and engagement on key issues that are crucial for success.



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Download our book, Vitalising Purpose at www.e3m.org.uk/vitalising-purpose-book

Read reports from our E3M Imagine events exploring new models for public services at www.e3m.org.uk/category/publications

E3M is supported by three strategic partners: Stone King LLP, Buzzacott LLP and Zurich

We are grateful to all the social enterprises and commissioners featured in this publication.
Read more case studies at www.e3m.org.uk/cases

Special thanks to the following for their input to this report: Jo Douglas (Allied Health Professionals Suffolk CIC), Geraint Jenkins and Donna Coyle (Cartrefi Cymru), Kirsty Cumming (Community Leisure UK), Meg Jones (Cranstoun), Tom Jefford (Family Psychology Mutual), Helen Curr and Mona Walsh (Here), Lucy Humphrey (Leading Lives), June O'Sullivan and Françoise Facella (LEYF), Karen Jackson (Locala), Tom Harrison and Jenny Snell (Local Solutions), Gemma Bukel and Simon Allcock (P3), Dave Horsfield and Hannah Hague (PC24), Rachel Law (PossAbilities CIC), Ingrid Tennessee (Quo Vadis Trust), Scott Darraugh MBE (Social adVentures), Michelle Hill, Anna Callaghan and Emily Williams (Talk Listen Change), Leon Jones (Tees Active), Sarah Kennedy (Turning Point), and Julian Blake and Sandra Hamilton (Stone King).

Written by Jonathan Bland and Jamie Veitch. Design: Research Retold www.researchretold.com

Company number 7007166. Registered office: 8 Coldbath Square, London, EC1R 5HL