

Support for Social Enterprise in Scotland

A very useful database of social enterprise support agencies has been developed by Senscot and can be found [here](#). The database is divided into a number of thematic areas:

- [START UP DEVELOPING, PLANNING & TRAINING](#)
- [GOVERNANCE & LEGAL](#)
- [FINANCE & FUNDING](#)
- [BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT](#)
- [IMPACT MEASUREMENT](#)

Social Enterprise in Scotland has a number of umbrella groups which act as information, training, lobbying and policy making bodies which are useful to be aware of. These include:

- [Social Enterprise Scotland](#): the national representative body for social enterprise. One of our consultants was a co-founder of SES under its previous incarnation as the Social Enterprise Coalition.
- [Social Enterprise UK](#): Social Enterprise UK sees itself as operating in non-devolved areas in Scotland and are therefore a useful source of information/lobbying, especially on taxation issues.
- [Senscot](#): is the influential national network for social entrepreneurs (which one of our consultants is a former board member of). Its weekly bulletin is a useful source of information and polemic on social enterprise issues.
- The [Social Enterprise Networks](#): are a range of thematic and geographic networks which link social entrepreneurs active in Scotland.
- [Development Trusts Association](#): DTA Scotland (founded originally by Senscot and the Association of Small Towns in Scotland) is an invaluable source of support to local asset based Development Trusts. It offers an excellent range of services on many issues facing Development Trusts. An example of this is:
- [Community Shares Scotland](#): which advises on and develops community based share supported organisations.
- [Social Firms Scotland](#): Social Firms Scotland is the national support body for Social Firms in Scotland. A Social Firm is a specific type of Social Enterprise where the social mission is to create employment, work experience, training and volunteering opportunities for people who face significant barriers to employment.
- [HISEZ](#) offers Business Support to new and existing Social Enterprises throughout the Highlands and Islands. HISEZ deliver support as part of the Just Enterprise Programme as well as networking opportunities and training.
- [Community Land Scotland](#): the representative body for Scottish community landowners.
- [Voluntary Action Scotland](#) is the national organisation for local third sector infrastructure. Each local authority area in Scotland has a Third Sector Interface to support, promote, develop and represent the third sector which includes social enterprise. There is a continuing turf war between many local SENS and TSIs which can be unhelpful.

A range of Scottish Government supported initiatives are operated, sometimes by social enterprise agencies, and at other times by quasi-Governmental agencies:

- [Just Enterprise](#): is a consortium bringing together Scotland's social enterprise support agencies to provide business support and development services to Enterprising Third Sector Organisations across Scotland. Its principal role is to deliver the Scottish Government's contract for Business Support to the Enterprising Third Sector.



- [Ready for Business](#) delivers the Developing Markets for Third Sector Providers programme. The programme, offers a unique opportunity to develop and embed a number of leading market development solutions, including the Public Social Partnership (PSP) model, Community Benefit Clauses (CBC) and the use of Social Value throughout public sector commissioning and procurement in Scotland.
- [Co-operative Development Scotland](#), an arm of Scottish Enterprise, supports the development of co-operative and employee-owned enterprises across Scotland. Support includes exploring the options, structuring the company, financing the business and developing member participation. We are CDS specialist advisors.
- [Business Gateway](#): supports business in Scotland including taking on account managed organisations such as larger social enterprises which meet their criteria. This can assist them with Intellectual Property, business growth and international expansion.
- [Highlands and Islands Enterprise](#): provides similar services to Scottish Enterprise but additionally, specific support for Community Land Buyouts, account managed communities and social enterprises and vulnerable areas.

A number of social enterprises provide their own paid-for support services for social enterprise. They include:

- [SKS Scotland CIC](#): a social enterprise which specialises in consultancy support to other social enterprises and Third Sector organisations. It is a paid for service which uses its income generated to provide employment and services for people with long term conditions.
- The [Social Learning Company](#) provides access to expertise, advice and consultancy specialising in EU transnational programmes and agricultural based programmes.
- [CEIS](#): a significant social enterprise which offers support to social enterprises across Scotland both on a paid-for basis and through Scottish Government contracts.
- [CEL Ltd](#): a West Lothian based social enterprise offering a Scottish wide service including marketing development, venue advertising and social enterprise product sales platforms.

Learning is an important area of social enterprise support provided by two main social enterprises:

- The [Social Enterprise Academy](#): was co-founded by one of our consultants to provide social enterprises and Third Sector organisations with sector specific learning and development opportunities. The Academy now works on an international basis in countries such as Australia, South Africa and Ireland. It has an international reputation for the quality of its leadership programmes and provides Government contracts in schools and amongst social enterprises on a geographic and thematic basis.
- The [School for Social Entrepreneurs](#): provides intensively supportive programmes for start-up social entrepreneurs co-financed by the Bank of Scotland.

Scotland does not lack for social enterprise support agencies. The [Scottish Government](#) has tried to develop a coherent support framework over the last few years which has partially succeeded. However, criticisms of the support offered includes the observation that quality levels, particularly in the Just Enterprise programme, vary considerably.

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