

RNIB and Action for Blind People Social Firms: A Social Impact Measurement

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This research was commissioned by RNIB but the conclusions and views stated in this report are the author's and do not necessarily reflect the view of RNIB or Action for Blind People.

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Executive Summary

This report presents research conducted with London South Bank University to evidence the social impact being created by RNIB and Action for Blind People's two social firms, Concept Conferencing Centre and Viewpoint. These are social enterprises that provide employment and training opportunities to blind and partially sighted people.

The research methodology involved interviewing ten current and past employees and trainees at both organisations to gather evidence of how employment had changed their lives. In addition five interviews were held with the social firm managers and commercial clients, and a short questionnaire with three of the employees' families.

The results showed increases in employees' and trainees' confidence in themselves and in the workplace, improvements to their family's lifestyles, and at Concept, challenged attitudes of sight loss in the workplace. In addition employment of these individuals saved the government money in welfare spending and increased income from tax receipts from salaries and trading.

It was found that the factors creating these changes were empowerment, supportive management, peer support, new physical environments and direct client contact. Many of these were unique to the social firm model and may not be found in the external labour market.

In addition, a Social Return on Investment analysis was undertaken on Concept and estimated that for every £1 invested in Concept, £4.80 is returned in value. This includes social outcomes to employees, trainees and in changed attitudes (valued at £3.29 per £1). Economic outcomes to the government in reduced welfare spend in and increased tax income (valued at £1.52 per £1).

This research begins to set out a compelling case for social firms within the employment service portfolio of RNIB and Action for Blind People. With powerful factors implicit to the model, social firms represent a mechanism of vocational rehabilitation that could help create the social outcomes required to bring those furthest from the labour market back into employment and society as a whole.

1. Introduction

1.1 Social Impact Measurement

Social impact measurement (SIM) is defined as "the process by which an organisation provides evidence that its services are providing real and tangible benefits to people or the environment" (Arvidson, 2009). In the nonprofit context this is the method by which charities demonstrate that they are creating the social changes that they claim to.

It is important that SIM is also in a systematic way, identifying both expected and unexpected effects, and both positive and negative effects. Although there is a large number of SIM tools available the majority begin with the foundation of identifying social impacts made through direct engagement with stakeholders themselves.

Stakeholders in SIM are anyone who is affected by the organisation or the specific project being measured. Stakeholders may include staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, family of beneficiaries, the environment, external partner organisations or the government.

The demand for the application of SIM across the nonprofit sector is increasing all the time. The following quotes are taken from recent publications from a respected research centre, major UK nonprofit consultancy organisation and UK Government publication:

"[The] attention to [social] impact...is driven both by funders who want to know whether their funds are making a difference or might be better spent elsewhere, as well as by committed nonprofit leaders and social entrepreneurs looking for solutions to pressing societal problems" - Alnoor Ebrahim, Harvard Business School, 2010

"If charities are to survive and even thrive in these tough times, they need to face up to the challenge [of demonstrating impact]. This means subjecting themselves to the same scrutiny faced by government spending departments. Charities need to talk to

government on its own terms" - New Philanthropy Capital, 2010

"The Office of the Third Sector (OTS) and the Scottish Government recognise that demonstrating added social, economic and environmental value is important for third sector organisations and their funders, investors and commissioners, and is becoming increasingly important for the public and private sectors" - Office of the Third Sector, 2009

These three quotes emphasise three major drives behind SIM: accountability, alignment and attraction.

- **Accountability** - It is already important for nonprofit organisations to be more accountable to funders and donors but with funding scarcer it is increasingly so. Being able to justify your receipt of current resources is important.
- **Alignment** - Social problems and inequalities throughout the UK are both significant in size and effect on people's lives however the resources available to reduce and remove them are finite. It is therefore critical that those resources nonprofit organisations do have are used in an informed manner in order to create the most social benefit possible. SIM allows a nonprofit to assess whether this is the case.
- **Attraction** - In a climate of reduced funding, nonprofits need to make themselves more attractive to new funding streams. Through effective use of the evidence of SIM, a nonprofit who is communicating its impact on society will be one that funders and donors will be more likely to support.

Not all of these drives will apply to all nonprofit contexts, however even separately they form a strong case for the use of SIM as a key organisational process.

1.2 Social Firms

Social firms are type of social enterprise, the general term for a business that trades for a social objective. The social objective is the provision of employment opportunities for those facing disadvantages in the labour market. Although informal due to no

government or legal definition being in place, the UK social firms sector operates under the umbrella body of Social Firms UK. Social firms UK has three criteria for classification as a social firm (Social Firms UK, 2010):

- **Enterprise:** At least 50 per cent of the firm's turnover will be earned through sales of goods and/or services. The firm will have an appropriate legal status. It must not be governed or driven by individual profit.
- **Employment:** more than 25 per cent of employees will be disadvantaged people. Reasonable adjustments will be made for employees relevant to their needs.
- **Empowerment:** Social firms are committed to the social and economic integration of disadvantaged people through employment. A key means to this end is economic empowerment through all employees having a contract of employment and a market wage at or above national minimum wage.

These criteria suggest there is a number of advantages to the social firm model as a route to employment for blind and partially sighted people in the labour market:

- **Empowering:** Historically, disabled people have not always been employed in the same situations as non-disabled people (Vidal, 2005). However social firms aim to create meaningful working lives, bringing blind and partially sighted people the social, psychological and health benefits associated with work (Waddell & Burton, 2006). In addition, social firms can offer training opportunities alongside permanent positions, giving demanding work experience to help rehabilitate those looking to get back into work.
- **Integrating:** Social firms aim to mix people with disabilities with those without in a single workforce rather than just a group of other people with disabilities, reflecting the population as a whole. This is helpful to increase the understanding of sight loss to people who might otherwise not have the opportunity to do so.

- **Self-funding:** Although often a goal to work towards, the most successful social firms can become self-funding through trading income and therefore become more sustainable and not dependant on philanthropic giving.
- **Growing:** As a business, a successful social firm can grow, creating more opportunities for the employment of blind and partially sighted people. As a particular example, Arcobleno, an Italian company working under a similar set up to a social firm, has been running for 18 years and currently employs over 70 disadvantaged staff in its workforce (Social Firms UK, 2010).

However it must also be noted that there are some disadvantages:

- **Business fluctuations:** Any business operating under market conditions is liable to suffer from economic trends and fluctuations, potentially resulting in job losses or business failure.
- **Small beginnings:** Again like any business, social firms will begin small and therefore provide limited opportunities for blind and partially sighted people at first.

However despite these disadvantages, UK and European evidence suggests that social firms, and their European counterparts Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs), have the potential to add a lot to disability employment efforts. Having a longer history across Europe, and in many cases some form of government support or subsidy, Spear & Bidet (2005) found that Germany has between 6000 and 7000 WISEs, Italy has nearly 2000, and Finland has over 200. Although some of the definitions of the WISEs differ, it shows the success of the mix of business structures and social employment aims. Furthermore, early success of social firms within the UK, achieved without government support, points to a bright future. Social firms UK report that each year the 179 existing UK social firms save £30m in government benefits payments, £8.5m in health service savings from improved health outcomes and £1m in social service savings from greater social inclusion (Social Firms UK, 2010). Were these figures extrapolated to the size of the social firms sector in Germany it would amount to over £1.4bn a year in direct and indirect savings to the UK Government.

For these reasons RNIB and Action were keen to apply SIM methods to its two current associated social firms to evidence the social impact being created. This would contribute to the business case to develop new blind and partially sighted specific social firms within the UK as part of the attempt to fulfil their employment strategic goals.

In February 2010 RNIB initiated a project in collaboration with South Bank University to research, develop and apply SIM to RNIB and Action social firms.

1.3 Research Questions

Social impact is about looking at an intervention and asking what change has been created. This includes positive or negative, intended or unintended. The process also identifies which activities are causing those changes. Therefore the research questions for RNIB and Action social firms were:

- What changes are occurring as a result of employing of blind and partially sighted people through a social firm?
- Which aspects of the social firm were creating those changes?

In addition, we used a specific methodology known as Social Return on Investment (SROI) to answer a third and fourth question:

- What value can we place on the changes occurring?
- How does this value compare to the resources being used to create them?

2. Methodology: Measuring Change

2.1 RNIB and Action Social Firms

2.1.1 Concept Conference Centre

Concept Conference Centre is based in Birmingham and has been operating since 2007. It has capacity for around 90 delegates across four conferencing rooms and each year serves around 7,000 delegates. Concept has a fully functional open plan kitchen, staffed by blind and partially sighted people, and the chefs have high professional levels of qualification in food management and hygiene. Concept has been awarded the top 5H score by Birmingham City Council for hygiene standards. Concept is currently part of Action for Blind People.

Concept provides both employment and long-term training opportunities for blind and partially sighted people. Typically there are three permanent staff and three trainee positions at one time. Trainee positions are funded through either RNIB and Action for Blind People money or other subsidies. These positions last a year but can go on longer. All trainees achieve Level 2 Food Safety certificates as well as close personal support in developing new professional and intrapersonal skills.

Concept also regularly engages with the local and national media, through radio, television and newspapers to promote the message that sight loss does not need to be a barrier to a high quality service.

www.conceptconferencecentre.com

2.1.2 Viewpoint CIC

Viewpoint CIC is a telephone research service, specialising in customer satisfaction surveys. It operates out of two UK offices, one in Sheffield and one in Leeds. The Sheffield office opened in 2006, followed by the Leeds office three years later. Viewpoint is an independent company, operating under the Community Interest Company (CIC) legal model. This is a model of organisation that operates for profit but uses those profits for the public good.

Currently Viewpoint deliver telephone-based research for clients such as the NHS, The Big Issue, a major local tenant's association and a number of local housing associations.

Viewpoint's social aims are the employment of people facing disadvantages in the workplace. The Sheffield office is primarily staffed by research assistants with and recovering from mental illness. The Leeds office, set up with conjunction with RNIB, is staffed by blind and partially sighted people. Currently there are seven staff working with Viewpoint who either have mental ill-health or sight loss. The majority of these staff are permanent and although they do not work full-time both Viewpoint and the staff have ambitions to expand.

www.viewpoint-research.co.uk

2.2 Research Methods

2.2.1 Identifying Stakeholders

The initial stage of the project was open interviews with the two social firm managers about the background and activities of the social firms. This resulted in a list of key stakeholders to consult. The stakeholders identified are listed below.

- Social firm managers
- Social firm staff and ex-staff
- Social firm trainees and ex-trainees
- Family of social firm staff and trainees
- Social firm commercial clients

2.2.2 Engaging Stakeholders

The next stage of the methodology was to complete semi-structured interviews with all of the stakeholders. This was chosen to gather qualitative evidence of the social impact of the social firm activities. This is important in understanding both intended and unintended outcomes and is a key part of multiple social impact assessment methodologies (Pearce & Kay, 2008; Cabinet Office, 2009). Participants were informed about the nature of the research and its goals, and assured about their right to withdraw, decline to answer questions and the anonymous recording of the answers

given. All participants gave their consent before beginning the interview.

Current and Past Staff

Seven current and past blind and partially sighted people were interviewed. The six current blind and partially sighted staff across both social firms were interviewed face to face. The interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes. The interviews covered the participant's employment history, periods of unemployment, and the period of employment at the social firm. The semi-structured format was based around four areas of intrapersonal changes, interpersonal changes, economic changes, and lifestyle changes. Two previous staff members were contacted via email and one agreed to participation. The same interview was delivered over the phone.

Current and Past Trainees

Three current trainees at Concept were given the same interview as the staff. They had all been trainees for between six months and a year. Regrettably the manager reported that they did not have contact details of previous trainees and therefore they could not be contacted.

Staff and Trainees' Families

Three staff and trainees families completed qualitative questionnaires. Families were identified through asking staff and trainees if they had any family who would be happy to contribute to the research through talking about whether they had been impacted by their employment. Two of the staff and one of the trainees said that this would be appropriate through a questionnaire. A short qualitative questionnaire was developed and sent to the participants to take home. It contained the same information as the interview.

Managers

The managers were re-interviewed to focus on changes they had observed in staff and other stakeholders. These interviews took approximately one hour. They were asked to report on interpersonal, intrapersonal and lifestyle changes observed in the

staff and trainees since working at the social firm. They were also asked for evidence of how the social firm had impacted on clients and customers.

Clients

Key clients and customers of the social firms were identified by the managers and contact details passed on to the researcher. Viewpoint provided three, and Concept provided two. A semi-structured interview was developed based on the 'Attitudes Towards Blind People' scale (used by Inglis, 2005). Clients were asked about the nature of their interaction with the social firm and what, if any, impact that interaction had on them.

2.2.3 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis was done using a thematic analysis on the data gathered through the interviews. This involved identifying common themes across all participants. In addition these themes were then placed in impact maps for each social firm. These are graphical representations of how the activity of the social firm results in the evidenced outcomes, for each stakeholder.

2.2.4 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis was conducted after the qualitative analysis and used a method known as social return on investment.

Social Return on Investment

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a methodology developed to evidence, assess and value the outcomes created by nonprofit activities, and compare it to the value of the inputs used to create them. It uses financial approximations to help translate social outcomes into an estimated financial value to individuals and society. By comparing the total value of the outcomes to the total input value, a 'social return on investment' can be estimated.

The methodology of SROI

SROI methodology includes the unique aspect of an impact valuation stage. This creates estimations of both the value of the outcomes created and estimations of:

- what would've happened anyway if charitable activity hadn't occurred (known as deadweight)
- how much credit can be claimed for the positive change we observe (known as attribution)
- whether by creating positive outcomes others are deprived of them (known as displacement)
- how long will the positive changes last (known as drop-off)
- how much social value will be created over a period of five years

An additional factor that was added into to the analysis is that of 'distance travelled'. This represents the degree to which an outcome is achieved e.g. how much did lifestyle improve? This is important because financial valuations often estimate the total value of lifestyle, therefore unless this total value is discounted to the level of improvement found in the particular study it will be an overestimate.

These estimations can help charities make strategic or operational changes to further increase the positive changes they are making to society and to individuals.

SROI does not always represent real money saved or generated, but it helps to approximate how society values the outcomes in financial terms.

One of the outcomes of an SROI analysis is the social return on investment ratio. This is calculated using the ratio of 'Total Value of Outcomes' **divided by** 'Total Value of Inputs'. Therefore an estimation is made of how many pounds of value is created for every one pound invested.

Finally, SROI best practice is to conduct a sensitivity analysis to test reliance on assumptions and information sources used. Here two kinds of tests were used. The first is with more conservative assumptions and sources in the model, and the second is identifying lowest the level of outcomes, valuations and assumptions required to make the model value neutral i.e. £1 value for £1 invested.

3. Qualitative Results

3.1 Impact Mapping

All the sources of information were collated and analysed to identify the changes being created by the social firm. SIM presents these graphically in an impact map to represent how activities lead to impacts. The impact map for Concept is shown in Table 1, and for Viewpoint in Table 2. There are expected similarities in the outcomes created on blind and partially sighted staff and their families. However Concept's trainee scheme creates outcomes on these stakeholders also. Further, due to the customer facing nature of the conferencing facility, Concept generated outcomes on business clients.

3.2 Social Outcomes on Staff and Trainees

The frequency of the five main social outcomes is reported in Figure 1, and each social outcome is explained in more detail below, along with one additional outcome on society as a whole.

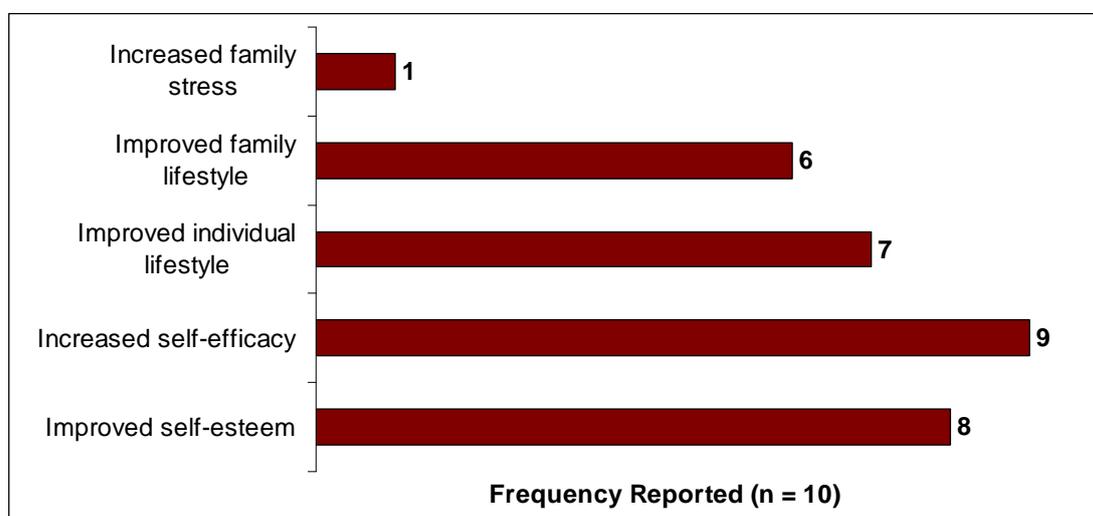


Figure 1 // Frequency of each outcome

Figure 1 shows that the most common outcome was an increase in self-efficacy with 9 of the staff and trainees reporting this change. Improved self-esteem and improved individual lifestyle were reported by 8 and 7 of staff and trainees, respectively. In terms of family outcomes, 6 staff and trainees with families reported increased family lifestyle, and only 1 reported increased family stress due to employment.

Stakeholder	Activity	Outputs	Outcomes
Blind or partially sighted staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given job in an enterprising workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time spent in the job Support from management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased self-esteem Increased self-efficacy Improved lifestyle Sustainable employment
Blind or partially sighted trainees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given placement in an enterprising workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time spent in the placement Support from management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased self-esteem Increased self-efficacy Improved lifestyle Increased work experience
Family of blind or partially sighted staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family member given opportunity in work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time family member spends in job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved family life Decreased / Increased stress
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual brought into employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in benefit claims Increased commercial activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased costs in benefit claims Increased income in personal tax receipts Increased income in commercial tax receipts
Social firm clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided by staff including BPSP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive high quality services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of sight loss in the workplace

Table 1 // Impact Map for Concept

Stakeholder	Activity	Outputs	Outcomes
Blind or partially sighted staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given job in an enterprising workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time spent in the job • Support from management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased self-esteem • Increased self-efficacy • Improved lifestyle • Sustainable employment
Family of blind or partially sighted staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family member given opportunity in work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time family member spends in job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved family life • Decreased / Increased stress
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual brought into employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in benefit claims • Increased commercial activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased costs in benefit claims • Increased income in personal tax receipts • Increased income in commercial tax receipts

Table 2 // Impact Map for Viewpoint

It is important to note that these outcomes represent evidence of any change and not the degree of change. For example the one staff member who did not report increased self-efficacy did not have low self-efficacy, but rather had a high self-efficacy that was unchanged by the social firm. These numbers therefore represent more of a 'distance travelled' than a 'destination arrived at'.

3.2.1 Increased self-esteem

"When unemployed I shut myself off, saw less people, lost motivation and interest in activities...but now I have more confidence in myself and my job, and this translates outside of work. I am more adventurous"

- A quote from an employee

Self-esteem was one of the most significant and ubiquitous outcomes of the social firm on its blind and partially sighted employees and trainees. Self-esteem is defined as a positive or negative evaluation towards oneself and indicates the degree to which a person experiences themselves as worthy and capable (Rosenborg, 1990). It is associated with mental and physical health, as well as social relationships (Kinnunen et al., 2008). Although there are many contributors to self-esteem, disability has been found to have significant and enduring negative effects on an individual's self-esteem (Hughes et al., 2004, Bat-Chava, 1993). It is therefore a valuable outcome to be achieving in a social firm.

Significantly it was found that the reported increases in self-esteem from unemployment to employment were related the individual's disability. Their experiences in the social firm had helped them come to terms with their disability in a holistic way, and not just within the workplace. This suggests the social firm is creating outcomes outside of the immediate employment objectives. This outcome was most evidenced, although not exclusively, in those who had lost their sight later in life.

3.2.2 Increased Self-Efficacy

"I stopped going out because I feared laughter or embarrassment. I had no confidence in meeting people...Since working here I am now confident about

my sight condition, I feel better in myself. I am confident to be able to get a job elsewhere"
- A quote from an employee

Self-efficacy is defined as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994). In this context we mean people's beliefs in their capability in the workplace. The current research found that prior to working in the social firm the majority of staff and trainees either had no belief or limited belief that they could perform a competent role in the workplace. This was either through negative experiences in the past or from being unable to understand how the new experience of sight loss aligns with the demands of a workplace. It was also found that their experience in the social firm had led them to a confidence in their work-related abilities such that they had hope for the future again, either at the social firm or elsewhere.

3.2.3 Improved Individual Lifestyle

"I am now happy to travel into the city on my own. I never would have done that before"
- A quote from an employee

The research identified improved individual lifestyle as another outcome on blind or partially sighted staff and trainees. This was evidenced in reports of renewed confidence to re-engage in activities lost since the loss of their sight, such as going out with friends, or to do wholly new activities like going shopping alone. This outcome is valuable because increased social support and relationships, as well as a sense of independence, are factors associated with stronger psychological well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Haslam, Jetten, Postmes & Haslam, 2009), and therefore, over time, this outcome may lead to further benefits for the staff and trainees.

3.2.4 Improved Family Life

"When I was unemployed it was hard not providing for my children and I got into debt trying. The little things dig away at you...but now they live in a nice house"
- A quote from an employee

A major outcome of unemployment for the blind and partially sighted people interviewed was a negative effect on their family. Those of whom who were married reported both financial and social family difficulties when sight loss led to the loss of their previous job. Whilst employment in the social firm did not relieve all of these pressures - for example one spouse has additional pressure to transport their husband - many of them were reduced significantly. This improved family lifestyle and was an outcome of employment in the social firm that staff were particularly grateful for.

3.2.5 Increased Stress for Family Members

"My wife now has to plan her shifts around my work here. She has to drive me to work"
- A quote from an employee

Although this outcome was only evidenced once, it is important to recognise both positive and negative outcomes in social impact measurement. One interviewee reported that his wife lived with increased stress due to his employment because she had to move her working patterns around in order to transport him to work due to this severe sight loss. When he was unemployed and at home she did not have this requirement.

3.2.6 Increased Awareness of Sight Loss in the Workplace

"Working with [the social firm] has certainly made me more aware. We understand which aids are available and it gives great satisfaction to help blind and partially sighted people"
- A quote from an associated company

An additional outcome evidenced in the interviews with social firm commercial clients was the increased awareness of sight loss in the workplace. Stereotypes and ignorance of sight loss in the workplace have been reported across the last decade (Inglis, 2006; Dench, Meager & Morris, 1996). One of the major theories of changing perceptions is the 'contact hypothesis' (Allport, 1954). This says that interaction with the stereotyped group is the important factor. Therefore it is not surprising that Concept, whose conferencing commercial activity brings delegates face to face with blind and partially sighted employees, was found to challenge

perceptions and leave delegates more aware of the capabilities of people with sight loss in the workplace. This is another outcome of Concept that was outside the immediate employment remit but is highly valuable. Viewpoint did not operate in a face to face manner and therefore this outcome was not found here.

3.3 Reported Casual Factors

In order to maximise the utility of a social impact measurement it is important to identify not only the outcomes but the factors within the social firm that the outcomes can be attributed to. In a cross-sectional study such as this — a study taking a 'snap-shot' at one time rather than taking evidence over time — this attribution can be done through asking the stakeholders themselves to attribute the outcomes they report.

Figure 2 shows graphically a model of RNIB and Action social firms. The model merges Concept and Viewpoint. The outer circle represents the outcomes achieved by the social firm¹, and the middle circle represents the factors attributed by stakeholders to those outcomes.

3.3.1 Empowerment

The first major factor identified by both managers and the staff themselves was the culture of the social firms that sought to empower rather than shelter blind and partially sighted staff. One employee, referring to his sight loss, said that 'the managers don't see things are problems, but rather challenges to overcome'. Managers expected results from staff and trainees and this was claimed to result in the growth of individual self-efficacy once employees and trainees realised they could, with reasonable adjustments, complete the tasks required of them.

3.3.2 Supportive Management

The second major factor identified by staff and trainees was the supportive and understanding nature of the social firm managers. Both managers, whilst not having sight loss themselves, were

¹The single negative outcome evidenced was removed due to it only occurring once and therefore not being representative of a generic social firms model

knowledgeable and aware of the realities of sight loss, and the support available. One staff member referred to the actions taken by the management as 'reasonable adjustments with a smile'. This meant that staff and trainees were not afraid to disclose difficulties being faced due to their sight loss, either in work itself or outside of it e.g. travelling to and from work. Disclosure of sight loss has been identified as a difficulty for blind and partially sighted people in the workplace by RNIB and Action employment training however within the social firms this difficulty was overcome. Specifically, the outcomes of increased self-efficacy and increased self-esteem were attributed to the support and understanding of management.

3.3.3 Peer Support

The third major factor of a social firm that contributed to the outcomes achieved was the support between blind and partially sighted staff and trainees themselves. Concept had a group of six staff and trainees with sight loss, and Viewpoint had a group of three. Staff and trainees from both social firms reported the value of knowing that others understood what the likely difficulties they would need to overcome were, and how they could be overcome. This was a factor unique to the social firms model because in the majority of circumstances employees with sight loss would work alongside only fully sighted colleagues with no experience of sight loss and its implications. The factor was claimed responsible for increases in self-esteem, self-efficacy and improved lifestyle.

3.3.4 New Physical Environments

The fourth factor, reported by a minority of the staff and trainees, was the chance to get out of their houses and experience a new physical environment. This was something that some had lacked in their lives since losing their sight. It provided them with a chance to meet new people and experience new things, or re-experience things they may have had in the past. This aspect of the social firm, given credit for improved self-esteem, individual lifestyle and family lifestyles, was very highly valued by the staff and trainees.

3.3.5 Direct contact with others

The final factor of the social firm was specific to Concept. Interviews with commercial clients reported that coming into direct

contact with blind and partially sighted people in the kitchen was a powerful challenge to stereotypes of sight loss in the workplace for their delegates. This experience is not one that will be commonly found elsewhere.

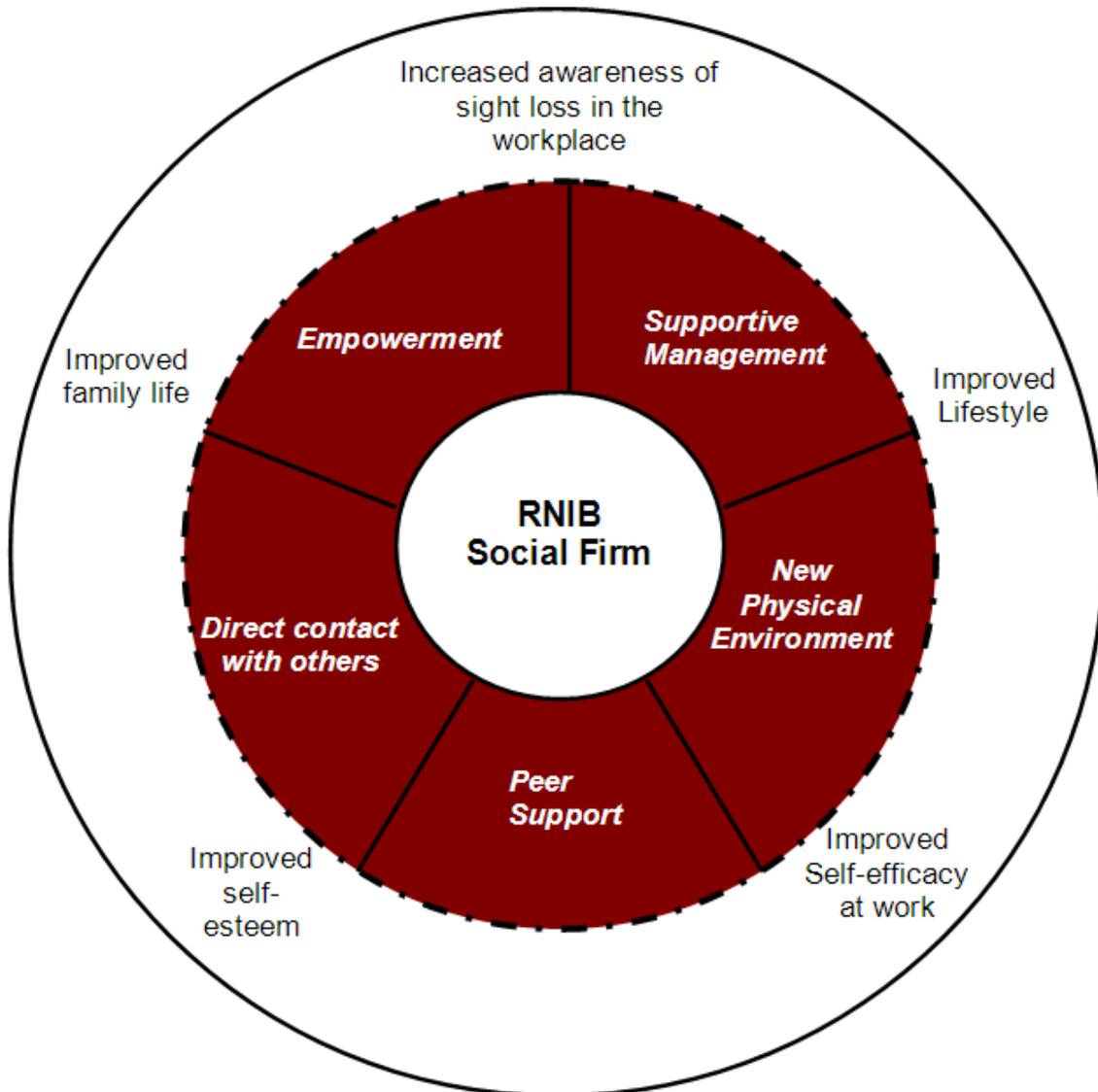


Figure 2 // A graphical summary of the outcomes created by and causal factors within RNIB and Action social firms

3.4 Proposed Intrapersonal Theory of Change

A theory of change, also known as a 'story of change', is a narrative account of how the outcomes of a project are achieved through the activities conducted. One of the goals of SIM is the identification of this theory of change, increasing understanding of how best to maximise the outcomes for beneficiaries. In this case a change process that blind and partially sighted people went through whilst being at the Social Firm was modelled. Figure 3 demonstrates the theory of change that was proposed.

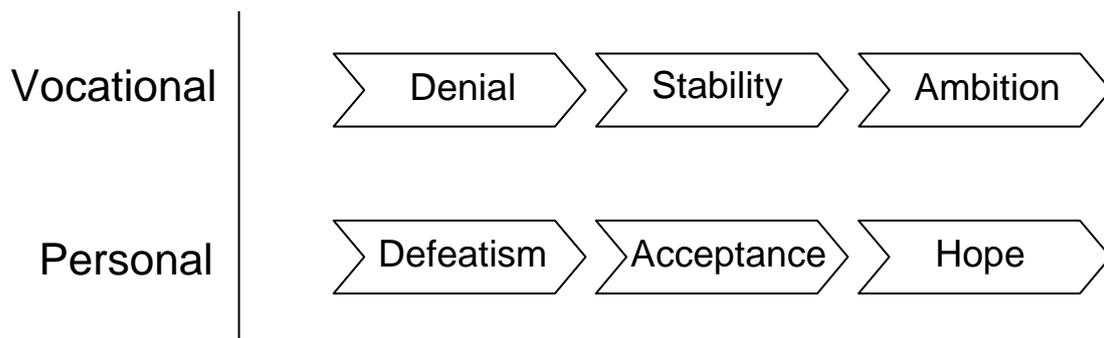


Figure 3 // A proposed model of the 'theory of change' that blind and partially sighted people go through at RNIB and Action social firms

Figure 3 suggests that staff and trainees had a two-track change process: a personal and a vocational. These map onto the outcomes listed in section 3.1.2 of self-esteem (personal) and self-efficacy (vocational). All of the trainees interviewed had been in post for a number of months and therefore reported similar stages of change.

First was a personally-focussed change. Most individuals came in with a mindset of defeatism that they would always struggle to participate fully in life. However this changed to an acceptance of the opportunity and that they could perhaps succeed despite their sight loss. Finally the acceptance of the situation led, in some cases, to a hope of the future that was not there before.

This development process was mirrored by a vocational change process. The majority of the staff began their roles in a period of denial, disbelieving that they had been given an employment opportunity. This was then followed by a period of stability where the individual was happy and enjoyed doing the job to the required

standard. Finally, some staff moved on to a position where they were looking to expand their roles, take on more responsibility.

However this model was built from a small sample size and therefore is a proposed theory at this stage. Nonetheless it could be useful for helping personalise support to each staff and trainee depending on where they are at in the process.

4. Quantitative Results: Social Return on Investment

4.1 Understanding SROI Results

SROI is still developing as a method and has little standardisation in which valuations should be attached to common social outcomes. This means that it is not usually suitable to compare two organisation's SROI results to another unless they are similar organisations, and results should be treated as functional estimations rather than precise cost-benefit analyses.

Therefore in order to get most use from SROI valuation results, they should be read along with a narrative analysis of the outcomes being created (section 3 of this report), and conclusions drawn from more information than just an SROI valuation analysis.

SROI results can be split by three kinds of value created. The first is financial or economic value. This is simply any profit that the charitable activity makes. This is real money. The second is social value. This is an estimation of the value of social outcomes that the activity has been shown to create. This is not real money but an estimation of the value of the social outcomes according to accounting techniques and financial approximations. The third is socioeconomic value. This is savings to the government in decreased expenditure or increased income. This is real money but is not immediately realisable because it exists within the economy or as a reduced government expenditure.

4.2 SROI Results

This section reports and explain the results of the SROI modelling and analysis on Concept. Viewpoint was not analysed in this way due to the small sample size of blind and partially sighted employees (three) and the mixed nature of the beneficiaries.

4.2.1 Concept

The full model can be found in appendix 4 and technical detail can be found in appendices 1 to 3 however a summary of the impact analysis stage (using terms described in 2.2.4) is as follows:

- **Deadweight** - The primary evidence for deadweight estimation came from data on the overall employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people, 33 per cent (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006). It was therefore in the majority of cases it estimated that 33 per cent of the employment-related benefits, from the position itself to the work-related confidence gained, would have happened without Concept's intervention.
- **Attribution** - The interviews gave clear opportunity to ask stakeholders about whether working at Concept was the obvious cause of the outcomes and in almost all occasions it was. Therefore in almost all outcomes 90% of the outcome value was attributed to Concept.
- **Displacement** - As a social enterprise Concept has created three permanent roles that would not otherwise exist and therefore to fill these roles, and those of the trainee positions, with unemployed blind and partially sighted people is not forcing someone else to be unemployed as a result. Therefore there was very little displacement in the model. However the future success of trainees in the mainstream labour market was counted as displacement as explained below.
- **Drop-off** - The duration of the outcomes was calculated in various ways however in the main, outcomes on employees were sustained across the five year period and the outcomes on trainees were reduced over time, according offset their predicted success in finding alternative employment.
- **Distance Travelled** - For all but two of the outcomes the distance travelled was recorded as very high because the evidence generally showed a large change. Therefore the full value of each proxy could be used. The exception was increased lifestyle. The proxy for this estimated the full value of a lifestyle to a family whereas the study evidenced only a partial improvement. Therefore distance travelled was estimated at 50 per cent.

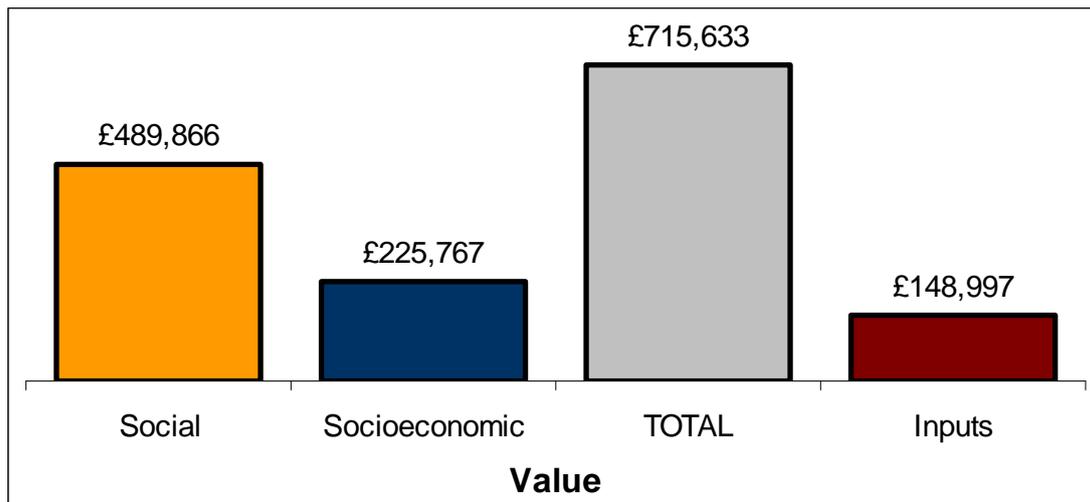


Figure 4 // Total estimated valued created by Concept over five years and split by value type

Figure 4 shows that the total value — calculated by adding the total estimated value of each outcome over the five year period — created by Concept projected over a five year period is estimated at £715,233. This is split into social value of £489,466 and socioeconomic value of £225,767. The total subsidy to Concept's operations is £148,997. This is in wage subsidy for some of the trainee positions.

Economic value was not included because although historically Concept has made a small profit it is still embedded within a larger charity and is not run to generate a profit. However it is important to point out that the majority of Concept's input costs e.g. salary, raw materials etc. are fully paid for by its commercial income. Therefore the input figure in the model represents the only wage subsidy into Concept.

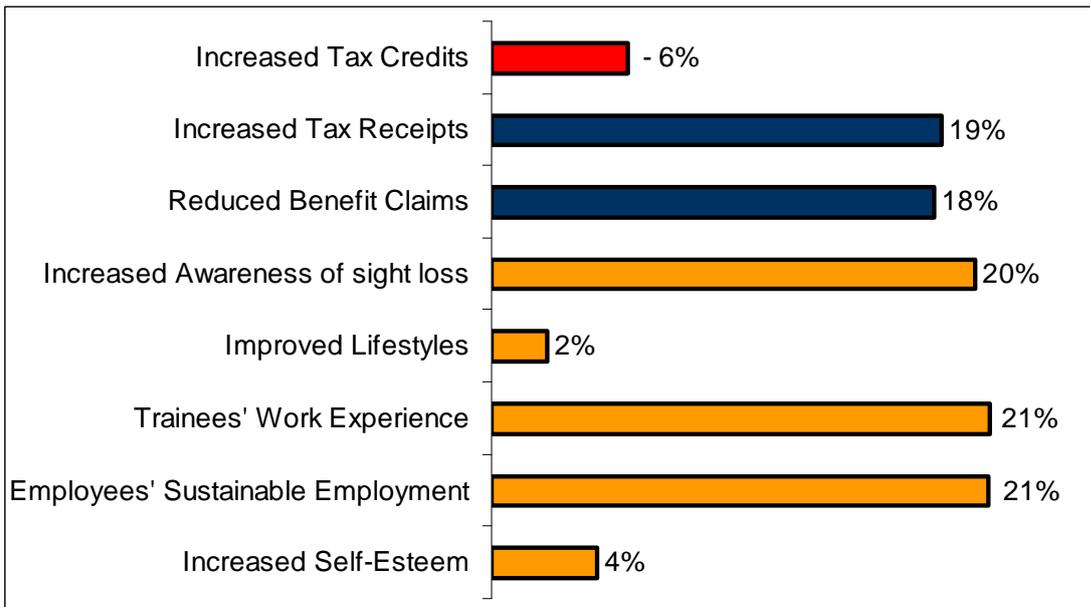


Figure 5 // A breakdown of estimated value by outcomes created (with rounded figures)

Figure 5 shows that the model suggests the employment and work experience represent, together, 42 per cent of the value of Concept's work. These valuations also include the valuation of self-efficacy because they were judged too similar to value separately.

The next highest are the value of the increased tax intake by the government and decreased benefit claims. Increased tax receipts incorporated income tax from salaries and VAT from commercial trading. These accounted for 19 per cent of the value. Decreased benefits claimed represented another 18 per cent of the value. However the increased expenditure on working tax credits deducts this value by 6 per cent.

The work of Concept in challenging stereotypes and raising awareness of sight loss in the workplace accounted for 20 per cent of the value.

Finally, the valuation of increased self-esteem and lifestyles of staff, trainees and their families accounted for the final 6 per cent.

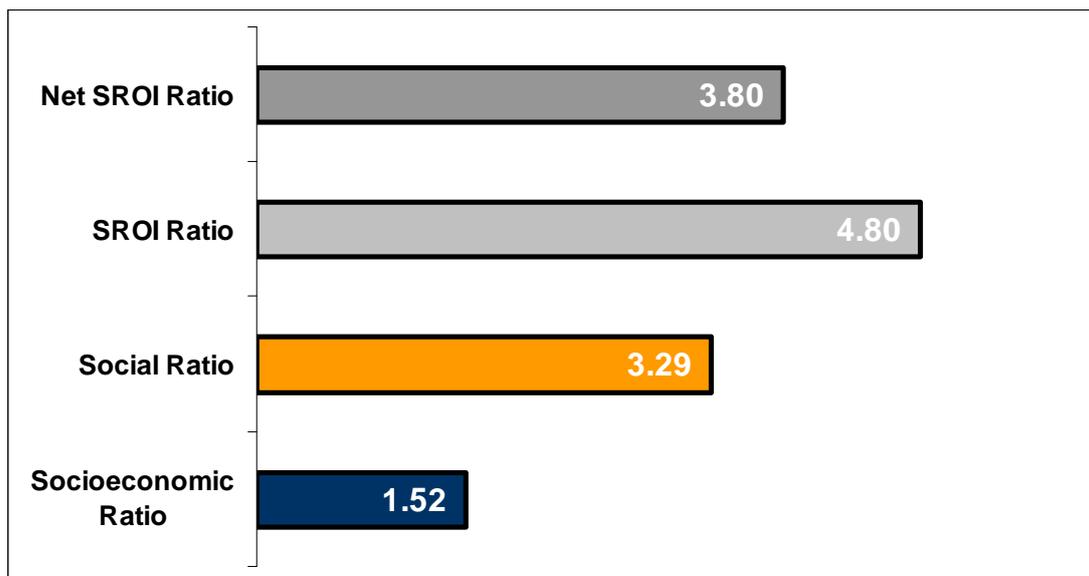


Figure 6 // Calculated SROI ratios for Concept

Figure 6 shows four SROI ratios. The overall SROI ratio is calculated using the ratio of 'Total Value of Outcomes' **divided by** 'Total Value of Inputs'. Using this method, for every £1 invested in Concept, £4.80 is generated in estimated value. This can be broken down by each kind of value in order to separate out real savings to the government from the estimated value of social outcomes. Socioeconomic benefits to the state are an estimated £1.52 for every £1 invested, and social benefits are an estimated £3.29 for every £1 invested.

An alternative method is the net SROI ratio 'Total Value of Outcome' **minus** 'Total Value of Inputs', all **divided by** 'Total Value of Inputs'. Using this method, for every £1 invested in Concept, £3.80 is generated in estimated net value.

4.4.2 Unvalued outcomes

An outcome of Concept that was not valued was the estimated number of blind and partially people who move into full-time jobs when they leave trainee positions. There were two reasons for this. First, there was insufficient evidence to model accurately, and second, there is a good argument that any job secured in the labour market would deprive another unemployed individual of a job. Outcomes from this employment would be offset, or displaced, by someone else now claiming unemployment benefits.

However Figure 7 models the potential transfer of employment of blind and partially sighted people into the open labour market over the five year forecast. It is based on an internal estimate from another of RNIB and Action's employment training programmes that 2 in 3 blind and partially sight people go on to secure full-time employment after completing a training placement.

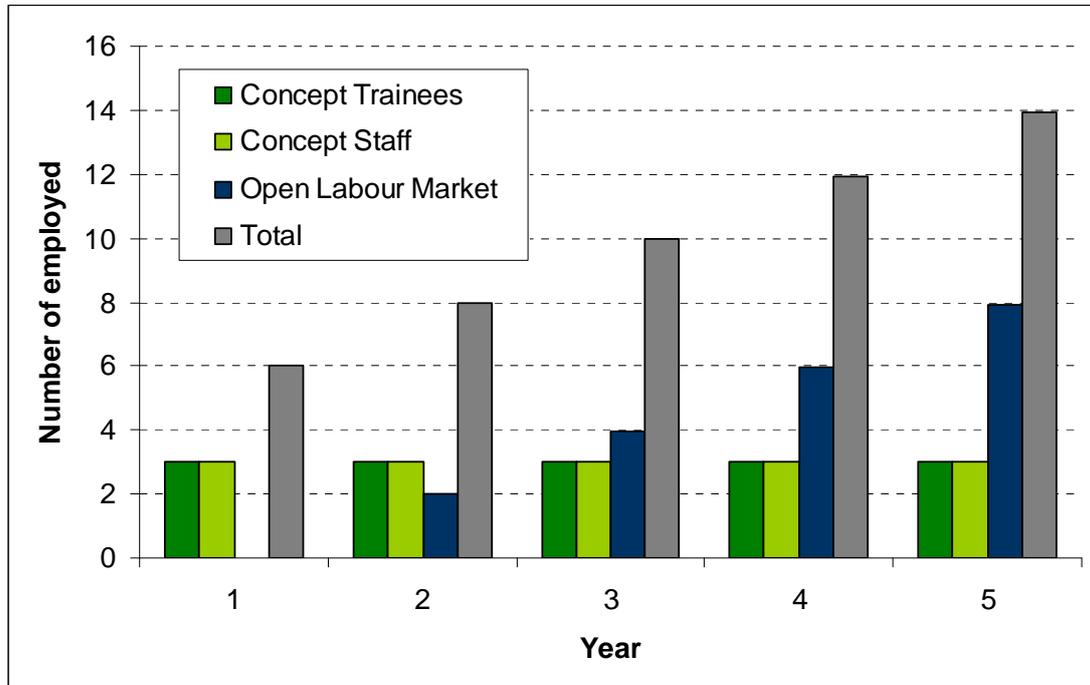


Figure 7 // Modelling the transfer of trainees from Concept into the open labour market

Figure 7 shows that in year one Concept has three trainees and three staff. By year two, it has the same three staff and three new trainees, however it is estimated from other RNIB trainee scheme data that two of the first year's trainees have secured other jobs. There are now eight people employed as a result of Concept. Through years 3, 4 and 5 the same three staff are employed and three new trainees each year work at Concept. However cumulatively in the open labour market 4, 6, and 8 more ex-trainees are employed in years 3, 4, and 5, respectively. Therefore in total, including staff, trainees and those now likely to be in full-time work elsewhere, by year five Concept may have helped 14 people in employment who might not have had the chance previously.

4.2.2 Comparable SROIs

Although the principles of SROI lead to the development of bespoke models for each organisation, SROI analyses have been published on a number of other social firms and these are therefore more comparable. In order to increase the legitimacy of comparison, the valuation of self-esteem was taken out of the Concept model because this was not valued in the other analyses. However it should be noted that all of the analyses used were completed more than four years ago. Table 3 gives a brief overview of the other social firms and Figures 8, 9 and 10 show the results of this comparison.

Six Mary's Place (Forth Sector, 2007)
Six Mary's Place is a guesthouse in Edinburgh, Scotland. It provides jobs and placements for people recovering from mental illness. SROI analysis was published in 2007.
Restart (Forth Sector, 2007)
Restart is an employment service in Edinburgh that provides employment support and placements for people recovering from mental illness. SROI analysis was published in 2007.
MillRace IT (nef, 2006)
MillRace IT is a Social Firm working across Essex that provides hard and soft IT training skills to people recovering from mental illness. SROI analysis was published in 2006.
Pack-IT (nef, 2005)
Pack-IT is a Cardiff based Social Firm providing mail and distribution services. Half of its employees have learning difficulties. SROI analysis was published in 2005.

Table 3 // Overviews of the four Social Firms SROI analyses compared

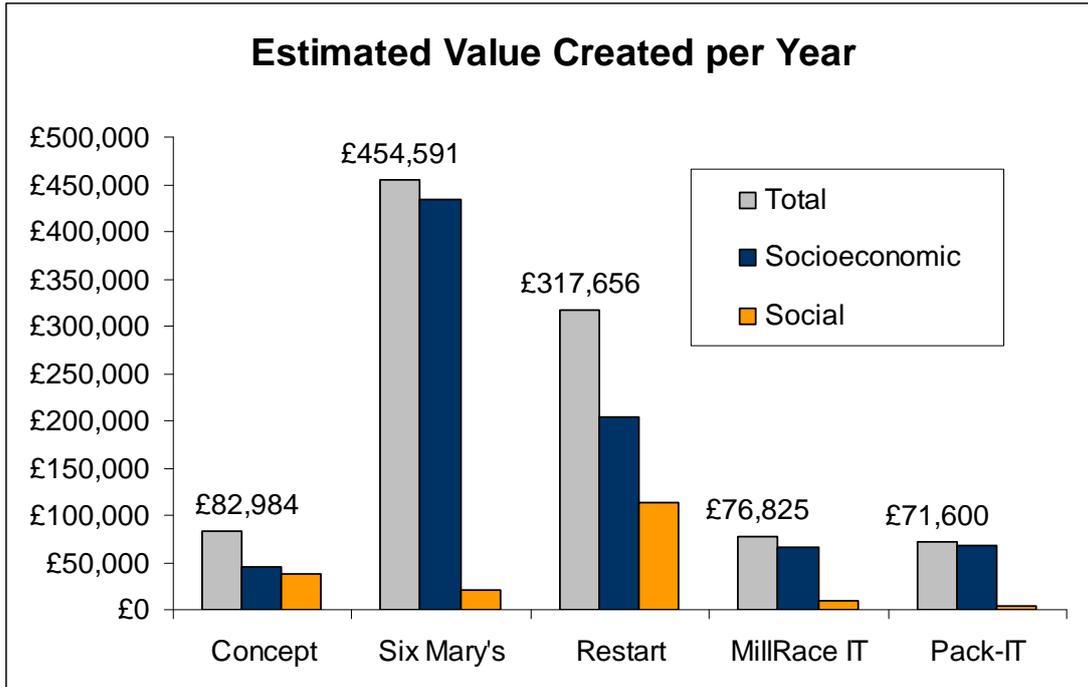


Figure 8 // Five social firms' estimated value created per year

Figure 8 shows that in terms of estimated value created per year, Six Mary's place is by far the best enterprise. The majority of this value comes from estimated savings to the state in reduced health care through mental health recovery. Restart is second, followed by the other three at similar levels. However this does not take into account the cost to create these impacts.

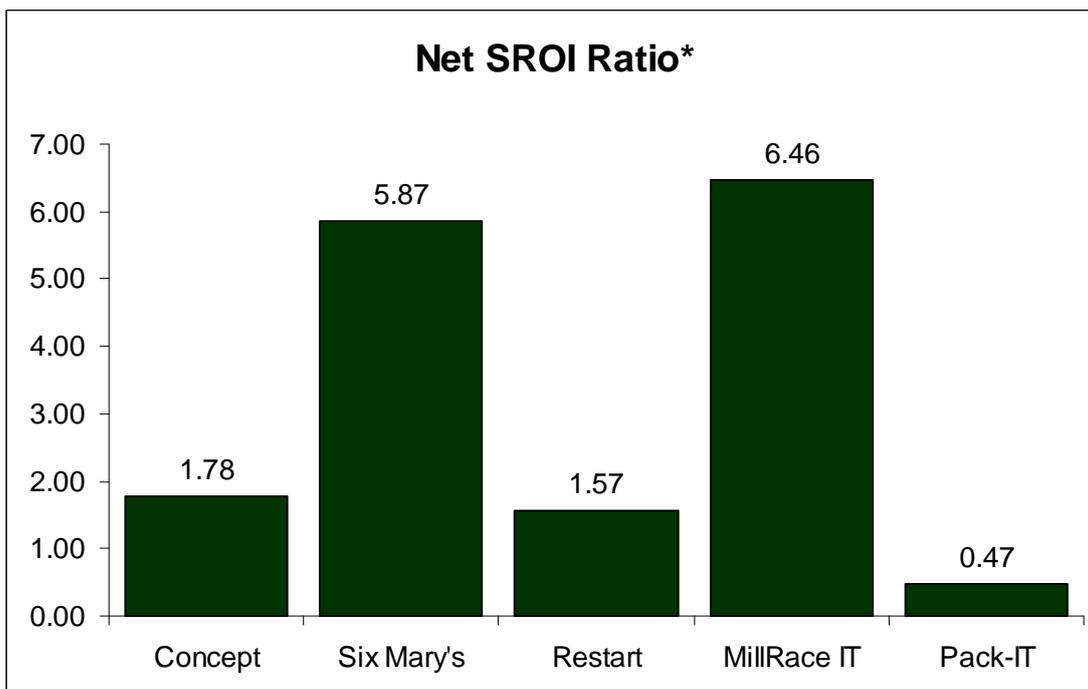


Figure 9 // Five social firms' estimated net SROI ratio

Figure 9 shows that using the Net SROI Ratio (*the more conservative measure, see section 4.4.1) Six Mary's is still an efficient enterprise, but Restart has dropped back and MillRace IT is now the most efficient. This is mostly because of the low subsidies used to operate it. Concept and Restart are at similar levels, whilst Pack-IT is the lowest. All social firms report a positive social return on the investment.

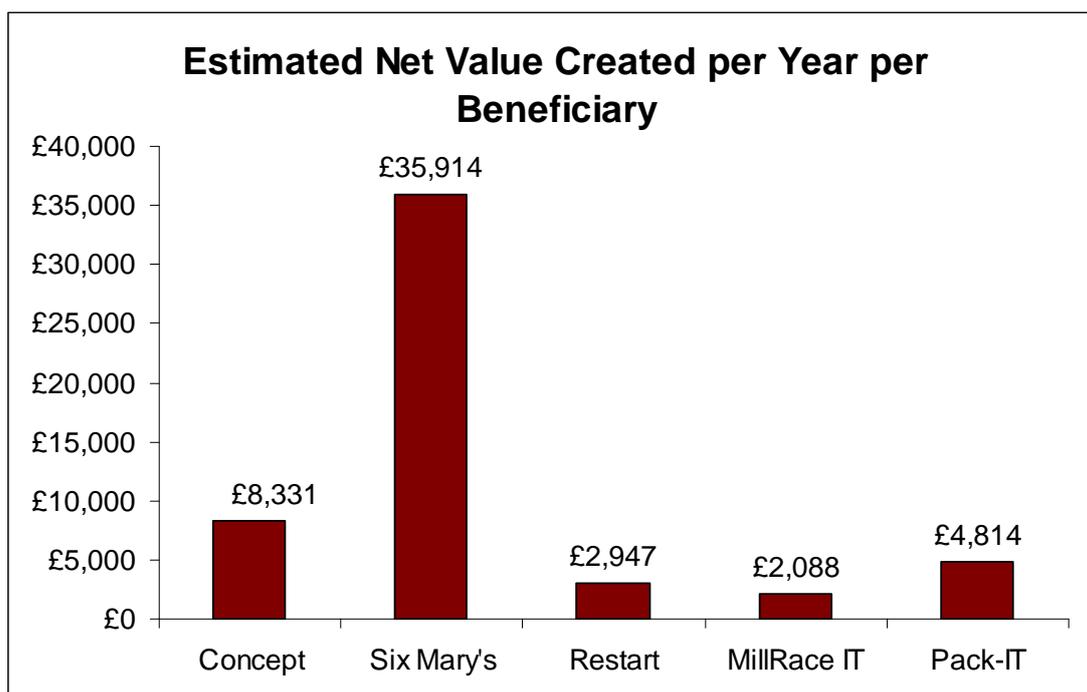


Figure 10 // Five social firms' estimated net value created per year per beneficiary

Finally, Figure 10 shows another view on the data. This splits the net value created per year by the number of beneficiaries. Effectively this takes out any bias of larger social firms. It shows that Six Mary's still creates the most net value per beneficiary, but that Concept is twice as high as the other social firms. However this currently comes with a higher investment, hence the lower SROI ratio in Figure 9. However with long-term unemployed blind and partially sighted people, it may be that this higher investment is required to return savings to the government and social well-being in a sustainable manner.

4.3 SROI Sensitivity Analysis

SROI best practice is to conduct a sensitivity analysis to test reliance on assumptions and information sources used. Two kinds of tests are reported here. The first is with more conservative assumptions and sources, and the second is identifying lowest the level of outcomes, valuations and assumptions required to make the model value neutral i.e. £1 value for £1 invested.

4.3.1 Conservative assumptions and sources

The model relies quite heavily on a statistic from the Network 1000 study conducted by RNIB in 2006 that found that only 33 per cent of registered blind and partially sighted people of working age were in employment (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006) as measure of deadweight, or 'what would've happened anyway'. However there is another statistic from the UK Labour Force Survey in 2008 which used a more general definition of sight loss. This found that 48 per cent of respondents 'long term disabled with a seeing difficulty' were in employment (Meager & Carta, 2008). Generally speaking, because it used a clearer definition of sight loss, the RNIB study is most commonly used, however for the conservative model the 33 per cent statistic was replaced with the 48 per cent.

In addition a number of other assumptions and estimations were changed. First the proportion of delegates estimated to have already experienced sight loss in the workplace when they arrived at Concept was raised from 50 per cent to 70 per cent. Second the entire VAT receipt from Concept was discounted as displacement because it is possible that the government would've got the same income from clients using other meeting rooms in the city. Third the financial proxy for the challenged attitudes of sight loss in the workplace was reduced from a whole RNIB campaigns officer salary to only half. These changes were those deemed most debatable and therefore 'sensitive'.

The result of these changes reduced the estimated total value over five years to just over £466,000 (down from just over £715,000) and the ratio to £3.13 for every £1 invested. However the element of this that was a direct return to the government in reduced welfare and tax income fell below £1 to only 84p per £1 invested.

This analysis shows that, primarily due to the range of Concepts outcomes, the model is strong and is not heavily influenced by one source of information or debatable assumptions.

4.3.2 Neutral Value Analysis

In order to make the overall model report a 99p return on every £1 spent. The following changes had to be made to the model:

- All of the conservative assumptions from 4.5.1 inserted
- The entire trainee programme was taken out leaving just the three permanent staff
- The valuation of sustainable employment was changed to from gross salary to 'take home pay' which effectively means increased self-confidence about work (self-efficacy) is no longer valued (see Appendix 1)
- Only half (previously all) the families of the staff report improved lifestyle and reduced stress and in addition Concept is only credited with 20 per cent of this improvement
- Only one of the three staff report improved self-esteem and Concept is only credited with 50 per cent of this improvement
- Staff salary was reduced by approximately 20 per cent to £12,000 and this therefore had knock on effects in reduced extra government income in tax
- The valuation of changed attitudes to sight loss in the workplace was further reduced from half (previous conservative estimate) to a quarter of an RNIB Campaigns Officer salary
- Average welfare expenditure savings per staff member reduced by 20 per cent to £6,000

The range of changes required to make the model value neutral, many of which contradict the empirical evidence gained through the interviews of this study, show the breadth and strength of this model in showing Concept to create a positive social return on investment.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Evaluating the study

There is a number of strengths and limitations to this study. The first strength is that all the data about outcomes achieved by Concept and Viewpoint is rooted in first-hand interview evidence. This means that the outcomes identified have not been assumed or projected, but rather are really happening. The second strength is that this is the first time that RNIB and Action have evidenced the range of social outcomes being created by the social firms they work with. This gives more weight to those within the organisation who wish to see social firm development become a greater part of the disability employment field. Third, this study marks the first in-depth application of SROI methodology to an RNIB or Action activity. With increasing external pressure to demonstrate outcomes and impacts, experience of using this methodology is valuable.

However a number of limitations are also present. The first is that the interviews relied on the memory and hindsight of the stakeholders to describe what their situations were before becoming involved in Concept & Viewpoint. It is possible that this resulted in an exaggeration of the outcomes that they had generated due to a desire to show the social firms in a positive light or hindsight bias.

The second is that, although it was the original intention, no useful control group of blind and partially sighted people unemployed or employed elsewhere could be found. This means that the improved social outcomes could have been due to factors other than just the social firm. However this possibility is significantly reduced because the methodology also explored the reasons for the social outcomes, thus tying the causality back to the social firm.

Finally, the SROI model developed is not perfect. There is much debate about the merits and limitations of the SROI methodology but one is underlined in its use there. Self-esteem and lifestyle factors accounted for only 6 per cent of the value in the model which gives it a much lower relative value to other outcomes than might be expected. The reasoning for this is that market driven valuations were used and these tend to imply a lower value for an

outcome due to commercial pressure to drive costs down. However the sensitivity analysis does show an impressive resistance to be influenced by even multiple changes to assumptions made, proxies and information sources used.

5.2 Conclusions

Five conclusions can be drawn from this report.

- Firstly, this study investigated the social changes being created by RNIB and Action social firms and has demonstrated that employing blind and partially sighted people through this mechanism brings a range of social and socioeconomic benefits to individuals and society. These include personal benefits to the individual, benefits to the individual's family, reduced welfare expenditure and increased tax income to the government, and changed views on the abilities of blind and partially sighted people in the workplace.
- Secondly, the study identified that RNIB and Action social firms have key factors that create social change. These include empowering activity, supportive management, peer support and client interaction. It is likely that many of these may not be found in an employment situation where an individual is employed around people who have never experienced sight loss before. Therefore the social firm model may provide an important setting in which those with sight loss and long-term unemployed may find success.
- Thirdly, the SROI analysis of Concept estimated Social Return on Investment of £4.80, comprising of social and socioeconomic outcomes, and on both individuals and society at large. Furthermore, this ratio stands favourably against comparable analyses of other social firms, and this comparison also suggests that per year per beneficiary, Concept is creating social outcomes more valuable than other social firms, although at a greater cost. Further the sensitivity analysis shows that the model is not reliant on any one assumption, proxy or information source, and therefore is a trustworthy statement of Concept social return on investment.
- Fourth, a more in-depth look into the outcomes shows that different social firm beneficiaries bring in different kinds of social benefits. A social firm employee who has a family is less likely

to be eligible to claim as many benefits as an employee without a family, and therefore his or her employment saves the state less welfare spending. On the other hand they generate more social benefits because the family receives the benefit of employment through a better lifestyle. The opposite is true of an employee who does not have a family or dependants. This insight has implications for how the results of the analysis are viewed by different stakeholders and therefore how they should be presented.

- Lastly, the study as a whole demonstrated the value of applying social impact analysis in measuring and understanding the 'bottom line' creation of social change of nonprofit activity. This information can be used to build internal support, make decisions about the role of social firms within RNIB and Action's employment portfolio, and create business cases and funding proposals for further social firm development.

5.2.1 Further Research

Although the research was important and valuable as the first primary research looking at the employment of blind and partially sighted people through social firms, two further questions could be looked at:

- Comparative study of the social outcomes created through social firms versus those created through employment in the open labour market
- A study to identify which types of social firm would be most suitable to unemployed people with sight loss

5.2.2 Final Word

This research begins to set out a compelling case for social firms within the employment service portfolio of RNIB and Action for Blind People. With powerful factors implicit to the model, social firms represent a mechanism of vocational rehabilitation that could help create the social outcomes required to bring those furthest from the labour market back into employment and society as a whole.

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Appendix 1: Concept SROI Model: Notes, Rationales and Assumptions

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1 Blind and Partially Sighted Staff

1.1 Increased self-esteem

Outcome	Increased staff self-esteem
Deadweight	17 per cent

Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006). However the qualitative information in this study showed that factors unique to Concept were major contributors to increased self-esteem and therefore other jobs would be unlikely to result in the same level of self-esteem. Therefore I have discounted 50 per cent of this deadweight benefit
Attribution	90 per cent
Rationale	It is recognised that there are factors other than employment that affect self-esteem however in this study staff were clear that it was Concept that helped them come to terms with their disability in this way
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	No one will lose self-esteem because the staff gain in self-esteem
Drop-Off	0 per cent over all five years
Rationale	Assuming they remain employed, the benefit will remain
Proxy	Annual cost of counselling (£2,080)
Source	Based on internet searches the average cost of is £40 per session. One per week would be £2,080 annually
Rationale	This is an approximate cost for annual weekly appointment with a counsellor. Concept provides full-time jobs and therefore a full-time counselling cost is most appropriate.
Distance Travelled	90%
Rationale	The value of the proxy represents an intensive process where significant improvements in self-esteem would be made. However this reflects the evidence gathered from the study and therefore a high distance travelled was used.

1.2 Increased self-efficacy

The outcome of increased vocational self-efficacy was strongly associated with the outcome of sustainable employment and proxies found for both had too much overlap to prevent double counting. Therefore the self-efficacy outcome was valued within the financial proxy for sustainable employment to reduce over-claiming.

1.3 Sustainable employment

Outcome	Sustainable employment
Deadweight	33 per cent
Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006).
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	Concept is wholly responsible for providing this benefit
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	As a created job, no one is now unemployed
Drop-Off	0 per cent over all five years
Rationale	Assuming they remain employed, the benefit will remain
Proxy	Average wage paid by Concept (£16,379)
Source	Internal Concept information
Rationale	Other SROI analyses have used 'take home pay' for this proxy however in this case the valuation of self-efficacy was rolled together with sustainable employment and therefore the higher figure of average wage was used
Distance Travelled	100 per cent
Rationale	Employment represents a discrete not scalar category and therefore distance travelled is 100 per cent

1.4 Level 2 Food Safety

Outcome	Level 2 Food Safety
Deadweight	0 per cent
Rationale	It is assumed that no staff would've completed

	this course outside of Concept
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	Concept creates this opportunity and outcome
Displacement	0 percent
Rationale	The achievement of this qualification does not prevent another person gaining it
Drop-Off	0 per cent over all five years
Rationale	The value of the qualification will not decrease over time
Proxy	Cost of gaining the qualification externally (£110)
Source	University College Birmingham charges £110 for this course
Rationale	This is the alternative cost of achieving the outcome locally but outside of Concept
Distance Travelled	100 per cent
Rationale	The qualification represents a discrete not scalar category and therefore distance travelled is 100 per cent

1.5 Improved lifestyle

Individual improved lifestyle could not be valued independently of improved family lifestyle without significant overlap and double-counting and therefore it was folded into the valued of family lifestyle.

2 Blind and Partially Sighted Trainees

2.1 Increased self-esteem

Outcome	Increased trainee self-esteem
Deadweight	17 per cent
Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006). However the qualitative information in this study showed that factors unique to Concept were major contributors to increased self-esteem and therefore other jobs would be unlikely to result in the same level of self-esteem. Therefore I have discounted 50 per cent of this deadweight benefit

Attribution	90 per cent
Rationale	It is recognised that there are factors other than employment that affect self-esteem however in this study staff were clear that it was Concept that helped them come to terms with their disability in this way
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	No one loses self-esteem because the trainees gain in self-esteem
Drop-Off	0 per cent
Rationale	New trainees will come in to replace previous ones
Proxy	Annual cost of counselling (£2,080)
Source	Based on internet searches the average cost of is £40 per session. One per week would be £2,080 annually
Rationale	This is an approximate cost for annual weekly appointment with a counsellor. Concept provides full-time jobs and therefore a full-time counselling cost is most appropriate.
Distance Travelled	90 per cent
Rationale	The value of the proxy represents an intensive process where significant improvements in self-esteem would be made. However this reflects the evidence gathered from the study and therefore a high distance travelled was used

2.2 Increased self-efficacy

The outcome of increased vocational self-efficacy was strongly associated with the outcome of work experience and proxies found for both had too much overlap to prevent double counting. Therefore the self-efficacy outcome was valued within the financial proxy for sustainable employment to reduce over-claiming.

2.3 Work experience

Outcome	Trainee work experience
Deadweight	33 per cent
Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national

	employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006).
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	Concept is wholly responsible for providing this benefit
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	As a created position, no one is now unemployed
Drop-Off	0 per cent over all five years
Rationale	New trainees will come in to replace previous ones
Proxy	Average wage paid by Concept (£16,379)
Source	Internal Concept information
Rationale	This is the direct value of the training placement
Distance Travelled	100 per cent
Rationale	Employment represents a discrete not scalar category and therefore distance travelled is 100 per cent

2.4 Level 2 Food Hygiene

Outcome	Level 2 Food Safety
Deadweight	0 per cent
Rationale	It is assumed that no staff would've completed this course outside of Concept
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	Concept creates this opportunity and outcome
Displacement	0 percent
Rationale	The achievement of this qualification does not prevent another person gaining it
Drop-Off	0 per cent over all five years
Rationale	The value of the qualification will not decrease over time
Proxy	Cost of gaining the qualification externally (£110)
Source	University College Birmingham charges £110 for this course
Rationale	This is the alternative cost of achieving the outcome locally but outside of Concept
Distance Travelled	100 per cent
Rationale	The qualification represents a discrete not scalar

	category and therefore distance travelled is 100 per cent
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2.5 Improved lifestyle

Individual improved lifestyle could not be valued independently of improved family lifestyle without significant overlap and double-counting and therefore it was folded into the valued of family lifestyle.

3 Families of Blind and Partially Sighted Staff and Trainees

3.1 Improved family lifestyle

Outcome	Increased lifestyle
Deadweight	33 per cent
Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006) and it is assumed that they would receive the same increased family lifestyle through increased income
Attribution	80 per cent
Rationale	It is recognised that there are factors other than employment that affect family lifestyle, but in this study staff were clear that it was employment and income that helped their family life improve significantly compared to unemployment
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	No one loses quality of life because the staff gain in quality of life
Drop-Off	0 per cent
Rationale	New trainees will come in to replace previous trainees and the staff will remain
Proxy	Average yearly spend by families on recreation and culture (£3,125)
Rationale	Based on the 2008 UK family spending report, this represents how families value their lifestyle
Distance Travelled	50 per cent

Rationale	The proxy represents the entirety of the value of a family lifestyle and the outcome reported from Concept was only a proportion of this. However the economic and social benefits reported suggest it was at least a 50 per cent improvement.
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3.2 Decreased spousal stress

Outcome	Decreased spouse stress
Deadweight	33 per cent
Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006) and thus result in the same benefit to the spouse
Attribution	70 per cent
Rationale	It is recognised that there are factors other than employment that affect stress, but in this study staff were clear that it was unemployment of their family member that was a major cause
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	No one was more stressed because the family were less stressed
Drop-Off	0 per cent
Rationale	New trainees will come in to replace previous trainees and the staff will remain
Proxy	Estimated cost of personal stress management course (£300)
Source	Stress management courses vary in type and therefore cost, however based on internet searches £300 is a fair estimate at how much it would cost someone to attend one
Rationale	This is an approximate cost for a stress management course. It represents how the market values the outcome of reduced stress and therefore the value of this element of Concept's benefit
Distance Travelled	50 per cent
Rationale	The proxy potentially represents reducing stress

	completely however the stress reduction in spouses reported from Concept was only a proportion of stress. However the practical and social benefits reported suggest it was at least a 50 per cent improvement
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4 Customers & Society

4.1 Increased awareness of sight loss in the workplace

Outcome	Increased awareness of sight loss in the workplace
Deadweight	50 per cent
Rationale	Around 50 per cent of the delegates at Concept are internal and therefore have had awareness of sight loss increased already
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	The increased awareness comes solely through experiencing and seeing employees with sight loss working at Concept
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	Nothing is lost through increased the awareness of the delegates
Drop-Off	0 per cent over the five years
Rationale	A conservative estimate is made that the outcome of increased awareness lasts only one year however alongside the yearly replacement of new delegates to be influenced, the result is a 0 per cent drop off
Proxy	Salary of an RNIB Campaigns officer (£32,000)
Source	Internal RNIB wage structure
Rationale	On top of the direct delegate contact, concept is also involved in radio, TV and media pieces, as well as conference attendances. This work could be equated to what a full-time Campaigns officer role.

5 Government

5.1 Decreased benefits claims

Outcome	Reduced benefits claims
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Deadweight	33 per cent
Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006)
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	Employment at Concept is the only cause
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	The job is created, so no one is now unemployed
Drop-Off	0 per cent
Rationale	New trainees will come in to replace previous ones and the staff will remain
Proxy	Estimated average benefit claims in JSA, housing benefit and council tax for blind and partially sighted people
Source	Published Action for Blind People factsheets on welfare
Rationale	See Appendix 2
Distance Travelled	100 per cent
Rationale	Employment represents a discrete not scalar category and therefore distance travelled is 100 per cent

5.2 Increased VAT receipts

Outcome	Increased VAT receipts
Deadweight	21 per cent
Rationale	£7 of the £33 (21 per cent) delegate rate is for room booking, and therefore a room booking made elsewhere could be estimated to bring in only 21 per cent of the total VAT receipts
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	VAT receipts are solely due to the commercial activity of Concept
Displacement	30 per cent
Rationale	It is recognised that Concept may take business from other organisations however as a social enterprise that proactively advertises, the majority of the business can be argued likely to be created rather than displaced

Drop-Off	0 per cent
Rationale	Commercial activity is on-going through the five year period
Proxy	Amount paid in 08/09 on VAT
Source	Internal Concept financial data
Rationale	This is the direct value to the government
Distance Travelled	100 per cent
Rationale	The value of the proxy matches the activity directly in quantity

5.3 Increased costs in tax credits

Outcome	Increased cost to government in working tax credits (WTC)
Deadweight	33 per cent
Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006)
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	Employment at Concept is the only cause
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	The job is created, so no one is now unemployed
Drop-Off	0 per cent
Rationale	New trainees will come in to replace previous ones and the staff will remain
Proxy	Estimated WTC available based on average salary and typical situation of blind and partially sighted people
Source	Published Action for Blind People factsheets on welfare
Rationale	See appendix 3.
Distance Travelled	100 per cent
Rationale	The value of the proxy matches the activity directly in quantity

5.4 Increased salary tax receipts

Outcome	Increased income tax receipts
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Deadweight	33 per cent
Rationale	33 per cent could be estimated to get a job without Concept according to the national employment rate of registered blind and partially sighted people (Douglas, Corcoran & Pavey, 2006)
Attribution	100 per cent
Rationale	Employment at Concept is the only cause
Displacement	0 per cent
Rationale	The job is created, so no one is now unemployed
Drop-Off	0 per cent
Rationale	New trainees will come in to replace previous ones and the staff will remain
Proxy	Average wage over the tax threshold, multiplied by estimated income tax rate and NI rate
Source	http://www.incometaxcalculator.org.uk/
Rationale	This is the average a Concept employee will pay in tax and Concept in NI contributions
Distance Travelled	100 per cent
Rationale	The value of the proxy matches the activity directly in quantity

Appendix 2: Estimating Welfare Savings

These calculations were made using Action for Blind People welfare factsheets that explain and give examples of available welfare claims for blind and partially sighted people. These factsheets can be found at:

<http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/resources/practical-advice/independent-living-resources/your-money-resources/over-twenty-five-and-not-in-work/>

It was recognised that there is no 'typical' blind or partially sighted person and therefore no simple way of estimating how much the government saves when a blind or partially sighted person gains employment. Some are younger, some older, some married, some single. The method taken here was to create three fictional caricatures and estimate for each what benefits they would be entitled to if unemployed. However in order to aid practicality, only four main benefits were used: Disability living allowance (DLA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB).

The total of these benefits was then compared with the total benefits they would still claim if employed. This difference was the amount the government would save by RNIB and Action moving them into employment.

However in order to bring these three fictional people into one savings figure to use in the model, they had to be weighted by how common they are within the working age population. It was weighted by age and this data was gained from the Network 1000 study (Douglas, Corcoran, & Pavey, 2006).

The result of this process was an estimated saving of £6,882.96 by moving a blind or partially sighted person from unemployment to employment. The numerical breakdown of the process is shown below.

Fictional Caricatures

Case 1: 18 years old, born with sight loss, registered blind, never employed, lives with parents

<i>Unemployed</i>		<i>Employed</i>	
DLA	£66.75	DLA	£66.75
ESA	£51.85		
Total pw	£118.60	Total pw	£66.75
		Savings pw	£51.85
Savings per year £2,686.20			

Case 2: 48 years old, recent sight loss, recently unemployed, married

<i>Unemployed</i>		<i>Employed</i>	
DLA	£37.90	DLA	£37.90
ESA	£91.40		
Total pw	£129.30	Total pw	£37.90
		Savings pw	£91.40
Savings per year £4,752.80			

Case 3: 55 years old, lost sight in mid-40s, long-term unemployed, single

<i>Unemployed</i>		<i>Employed</i>	
DLA	£37.90	DLA	£37.90
ESA	£91.40		
HB	£85.00 ²		
CT	£16.34 ³		
Total pw	£230.64	Total pw	£37.90
		Savings pw	£192.74
Savings per year £10,022.48			

Weighting

Case	Savings	Population	Weighting
1	£2,686.20	9,000	1
2	£4,752.80	28,000	3.1
3	£10,022.48	31,000	3.4

² Based on estimated mean rent from Action for Blind People factsheets

³ Based on approximate mean council tax from Action for Blind People factsheets

Estimated savings after weighting:
£6,882.96

Appendix 3: Estimating Working Tax Credit Costs

These calculations were made using Action for Blind People welfare factsheets that explain and give examples of available welfare claims for blind and partially sighted people. They can be found here:

<http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/resources/practical-advice/independent-living-resources/your-money-resources/over-twenty-five-and-not-in-work/>

It was recognised that there is no 'typical' blind or partially sighted person and therefore no simple way of estimating how much the government spends on working tax credit (WTC) when a blind or partially sighted people gains employment. The method taken here was to create two fictional caricatures of people working at Concept and estimate for each what WTC they would be entitled to if employed. Only a small number of blind and partially sighted people are on higher rate DLA and therefore this element of WTC was not included. The average salary at Action's Concept Conferencing Centre was used as gross pay.

However in order to bring these three fictional people into one cost figure to use in the model, they had to be weighted by how common they are within the working age population. It was weighted by age and this data was gained from the Network 1000 study (Douglas, Corcoran, & Pavey, 2006).

The result of this process was an estimated cost of £2,241.38 per year by moving a blind or partially sighted person from unemployment to employment at Concept. The numerical breakdown of the process is shown below.

Caricatures

Case 1: Single, no children, working full-time, lower rate DLA care and mobility

Maximum WTC

Basic element	£1,890
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30 hours element	£775
Disability element	£2,530
Total	£5,195

WTC allowance

Gross Pay	£16,378
Income Threshold	£6,420
<i>Difference</i>	£9,958
WTC equals (Maximum WTC - [Difference x 0.39])	
WTC equals (5,195 - [9,958 x 0.39])	
WTC Total	£1,311.38

Case 2: Married, working full-time, one child, lower rate DLA care and mobility

Maximum WTC

Basic element	£1,890
30 hours element	£775
Disability element	£2,530
Couple/lone parent	£1,860
Total	£7,055

WTC allowance

Gross Pay	£16,378
Income Threshold	£6,420
<i>Difference</i>	£9,958
WTC equals (Maximum WTC - [Difference x 0.39])	
WTC equals (7,055 - [9,958 x 0.39])	
WTC Total	£3,171.38

Weighting

Case	Savings	Population	Weighting
1	£1,311.38	50%	1
2	£3,171.38	50%	1
Estimated cost after weighting: £2,241.38			

Concept Model

This version focusses on Concept itself over five years (as opposed to the people at Concept in 2010 and tracks them over five years) and therefore assumes that the trainee outcome incidences found in 2010 are representative of the new trainees who would come in over the five year period)

Stakeholder	No. stakeholders	Outcome	Indicator description	Indicator	Outcome incidence	Deadweight description	Deadweight proportion	Deadweight incidence	Incidence after deadweight	Attribution proportion	Incidence after attribution & deadweight	Displacement proportion	Incidence after attribution, deadweight & displacement	Financial proxy description	Proxy	Distance Travelled	Adjusted Proxy	Total Annual Value Produced
BPS Staff	3	Increased self-esteem	Proportion reporting increased self-esteem	0.66	2.0	Staff who would've reported improved self-esteem anyway	0.17	0.33	1.7	0.9	1.5	0.0	1.5	Annual cost of counselling	£2,080	0.9	£1,872	£2,785
	3	Increased self-efficacy	Proportion reporting increased self-efficacy	0.66	2.0	Staff who would've reported improved self-efficacy anyway	0.17	0.33	1.7	0.9	1.5	0.0	1.5	Counted in the sustainable employment valuation				
	3	Sustainable employment	Proportion now in sustainable employment	1.00	3.0	Staff who would've been in sustainable employment anyway	0.33	1.00	2.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	Average wage paid by Concept	£16,379	1.0	£16,379	£32,758
	3	Level 2 Food Hygiene	Proportion gaining qualification	1.00	3.0	Staff who would've gained it anyway	0.00	0.00	3.0	0.5	1.5	0.0	1.5	Cost of course externally	£110	1.0	£110	£165
	3	Improved lifestyle	Proportion reporting improved lifestyle	0.66	2.0	Staff who would've reported improved lifestyles anyway	0.33	0.65	1.3	0.9	1.2	0.0	1.2	Counted in the family lifestyle proxy	n/a			
BPS Trainees	3	Increased self-esteem	Proportion reporting increased self-esteem	1.00	3.0	Trainees who would've reported improved self-esteem anyway	0.17	0.50	2.5	0.9	2.3	0.0	2.3	Annual cost of counselling	£2,080	0.9	£1,872	£4,220
	3	Increased self-efficacy	Proportion reporting increased self-efficacy	1.00	3.0	trainees who would've reported improved self-efficacy anyway	0.17	0.50	2.5	0.9	2.3	0.0	2.3	Counted in the work experience valuation				
	3	Work experience	Proportion given work experience	1.00	3.0	Employment rate of registered BPSP nationally	0.33	1.00	2.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	Average wage paid by Concept	£16,379	1.0	£16,379	£32,758
	3	Level 2 Food Safety	Proportion gaining qualification	1.00	3.0	Staff who would've gained it anyway	0.00	0.00	3.0	0.5	1.5	0.0	1.5	Cost of course externally	£110	1.0	£110	£165
	3	Improved lifestyle	Proportion reporting improved lifestyle	1.00	3.0	trainees who would've reported improved lifestyles anyway	0.33	1.00	2.0	0.9	1.8	0.0	1.8	Counted in the family lifestyle proxy	n/a			
Family of BPS Staff and Trainees	6	Improved family life	Proportion reporting improved family life	0.67	4.0	Employment rate of registered BPSP nationally	0.33	1.33	2.7	0.8	2.1	0.0	2.1	Average yearly spend on family recreation and culture, based on 2008 UK family spending report	£3,125	0.5	£1,563	£3,334
	6	Decreased spousal stress	Proportion reporting decreased stress	0.67	4.0	Employment rate of registered BPSP nationally	0.33	1.33	2.7	0.7	1.9	0.0	1.9	Cost of a stress management course	£395	0.5	£198	£369
Customers & Society	7500	Increased awareness of BPSP in the workplace	Proportion experiencing sight loss in the workplace	1.00	7500.0	No of clients who would've have experienced sight loss in the workplace anyway	0.50	3750.00	3750.0	1.0	3750.0	0.0	3750.0	Salary of a Campaigns officer	£32,000	1.0	£32,000	£32,000
Government	1	Decreased costs in benefit claims	Number claiming less benefits	6.00	6.0	Employment rate of registered BPSP nationally	0.33	2.00	4.0	1.0	4.0	0.0	4.0	Average amount saved to government purse per year in JSA, Housing benefit and Council Tax	£7,303.35	1.0	£7,303	£29,213
	1	Increased VAT receipts	No of businesses generating commercial income	1.00	1.0	% of VAT that would've been paid anyway in room hire only	0.21	0.21	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.3	0.5	Estimated VAT bill	£24,500.00	1.0	£24,500	£12,005
	1	Increased costs in tax credit	Number claiming tax credit	6.00	6.0	Employment rate of registered BPSP nationally	0.33	2.00	4.0	1.0	4.0	0.0	4.0	Estimated WTC due	-£2,241.38	1.0	-£2,241	-£8,966
	1	Increased salary in tax receipts	Number earning a wage	6.00	6.0	Staff/trainees who would've paid more tax anyway	0.33	2.00	4.0	1.0	4.0	0.0	4.0	Average wage multiplied by income tax and NI contributions	£4,437.58	1.0	£4,438	£17,750

Year One Drop Off	Value Year 1	Year Two Drop Off	Value Year 2	Year Three Drop Off	Value Year 3	Year Four Drop Off	Value Year 4	Value Year 5	Total Value	Net Present Value	%
0.00	£2,785	0.00	£2,785	0.00	£2,785	0.00	£2,785	£2,785	£13,927	£12,577	1.8%
0.00	£32,758	0.00	£32,758	0.00	£32,758	0.00	£32,758	£32,758	£163,788	£147,902	20.7%
0.00	£165	0.00	£165	0.00	£165	0.00	£165	£165	£825	£745	0.1%
0.00	£4,220	0.00	£4,220	0.00	£4,220	0.00	£4,220	£4,220	£21,102	£19,055	2.7%
0.00	£32,758	0.00	£32,758	0.00	£32,758	0.00	£32,758	£32,758	£163,788	£147,902	20.7%
0.00	£165	0.00	£165	0.00	£165	0.00	£165	£165	£825	£745	0.1%
0.00	£3,334	0.00	£3,334	0.00	£3,334	0.00	£3,334	£3,334	£16,668	£15,051	2.1%
0.00	£369	0.00	£369	0.00	£369	0.00	£369	£369	£1,843	£1,665	0.2%
0.00	£32,000	0.00	£32,000	0.00	£32,000	0.00	£32,000	£32,000	£160,000	£144,482	20.2%
0.00	£29,213	0.00	£29,213	0.00	£29,213	0.00	£29,213	£29,213	£146,067	£131,900	18.4%
0.00	£12,005	0.00	£12,005	0.00	£12,005	0.00	£12,005	£12,005	£60,025	£54,203	7.6%
0.00	-£8,966	0.00	-£8,966	0.00	-£8,966	0.00	-£8,966	-£8,966	-£44,828	-£40,480	-5.7%
0.00	£17,750	0.00	£17,750	0.00	£17,750	0.00	£17,750	£17,750	£88,752	£80,144	11.2%

Total Period Values		
Social Value	£	490,124
Economic Value	£	225,767
Wage Subsidy per Year	£	33,000
Period Value of Subsidy at Net Present Value	£	148,997

Total Value	£	715,891
Net Value	£	566,894

SROI Ratio	4.80
Net SROI	3.80