

The Social Return of Real Jobs

An SROI Evaluation 2010





1. Introduction

Real Jobs and SROI Evaluation

Real Jobs is a supported employment programme operated by The Action Group, based in Edinburgh. There is a recognition that people with learning disabilities should be given the opportunity to gain and sustain employment just like anyone else. Real Jobs provides a supported employment service for people with support needs, which tackles individuals' barriers to work and makes a paid job in the open labour market a reality for many.

The Real Jobs team suspected their work with individuals was making a difference not just for them, but also their families and more widely. Real Jobs wanted to find out more about the impact of their supported employment so they contracted external SROI practitioners to evaluate the service's impact over a year, April 2009 to March 2010. The evaluation was funded by The Scottish Government.

This report is a summary of the evaluation. A full evaluation report with more SROI details is available from The Action Group (<http://www.actiongroup.org.uk/>). The Action Group has also published an easy read version of the report.

SROI (Social Return on Investment) was chosen as the evaluation method because SROI measures the wider impact of a project. It does this by including all the stakeholders who are affected by the project (both positively and negatively). The SROI asks the stakeholders what impact the project has had on their activities, and how this change could be measured or indicated. SROI is a social accounting method. The process converts relevant (material) outcomes into a monetary value. The total value of the project then can be compared with the cost. This allows the project's funders to review the return they receive for the money spent on the project.

For more information on SROI please see the SROI Network website (<http://www.thesroinetwork.org/>). The Real Jobs SROI was led by two SROI Network members, one of whom is an accredited practitioner. The SROI practitioners and the Real Jobs team worked in partnership throughout the evaluation process.



2. Background

Real Jobs, The Action Group

In common with many third sector organisations providing specialist, supported employment services, Real Jobs has a “cocktail of funding”¹.

During the evaluation period Real Jobs was funded by:

- The European Social Fund (£360,710)
- Service Level Agreement with The City of Edinburgh Council (£171,097)
- The Fairer Scotland Fund (Lothian High Support Needs Consortium) (£28,000)
- The Fairer Scotland Fund supporting the Transitions to Work programme for young people in Mid Lothian, and young people with additional support needs (£27,000)
- Midlothian Council grant for work placements for young people at school (£20,000)
- Central support from the Action Group (£12,854)

The total amount of funding from all these sources, £619,661.00, was the input or cost used in the SROI calculation¹.

During the evaluation period, the project was working with adults with support needs and people with multiple support needs, including a history of offending, in Edinburgh; children and young people in Edinburgh and Midlothian.

Real Jobs in 2009 reported 78% of its clients are people with learning disabilities, 10% are people with autism/Aspergers, 8% are ‘others’, and 1% identify with other disability groups.

During the year studied there were 126 clients in employment:

- 61 clients were supported to maintain their full-time and part jobs
- 65 clients were supported to maintain their part-time jobs in the year.

Most of the people were being supported in work, with 22 people entering work that year.

Real Jobs and SDC agreed that for the evaluation clients could be divided into four distinct groups:

- People in work (126 people)
- People being support to looking for work, and claiming benefits (273 people);
- People with multiple support needs including a history of offending (of which one person went into work in the year and two sustained work from previous years)
- Children and young people who were supported to gain work placements (34).

¹ This expression is used in The Supported Employment Framework for Scotland (Scottish Government 2010), which recognises that more consistent, sustainable funding is needed for supported employment services.



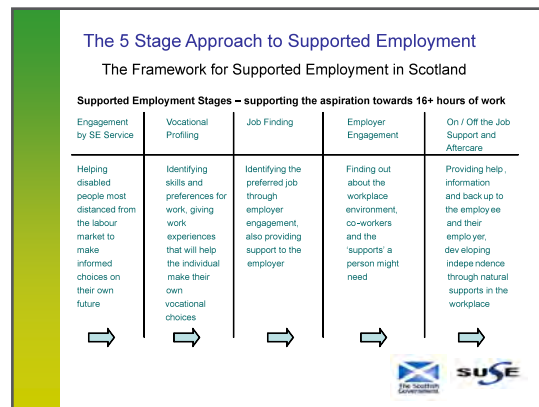
3. Context

The Supported Employment Process

Real Jobs, as a supported employment agency, provides an “end to end” service to its clients. This starts with meeting the client and providing accessible information on the service and work, and finishes with ongoing support in the workplace.

Real Jobs follows the five stage approach to supported employment advocated by The Supported Employment Framework for Scotland to improve consistency and quality of services.

Clients may join and leave the pathway at various points. For example, Real Jobs may be asked by a family member or employer to support someone already in work. In line with good practice in supported employment, if the client joins Real Jobs at the initial engagement phase, Real Jobs would expect to act as a case manager until the individual reaches sustainable employment, is referred on, e.g. to a supported work placement, or decides work and the service is not for them.



Key features of supported employment, which differentiate it from other services and make it successful for people with disabilities and multiple barriers to work include:

- A person-centred approach, with the client being at centre of the process, with the support based on the client’s needs and preferences
- The goal is competitive open employment: not training or volunteering
- Clients are expected to start to seek employment rapidly i.e. it is a “place and train” model
- In-work support is important once someone gets a job, with the aim of sustaining employment and developing a career for the individual.
- Collaborative working among support organisations working with the client (e.g. Real Jobs staff, and education, training, social care and/or health professionals) is important
- Advice on welfare benefits, and financial planning for employment, are an integral part.

Recognising the importance of this last point, Real Jobs has found funding to employ a welfare rights adviser as a part of the team. This person is crucial to supporting employment through allaying people’s fears about losing benefits and income once if they find work and maximising the income of those looking for and in work.



4. Methodology

The SROI Real Jobs Evaluation Process

A key principle of the SROI approach is engaging with stakeholders. It is important to ask the people who know about the project - those who are affected by it - about its outcomes, i.e. what has changed for them as a result of the project.

The evaluation began with meetings with the Real Jobs team to determine a list of stakeholders, which was refined throughout the process. Nine stakeholder groups were agreed:

1. Clients
2. Clients' Families
3. Employers
4. Skills Development Scotland, Careers and schools
5. Local Authorities
6. Local Authorities Economic Development
7. NHS Lothian
8. DWP
9. Police and prisons.

Focus groups, surveys, interviews and phone discussions were held with people from the first seven groups. These particularly focussed on gathering information on (a) outcomes - finding out more about the change that Real Jobs brings, and (b) indicators - how stakeholders might know the change has happened. The indicators needed to be measurable within the time and budget of the evaluation.

The next stage was to capture data on how many the outcome and its indicator apply to. For example, for the

outcome "people are able to travel independently" and the agreed corresponding indicator "the number of people who are trained to travel independently" project records were checked to find out how many people completed training in the year. Once the quantity of each outcome indicator has been calculated this is multiplied by duration of time it lasts.

The outcome indicators were valued – given a financial proxy. For example the worth of independent travel for the client was deemed to equate to the value of a bus-pass. The financial proxies allocated to each indicator of outcome were checked with the team and stakeholders.

Clients assisted with the valuation of their outcomes in client focus group. Facilitators first asked people what has changed for them as a result of engaging with Real Jobs. People talked about changes sometimes described as "soft outcomes" and which are often not valued, e.g. feeling less isolated. People were then asked to give the outcomes a value by equating them with common goods and services, e.g. Is it worth a similar amount to (a) a meal (b) a television (c) a holiday? Pictures were used to help communicate this concept.

All the information on indicators, quantities, duration and financial proxies for each outcome for all the stakeholder groups was entered into an impact map spreadsheet and used to calculate the social return.

For example, the below table is a summary of the initial workings for one outcome for clients who move into work in

the year, where the subtotal is the sum of G1 + G2.

NB In this example, the source of all the data is from Real Jobs client files, including those of the Welfare Rights Advisor.

Outcome (a)	Indicator of outcome (b)	Quantity (c)	Duration (d)	Financial Proxy (e)	Value (f)	Initial Social Return (g)
Clients gained employment	No who moved into fulltime employment	8	5 years	Net increase in disposable income in employment compared to benefits	£5,440	G1=c*d*f
	No who moved into part time employment	14	5 years	Net increase in disposable income in employment compared to benefits	£2,044	G2=C*d*f

The penultimate stage of the SROI analysis, before calculating the SROI ratio, is to ensure you are not over-claiming the impact of the project. Therefore for each outcome, what might have happened anyway; the contribution of other services to the result and the drop-off over time has to be subtracted from the initial social return.

More details of the SROI process are available in the Guide to Social Return on Investment (2009).



5. Employment Related Outcomes

“The value of a job is more than the money I get”

Different stakeholders derive various outcomes from Real Jobs supporting people to gain and sustain work.

Outcomes for clients

People said that Real Jobs had enabled them to find and keep work. The SROI found that the financial return from clients staying in work is large. In the year, Real Jobs supported 126 people to find or remain in employment, and Real Jobs' clients sustain work for an average of 5 years. The financial proxy picked for the outcome of sustained work was increase in income compared to benefits. This was highest for the clients who sustain full-time work in the year: estimated to be £8,240 per person (an average from a sample of 53 client files).

However, clients saw the value of work as being much more than an increase in income. They highly valued intangibles, like not having to sign on at the Job Centre and avoiding the perceived stigma of that, summed up as always “having to justify yourself”. Clients also highlighted the importance of work in terms of socialising and “meeting other people”, for example being asked by colleagues to go to play football.

Outcomes for Employers

Successful supported employment includes assisting employers as well as clients. Real Jobs connects with over 80 workplaces. The outcomes identified by employers include:

- Reduced staff turnover due to recruiting committed employees
- Save HR costs in attracting and finding suitable job candidates
- Help to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Some negative outcomes were also mentioned and valued, such as “workplaces need to spend more time in supporting the Real Jobs clients”. But overall, the total value to employers from Real Jobs' input over the year was positive, at £113,745.98².

Outcomes at a national Level

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) saves when clients move into employment. The financial proxy chosen to value this saving was the out-of-work benefits not claimed. DWP also benefits from Real Jobs' support to individuals to sustain work, which means other, DWP funded services like Access to Work, are not needed to provide that support. Also, Real Jobs supports people to become more employable and that creates a saving equivalent to the cost of alternative programmes for “hard to reach” clients for the number of days that Real Jobs spends developing a client's employability.

² See page 10 for “Results of the SROI”



6. Outcomes for families

“Thank goodness Real Jobs is there. I would worry if it wasn’t”

The Action Group was established to support families, as well as individuals. Therefore, it was important to look at the impact of Real Jobs on clients’ families.

In the evaluation, a discussion group was held with family members and a survey was conducted with families and significant others.

Real Jobs’ support has direct effects on families, for example saving people time. One family member said at the discussion group:

“I would have to spend 5-10 hours a day if I didn’t have Real Jobs support”.

The time might have been spent on being with the individual or discussing and negotiating with their relatives’ employer. People pointed out cases where Real Jobs has sorted out practical work issues such as pay and holidays; social issues at work; and that individuals with conditions like Autistic Spectrum Disorder need ongoing support at work, not least as they can be vulnerable to discrimination.

Another outcome for family members is that they are able to go back to work themselves.

As the individual engages with Real Jobs and as the family has more time, family relationships improve.

Family members said that Real Jobs had a positive effect on their relatives’ health, self-esteem, wellbeing and confidence. For example, one person said of a relative with a history of mental health issues:

“If she didn’t have the support she did at the moment she’d slip into depression”.

Real Jobs was described as having considerable knowledge and experience of working with people with disabilities. It provides a person centred approach and employability support that can be “upped when something happens” at work. This has given family members “a sense of relief” and an outcome of increased wellbeing.

“I feel good if she feels good – makes me feel like a person again”

(family member at focus group discussion).

Thinking about negative outcomes, the evaluation asked families/significant others if their household income had been reduced as the individual went into work. No-one reported this, but because it has been reported at a national level to guard against over claiming the benefit of the service, an allowance of 10% of the families losing income was assumed in the SROI calculation.



7. Outcomes for Young People Early Intervention

Real Jobs provided a service to 34 children and young people in Edinburgh and Midlothian by facilitating work placements. This service worked with people in mainstream High Schools; several secondary schools for children with significant additional support needs; Careers Scotland and Skills Development Scotland (SDS). This service, although not strictly supported employment as not aiming to provide open employment, has a positive effect on many young people, increasing their aspiration to find work after school.

The project had a significant impact on several stakeholders: the children that engaged with it, the professionals working in these services and The Councils.

A key outcome for the children and young people was that Real Jobs increased their belief that employment could be an option for them when they left school. Being told that they are unlikely to ever work, and developing a belief that they can't or won't work is a major barrier to this group of individuals gaining employment.

A major reason this group were in the evaluation was clients from the young people's work often went on to access the adult service³.

There were important outcomes for professionals too. A key outcome is that Real Jobs saves them time:

“a huge reduction in time used by teachers on work with specific pupils”
(Guidance Teacher at stakeholder meeting).

This resulted in teachers having more time to engage with other pupils, e.g. arranging work placements for them.

Professionals also said that the input of Real Jobs results in individuals behaving better in the learning situation – focussing more in school, engaging better.

Thirdly, as young people experience work placements, increase their employability skills and enter the adult service, they improve their chances of employment, training or going to college. This means that fewer young people in area will remain not employed nor in further education or training. This means for schools and local authorities their More Choices More Chances statistical returns will be more favourable, and the costs of young people not being in work or education will be avoided.

³ 14 young people in 2008/09.



8. Outcomes for Local Authorities

We have already seen that Real Jobs delivered outcomes that relate to the national outcomes by:

- providing better employment opportunities
- improving the health and wellbeing of clients and their family members
- tackling inequality by increasing the number of people with learning difficulties in work
- improving life chances for school children, young people and their families.

The evaluation process and iterative discussions with stakeholders also showed there were direct benefits to Edinburgh and Midlothian Council staff and services.

Staff, such as the local area co-ordinators, said that they felt supported by peers when working directly with Real Jobs staff in the care and support of disabled people.

Day care services are not taken up by Real Jobs clients who are in work. This provides a potential saving to the Local Authorities. Generally around 40% of people with learning disabilities attend day care⁴. “Same as You?”

statistics state that 12% with learning disabilities attend day care for five days per week; and 28% for less than 5 days, e.g. three days per week, for 48 weeks in the year. If this were to have been the pattern of day care usage for the 126 people Real Jobs supported in work in the year, the clients would have used 3,456 days of care. Using the PSSRU⁵ figure of day care = £86 per person per day, the potential saving is equivalent to around £297,000. However, SROI principles require the evaluation should only claim the value attributable to Real Jobs. So, as other agencies may have help people secure jobs, it was assumed that only 30% of this amount is attributable to Real Jobs.

Real Jobs supports people with multiple support needs including a history of offending, and the outcomes it achieves for them includes a reduction in offending and anti-social behaviour. People also use alcohol and drugs less regularly. These both potentially supply savings for the statutory sector as less support time is required from social work criminal justice staff and drugs and alcohol teams.

⁴ Source: Statistics Release for 2008: Adults with Learning Disabilities Implementation of “The same as you?” Scotland.

⁵ PSSRU is the Personal Social Services Research Unit.



9. Results of the SROI The Cost Benefit

Once a robust list of outcomes, indicators and their financial proxies was agreed, all the data was collected to complete the impact map, as outlined on page 4 “Methodology”.

The result is a financial value gained from the project for each stakeholder. The results of the Real Jobs evaluation are summarised in the table below.

Stakeholder	Total Value
1.1 Service users in work	£983,396.88
1.2 Service users who are looking for work but are on benefits	£258,596.58
1.3 Service users with multiple support needs including a history of offending	£81,317.04
1.4 Schoolchildren & young people on work placements	£90,064.17
2 Families	£861,949.42
3 Employers	£113,745.98
4 SDS, Schools, Careers	£41,758.61
5 Midlothian and City of Edinburgh Council, including social work	£254,167.00
6 The local economy, Economic Development	£74,874.76
7 NHS Lothian	£130,417.17
8 DWP	£160,721.02
9 Prison and police services	£198,572.61
Total	£3,249,581.23

The largest value is for the clients. When the number of service users in each part of the service is taken into account, the value of the Real Jobs’ inputs for people in gaining and sustaining work (stakeholder group one) is nearly £8,000 per person.

As highlighted in previous pages, this comes from a range of tangible and less tangible outcomes, but the largest slice of the total value for people in work (group 1.1) is from individuals being able to sustain employment with the assistance of Real Jobs.

Also, a relatively large proportion of the total value accrues to families, around £5,000 per family.

To calculate the SROI Index the total value (£3,249,581.23) is divided by the total input value. However before the calculation, the Impact Value is adjusted to reflect the Present Value of the Impact, to reflect the present day value of benefits projected into the future.

- The total impact of Real Jobs for 2009/10 is valued at £3,012,626.19;
- The total investment figure in the same period to generate this value is £619,661;
- The SROI index is the impact divided by the investment, which means there is a social return of £4.86 for every £1 invested in Real Jobs.

This SROI evaluation was based on actual practice and data, so the above ratio of nearly £1:£5 is well supported by the evidence from the analysis⁶.

⁶ However, the sensitivity of all assumptions was tested and more details are in the full report.



10. Conclusion

This was a stakeholder informed evaluation of Real Jobs to increase the awareness of the project, funders and a wider audience about the cost effectiveness of the project.

The finding of the SROI evaluation is that Real Jobs produced a positive financial return on investment in 2009/10. For every £1 spent £4.86 of social return was achieved.

This highlights the value of supported employment. The analysis showed that the value of sustaining people in work (in this case for an average of 5 years) is high, and it emphasises how important support in work is to maintaining people's employment and creating value.

Supported employment delivers many additional outcomes: for the services' clients, their families and a range of other local and national stakeholders. The relatively high value accrued to families is in line with Real Jobs' aim to support families, and illustrates the need for supported employment services, and their commissioners, to pay attention to the outcomes they generate for families.

Some of the outcomes generated are those described as "intangibles" such as: increases in confidence and self-esteem; people become more motivated to work; and raised awareness of disability issues in the workplace. SROI analysis provides a way to value these outcomes. So they were included in the final evaluation, whereas often, important as they are to the individuals and organisations affected, they may be left out.

The evaluation provides an important starting point for developing evidence of the wider social outcomes of supported employment and the cost benefit of services which operate according to supported employment principles.

⁶ Stage 5 of the 5 stage supported employment approach.

Contacts:

For more information, a copy of the full SROI report or the Easy Read report visit the

Real Jobs website: <http://www.actiongroup.org.uk/>

Following on from this evaluation, The Scottish Union of Supported Employment (<http://www.susescotland.co.uk/>) and The Scottish Government is developing an outcomes framework for supported employment, which will draw on the outcomes identified here.

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For more information on supported employment, including a definition of terms visit the Supported Employment Learning Network, funded by The Scottish Government.

<http://learning.susescotland.co.uk/>

