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A guide to the ‘right to request’

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Social Enterprise – Making a Difference

A guide to the ‘right to request’



The 'right to request' provides NHS staff with an opportunity to transform patient care through the creation of social enterprises. Social enterprises provide the ability to innovate, to be more responsive to local need and to deliver high quality patient care. They combine the values of the NHS with the principles of business in an effective and efficient way.

What is the 'right to request'?

The 'right to request' is a commitment set out within *High Quality Care For All: NHS Next Stage Review Final Report*. It is part of a bigger vision for the future of the NHS that recognises that we will only succeed in placing quality in the heart of everything we do if NHS staff are given the freedom to use their talents to find innovative ways to improve quality of care for patients. It enables NHS staff to respond to the needs of local communities by setting up social enterprises to provide high quality services, free at the point of delivery.

We believe that NHS staff have a good understanding of patient needs and how to meet them. Through the creation of social enterprises, we are enabling staff to set up and lead new organisations, which will empower staff and improve services to patients and users.

The 'right to request' entitles primary and community care staff to put a business case to their PCT board to set up independent social enterprises and to have their case considered. If approved, the PCT will support the development of the social enterprise and award it a contract to provide services.

CASE STUDY

SALFORD HEALTH MATTERS

Salford Health Matters was born after Salford PCT saw a need to seek alternative providers to deliver the services of three of its general practices. The high morbidity and mortality rates in the practices, combined with high levels of deprivation, meant that the traditional medical model was not the most appropriate to address health needs.

Salford Health Matters is a Community Interest Company (CIC) whose mission is to add years of life to 50,000 people in Salford. The organisation has a strong list of values to underpin its work and each member of the organisation is accountable for living these values, including creating an environment in which people can flourish and treating everyone with dignity and respect.

Being a CIC allows Salford Health Matters to develop non clinical services that patients would not otherwise have access to. These include a social prescribing project that allows assessment of patients' needs for education, social contact, exercise, diet and other support to improve their overall health and well being.

What is social enterprise?

Social enterprises are businesses established to address a social and/or environmental need. They range from local and community based organisations to national, and international multi-million pound enterprises.

Social enterprises that operate in primary and community care share with the NHS a commitment to high quality and efficient services that put patients, service users and the community first. Their added value lies in their ability to be independent, innovative, flexible, and responsive.

Their independence allows them to connect with communities and service users in different ways. Service users, patients, employees or other stakeholders are often involved in the governance and even ownership of social enterprise. This often means that the groups they serve have a greater involvement in the design and delivery of its services, resulting in uniquely tailored and designed service packages. It also allows them to take risks and be entrepreneurial.

Ultimately social enterprise enables people to make a difference and improve services.

CASE STUDY

OPEN DOOR

The 'Open Door' centre was established to meet the needs of some of the most excluded individuals in Grimsby, one of the poorest areas in England.

The centre was co-designed and co-created by its intended users, resulting in an activity and social centre designed as a safe and secure environment where vulnerable members of the community can come for information, advice, care, nutritional sustenance and productive utilisation of time.

Open Door looks beyond just the health needs of its users. In addition to a wide range of primary care services, it provides services such as support into employment, a Citizens Advice Bureau, and cooking, gardening and music therapies.

What information does the guide include?

Social Enterprise – Making a Difference aims to support NHS staff who are thinking of taking up the 'right to request' and setting up a social enterprise to deliver services.

This guide aims to answer some of the questions you may have about setting up a social enterprise. It discusses the potential benefits as well as the risks and challenges involved in order to help you to decide if this is the right decision for you. It includes detailed information on a range of topics, including:

- Background information on social enterprise and the policy context
- Key skills needed to run a social enterprise and some important risks to consider
- How to get started with a business plan and which legal structures are available
- Clarification on options for finance and the types of contracts awarded
- Employment law and other regulatory considerations.

Each section ends with FAQs and the guide is punctuated throughout with success stories of social enterprises delivering care services, each illustrating specific points.