

Public Affairs and Policy Newsletter

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Issue 02



I hope this email finds you well, and that you have had a chance to enjoy the long summer days. This second edition of the Social Enterprise UK Public Affairs and Policy Newsletter update highlights progress for social enterprises.

Social enterprises are businesses which trade for social and environmental purpose and reinvest profit, improving the lives of your constituents and strengthening the economic integrity of our country.

Since we were last in touch in April, we are pleased to see social enterprise referenced in the government's Industrial Strategy, in the NHS 10-year Plan, and as part of the procurement and social value consultation launched this month.

The Company Directors Bill, embedding the requirements of businesses towards their staff and the environment, is on its second reading, and the Better Futures social outcomes fund announced this week will fund social enterprise provision of critical children's services.

At SEUK, we have had an action-packed couple of months engaging with various departments across government, providing the secretariat for the Social, Cooperative and Community Economy APPG, as well as submitting to Labour's National Policy Forum, conference planning, and so much else.

It was good to speak with Minister Alex Norris recently about how social enterprises should be at the forefront in rebalancing regional inequalities and fantastic to know that social enterprises have the support from DHLG and that they are keen to better understand how to grow the sector.

In June, we signed the Civil Society Covenant, with DCMS serving as the secretariat. This covenant brings together partners from across the VCSE sector to bolster the efforts between government and civil society, with an aim to empower communities towards a fairer, more equal society in addition to building a new model of society that focuses on prevention and early intervention in supporting people across the UK.

We are supporting the new coops and mutuals team of policy advisers and analysts within the Department for Business and Trade with their call for evidence, and also working with DHSC and NHSE to create a fair playing field when it comes to accessing digital healthcare, helping to ensure equitable access to digital tools and services across all communities.

So it has been a busy and productive few months! I hope you enjoy this update, and if you're interested in getting involved with our work, with the APPG, at party conferences or working with social enterprises in your constituency, feel free to contact me: jovan.owusu-nepaul@socialenterprise.org.uk



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The Social, Cooperative and Community Economy APPG

The APPG has grown in number – we're pleased to welcome Sojan Joseph, Rosie Wrighting, Anneliese Dodds, and Bell Ribeiro-Addy as new members. Since April, the APPG has launched an inquiry into the government's commitment to 'grow diverse business models', for which the first two evidence sessions have been held online. The sessions took evidence from social enterprises and coops, and providers of financial and non-financial support.

The sessions were well attended, with more than 100 business and sector leaders, and civil servants joining to discuss how we can collaboratively respond to the challenges and opportunities available to our sector. We will be hosting our next evidence session exploring local ecosystems, on Monday 8 September and would love to see you there! Please email appg@socialenterprise.org.uk if you would like to attend.

In addition to our inquiry sessions, in June we hosted a first in-person roundtable, the start of a series exploring the role for social enterprises and coops in public service delivery. Held in Parliament's Jubilee Room, the session was attended by the Cabinet Office Minister responsible for public services reform Georgia Gould MP, Josh Macallister MP, who led the recent review of children's social care, Baroness Thornton and our Chair Patrick Hurley MP. The focus of the roundtable was children's residential care, convening providers, commissioners and investors to discuss the needs and challenges that exist, and [how these can be overcome](#).

Key Dates:

- Third evidence session of the Growing Diverse Business Inquiry (online meeting) - 8 September
- Fourth evidence session of the Growing Diverse Business Inquiry – TBC
- Roundtable on public services delivery – dates and sectors to be finalised
- Social Enterprise Day (Parliament) - 20 November



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Conference

This year SEUK will be attending Labour Party Conference, whilst supporting members and stakeholders at the other main party conferences. Alongside the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), we are looking forward to co-hosting *Public, Private or Social: how does Labour believe services for the public should be delivered?* With our partner Arden Strategies, we'll also be demonstrating the role some of our social enterprise members play in fulfilling Labour's manifesto commitments, including the key pledge to provide breakfast clubs for school children.

- Monday 29 September SEUK x Arden Strategies, Liverpool
- Tuesday 30 September SEUK x IPPR, Liverpool

Social Enterprise Places

We're proud to support social enterprise hotspots – our Social Enterprise Places network – across the UK, where our members are addressing everyday social and environmental challenges, being where government cannot.

Case Study – Kent

In June, alongside Sojan Joseph MP, we [visited Ashford](#) in Kent to meet with SE-Kitchen to see the work they were undertaking. With partners and changemakers they were able to establish the Elevate Programme which provides apprenticeships for local people and opportunities for care leavers.

This has been possible thanks to the Boost Fund from DCMS, as well as partners and funders willing to support their outreach work such as the social supermarket, [‘Made in Ashford’](#) - a vibrant local gift shop, and [The Beehive Ashford](#) - a shop which sells second-hand clothes, provides skill workshops, and hosts a volunteer café.

They also offer women referred by local services a place to access free clothing. As part of our visit, we also met the team from [The Coachworks](#), a social enterprise built from a re-purposed train station that hosts live music and events, bringing vibrancy and joy to the community.

Thank you to local MP Sojan Joseph for meeting [Social Enterprise Kent](#) and the team! Networks and members from across the country are pivotal to the work we do.



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Health and social care

Social enterprises deliver a wide range of critical NHS services under contract, including community health services, urgent care, end-of-life care, prison health services, dentistry, and more. Around a third of community care organisations are social enterprises. The 15 largest alone provide over £1.1bn worth of services and employ nearly 12,000 staff.

SEUK is working with these providers to further evidence and build understanding of their [vital contribution](#) to health and social care provision.

Better Commissioning Coalition

Together with our partners, we have been championing social value for the last 15 years. We are proud of the leading part we played in the Social Value Act in 2012, and in continuing to make the case for it through ground-breaking research and advocacy.

An important recent development is the new [National Procurement Policy Statement](#) (NPPS), published in February 2025, which recognises the power of public procurement, the potential of social value, and promises a mission-based approach that is ‘more joined up’ and ‘pushes power out to communities’.

We are at a turning point for mission-driven procurement and in September we will launch the Better Commissioning Coalition to help build and embed a new approach to commissioning across the wider public sector. Our initiative seeks to bring together government, corporates, and VCSE suppliers, leveraging the opportunities to drive forward mission-driven procurement.

Interested to find out more or become part of the Coalition?

Please contact Charlie: charlie.wigglesworth@socialenterprise.org.uk.



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Coming up...

Procurement Consultation

Cabinet Office Minister Georgia Gould MP has launched a new consultation on Public Procurement. This sets out proposals that could reshape how billions of pounds of public money is spent.

- There are some key aspects around this consultation that could definitely be to the advantage of social enterprises in your constituency, including a relaxation of competition rules for services supporting vulnerable people. If implemented well, this could significantly strengthen the role of procurement in building a fairer economy.
- If you have any social enterprises in your community who would like to feed in, please ask them to submit [here](#).

About Social Enterprise UK

Social Enterprise UK is the national voice for social enterprise. We're a membership and certification organisation raising awareness and making the case for social enterprise, building markets and influencing government policy. As the national voice for businesses with a social or environmental purpose, we continue to work closely with government to highlight how social enterprises can contribute meaningfully to Labour's growth agenda.



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