

SUPPORTED SELF EMPLOYMENT ACADEMY (SSEA), CROYDON

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Why We Felt There Was A Need

- Despite the current record-breaking labour market, 4.6 million disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are out of work. Less than half (48%) of disabled people are in employment, compared to 80% of the non-disabled population.
- Self-employment is now 15% of workforce
- People with learning disabilities are almost entirely absent from this self-employed group. Research carried out by the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities has suggested that the pathway to self-employment would be particularly beneficial to people with more complex needs as it allows for better flexibility and is usually based on the particular interests and skills of the self-employed person.

The Case For Self Employment

It presents a "tremendous opportunity" for individuals who are challenged by the competitive labour market and although "not for everyone", self-employment is hailed as "the next logical step in the evolution of supported employment"

- Closely matches individual preferences, gifts,
- Offer types of work not found in existing job opportunities
- Offers control and self-reliance, which is appealing to some
- Offers an opportunity to schedule the working day and week to accommodate personal productivity levels, personal goals, support needs, lifestyle choices etc

Newman (2001); Hagner and Davis (2002); Griffin and Hammis, (2003)

Croydon Self Employment Academy

- A Joint Venture between Tree Shepherd, Croydon Council, Status Employment.
- Pilot to see whether a supported approach to self employment will work
- It is available for 15 Disabled Candidates wanting to start their own business
- It has been funded by direct payments £2,000 per candidate

Outline Programme for enterprise support for people with disabilities

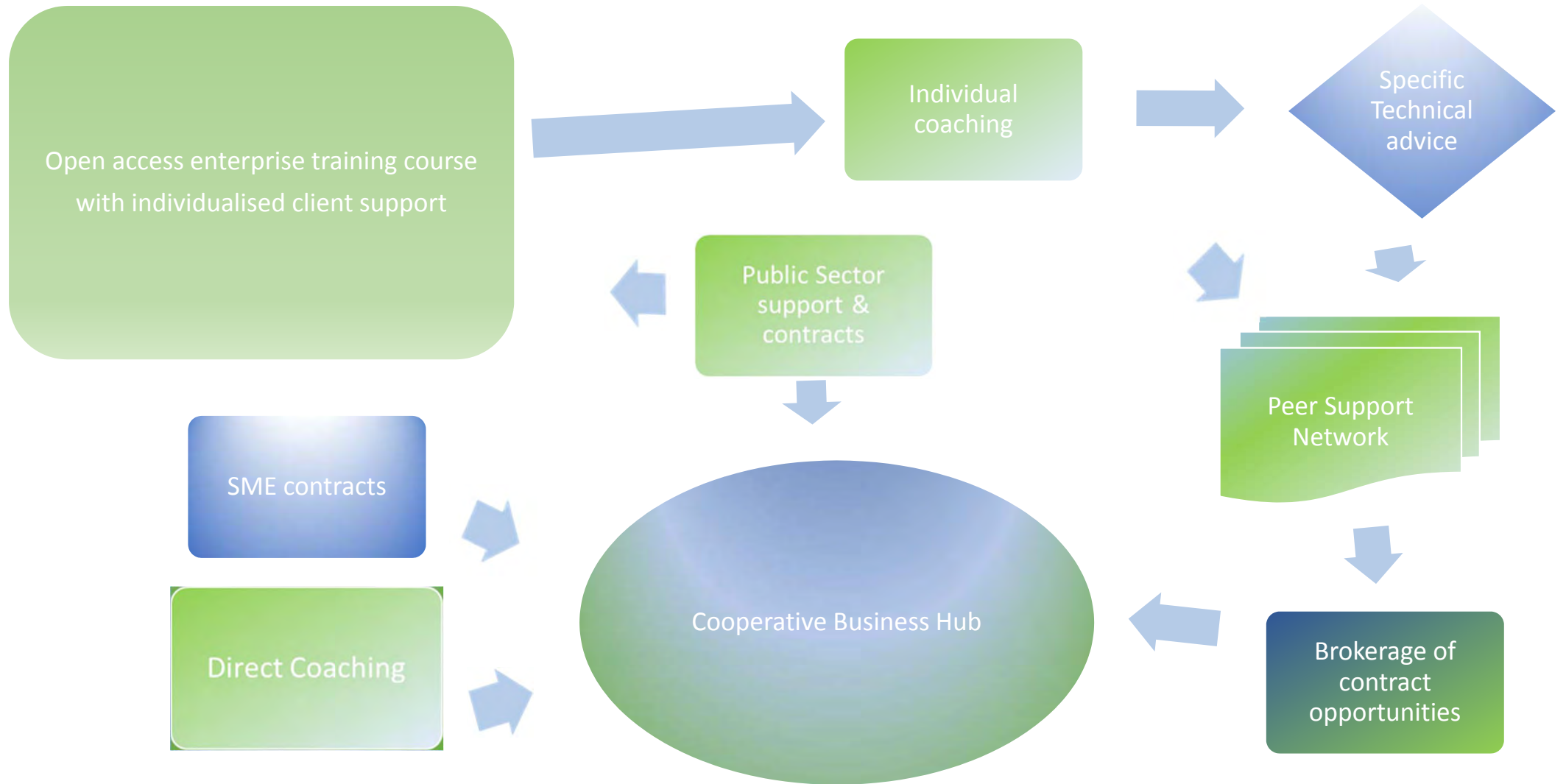
- Staged enterprise programme to optimise outcomes for people across the disability spectrum consisting of;
 - Enterprise training and peer-learning
 - Individual business coaching
 - Peer Network
 - Collaborative business opportunities
- Full, individualised personal support provided through existing network of support organisations
- Opportunities for appropriate business support through Croydon Commitment at the right stage
- Programme designed to lead to creation of an independent self-sustaining business support network run for and led by disabled clients

Supported Self Employment Model



LIFE CYCLE OF A ENTERPRISE				
SSE-STAGES	PRE-START	YOUNG ENTERPRISE	GROWING ENTERPRISE	END-STAGE
ENGAGEMENT ▼				
PROFILING ▼				
SUPPORT DEFINING & FINDING ▼				
ON & OFF THE JOB SUPPORT				

Step-by-step enterprise programme with support stages for public and private sector



One To One Support

- There was no template for the direct support aspect of for the entrepreneurs. So far the role could be described as an “entrepreneur enabler” taking experience and skills from several disciplines:
- Job coaching
- Enterprise coaching
- Business circles
- Peer supports

One To One Support

- The demand for direct one to one support has been more intense and extensive than expected. The team was struck by the preparedness of the clients and the high levels of motivation they exhibited. As a result a greater number of the business ideas moved faster and further than anticipated
- The clients have valued the one-one sessions and some have taken full advantage of them others have taken advantage when needed.
- It is important for the support worker to test the candidates business proposition, without compromising their self-belief



Supported Self Employment Skills Academy

- Interim Evaluation
- November 2008

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Evaluation questions

1. How effective was the SSEA programme in supporting disabled people to set up their own business?
2. Did the programme meet its intended outcomes?
3. What additional employment and enterprise opportunities has the SSEA programme developed?
4. What other impacts has the programme generated?
5. What is needed to improve the enterprise support infrastructure?



Evaluation framework

1. Individual characteristics of the entrepreneur,
2. Accountability systems (such as funding and market conditions) and
3. Support levels
 - For the individual
 - For the business
 - Sector specific support

(Yamamoto & Olson, 2016, Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities 2009)



Reflections and observations #1

Individual characteristics of the entrepreneur

- Although having an idea was not a condition of joining, there was a sense of excitement from the support team about the enthusiasm of the participants and the quality of their enterprise ideas
- High levels of motivation shared by the participants all keen to develop their and explore their business idea
- All met local authority requirement for health and social budgets



Reflections and observations #2

Accountability systems (such as funding and market conditions)

- Underpinned by senior 'buy-in' from the local authority, Excellent input from course tutor and programme partners. More than one report of superb levels of adaptability.
- The use of individual payments for this type of activity is of particular interest.
- Some variation between partner in how they defined a successful outcome - all went beyond simple business start-up as a measure of success to include both employment and health outcomes.



Reflections and observations #3

Levels of support - individual

- Formal enterprise coaching, models of job coaching and elements of Community Connecting and Enterprise Facilitation
- Demand for one-to-one support was higher than anticipated
- Strong evidence that individual journeys were being positively influenced by participant's involvement in the programme
- Significant shifts in wellbeing, personal circumstance and employment planning



Reflections and observations #3

Levels of support – general business

- Informal ongoing support – peer support structures.
- Facilitated 'We Can Do it Days - consistent with other peer support was helpful
- Opportunities to share, experiences, challenges, successes and methods



Reflections and observations #3

Levels of support – sector specific

- Sector specific knowledge has been an important element of this programme with overlaps with community participation models
- Largely facilitated on an ad hoc basis by the partners
- Programme illustrates the importance of a locally contextualised programme



Looking forward

- Enterprise facilitation role, signposting to others, offering individual and responsive solutions and ensuring continuity of support will be key to future success
- Support – transition from formal course, through action learning to enterprise club may be helpful in designing a sustainable level of support
- Consideration needs to be given to individuals without an enterprise idea and how this may impact the efficacy of the project.
- Clarity over the use of social care budgets for those with an ongoing eligibility and the use of business support circle and peer support mechanisms for those without.
- Tightening social care budgets may mean further SSEA activity may only be available for those social care users with a higher level of support need and may have implications on the future duration, delivery and outcomes of the programme.

Thank you

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