



Social Value Case Study Emmaus Merseyside

[Emmaus Merseyside](#) is a charity that offers a home and meaningful work to formerly homeless people. We have a purpose-built community building in Seaforth with space for up to 28 people (known as companions). We also have a superstore in Seaforth and two re-use shops based at recycling sites in Sefton and Liverpool where donations of household goods are repurposed, up-cycled and sold to generate income to self-sustain the charity. Each companion works in our social enterprises and receives support to enable them to live independently.

Impact

[Emmaus UK](#) has a federal structure, which means each community and group is an independent charity. There are currently 29 Emmaus communities across the UK providing a home and meaningful work to more than 750 formerly homeless people. Emmaus UK commissioned a [Social Return on Investment \(SROI\) forecast study](#). The research showed that Emmaus makes a significant impact, with savings to the healthcare system, a reduction in crime and reoffending as well as savings to the benefits bill. The study findings estimated that for every £1 spent with Emmaus there is an £11 social, economic and environmental return on investment.

Emmaus Merseyside Scope of Social Value Work

A Board Member of Emmaus Merseyside joined Social Value UK as an individual and volunteered to look more into social impact at Emmaus Merseyside. Due to limited resources (both financial and human) it was determined that an evaluation of Emmaus Merseyside activities would be undertaken using the [principles of Social Value](#).

The scope of the work included a report with the Board being the primary audience to use the information for strategic planning and identification of funding/income gaps. The report would include a theory of change, a mapping, measuring and analysis of the impact of the outcomes with recommendations for change.

Social Value Certificate

Emmaus Merseyside did not have the resources to get the report validated through the assurance process, however during the process [Social Value UK Certification](#) became available and Emmaus Merseyside, due to the work that had been undertaken are applying for for Certification at Level 1 with a plan to progress to Level 2 as soon as possible within the next 12 months.

Changes as a result of end user feedback

The first qualitative exercise to achieve Level 1 of the Social Value Certificate was a focus group with companions to gain their feedback on Emmaus activities (both positive and negative). From the feedback the main outcomes were identified and a quantitative questionnaire was developed. One to one interviews took place with companions to complete the questionnaire and measure the impact of Emmaus activities on companions' lives.

Using the [Maximising your impact guide](#) , the Board held a business planning away day and during one of the session undertook the same qualitative process as companions.

After reviewing the data, the Board made a number of changes: -

- Development of a moving on policy and availability of all policies.
- Agreement on organisation structure and recruitment of posts.
- Changes to Board governance.
- Changes to management information presented to Board to include health and safety and complaints issues as well as social impact.
- Emmaus newsletter for wide circulation and Board feedback to companions.
- Funding for companion Training.
- Organisation of Social events for companions.

Positive feedback has been given from companions; in the first instance having an opportunity to input and talk about their experiences, secondly more social events has created a better atmosphere with the house and workplace.

The Board have been very supportive of the process and recognise that the feedback and measurement in relation to social value is a useful tool in improving the business and meeting the needs of stakeholders.

Neina Cave, Board Member has the following to say “Whilst the board is well aware of the fact that we create obvious social impact with the work that we do it was great to see the value in quantified and measured in ‘real’ terms. The most important element was speaking to our main stakeholders – the companions – to see what was important to them. This has really helped to focus the board in mapping out the real steps we need to do to ensure we fulfil our mission and objectives”.

Advice and Support

Help was available from Social Value UK through the Impact Management Peer Support Network and in the design of the quantitative questionnaire and presentation of data. Consultancy support was available through the peer network from [NCVO](#) who have helped with the theory of change and questionnaire design for external stakeholders.

Next Steps

The next part of the process is to complete the feedback from external stakeholders. The aim of working with external stakeholders is to raise awareness of our impact as well as identify ways of improving their experience and identifying possibilities for new business. We can also benefit from their knowledge and understanding of our work.

Did you learn anything from this process?

After reviewing the data, the main finding was that the Emmaus Model (theory of change), works in terms of making a positive impact in people’s lives especially when compared to other interventions. We felt that the quantitative process gave us confidence in identifying what impact we have and to what extent.

Involving and starting with companions from the beginning had a bigger positive impact than anticipated in gaining buy in for social value which is viewed as “a good thing” by both companions and the Board.

Nigel Mellor, Chair of Emmaus Merseyside says the following. “The Social Value approach has helped us to make sure that the work we are doing and the services we provide are based on the needs and aspirations of the Companions themselves. Social Value helps to identify the qualitative requirements and benefits of an organisation's work. Too often we measure things in quantitative terms without recognising the value and importance of "soft outcomes". We are looking forward to developing our Social Value work and have been encouraged by the feedback we have gained from Companions and other Stakeholders who have views on our work and activities”.

Are you embedding social value across the organisation?

Emmaus Merseyside have included social impact as a specific item within board reporting. Emmaus UK have recently sent a series of questionnaires to all Emmaus groups across the country to gain a better understanding of their social impact. Emmaus Merseyside are going to work with Emmaus UK to identify a range of performance indicators and measures to be included in management information systems and Board reporting.

Emmaus Merseyside have suggested to Emmaus UK it would be helpful to build a network of social value champions within Emmaus to provide training and agree processes for the Emmaus communities across the UK.

Peter Dowd MP celebrates learners' achievements at Emmaus Merseyside.

