

# Head of Social Firm Development

**Recruitment Pack**  
**November 2024**

The logo for yes2ventures is enclosed in a red rounded rectangular border. The text 'yes2ventures' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. 'yes' is in red, '2' is in black, and 'ventures' is in black.

**yes2ventures**

[www.yes2ventures.org.uk](http://www.yes2ventures.org.uk)

## Head of Social Firm Development for Yes2Ventures

Thank you for taking time to read about this unique opportunity to lead our work and make a real and lasting difference for learning-disabled people in Sheffield.

Social Firms exist to provide good, sustainable employment for people with learning disabilities. Through our initiatives over the last 25 years, Yes2Ventures has seen the importance and impact of employment in a Social Firm for severely disadvantaged people who want to work but have never been given the chance.

By developing Social Firms, Yes2Ventures is taking the lead in growing the breadth and quality of employment opportunities for people in Sheffield with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), neurodiversity and/or autism. Social Firms, or Employment Social Enterprises (ESEs) as they are called in the USA, have the potential to become recognised by government as a distinct strand of social enterprise with a business model that combines enterprise, employment, empowerment and inclusion.

We are looking for a compassionate and collaborative leader to head up this venture. You will work across the city to promote the benefits and opportunities of starting or becoming a Social Firm and provide a helping hand to entrepreneurs and potential employees as they begin their journey.

This is a broad and varied role, so we need someone who is as comfortable being out and about spreading the message as they are sitting down to work through the fine detail of plans and proposals. You will have good all-round management skills and a track record of working collaboratively to build support for and nurture new social initiatives.

Opportunity Sheffield, the employment and skills service within Sheffield City Council, has received a Public Health grant to provide initial funding for this venture until 2026, and part of your role will be to attract further investment to build a team that can support a significant number of enterprises long into the future.

In this pack you'll find information about Social Firms, the focus for Yes2Ventures' work, details about the role and how to apply.

As the founder of Yes2Ventures in 1999, and a veteran of Social Firm development, I will be laying the foundations of this new programme for when you start. I am supported by an experienced Board and many stakeholders and supporters, but you will be the new figurehead for our organisation from day one and our principal collaborator with the wider adult social care, social enterprise and business sectors in Sheffield and beyond.

If you can respond to the challenge provided by this role with enthusiasm and imagination, we'd love to hear from you.



Mark Powell  
Chair of Yes2Ventures

## What are Social Firms?

Social Firms are enterprises set up with the expressed aim of creating employment, training and social inclusion opportunities for people who are severely disadvantaged in the open labour market specifically because they have learning disabilities or autism or both. There is no set legal definition for a Social Firm, but Yes2Ventures is clear about the types of organisations we can develop and support:

- The founding principles of the organisation, expressed in its mission statement, must include an explicit commitment to providing employment for people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), neurodiversity and/or autism.
- At least 25% of its employees will be from those groups of people.
- It will generate over 50% of its income through trading, i.e. the sale of goods or services.
- It is most likely to have a recognised not-for-profit legal structure such as a registered charity, a company limited by guarantee or shares, or a community interest company.

We recognise that these elements may not all be in place from day one, and we will be working with organisations that have a commitment in their DNA that will help them emerge as Social Firms.

### The first generation of Social Firms, employing a workforce of adults with learning disabilities...

Once upon a time, there was a Social Firms movement in the UK, with a national body and regional networks. Austerity and then Covid put paid to all that. Now, there is a generation of learning-disabled people who remember how good it was to work in a Social Firm, and another generation who want to work, but can't imagine what it is like. We have to start again!

**Reclaim** was a Sheffield based Social Firm from 1989 to 2019. It was the UK's first post-consumer plastics reclamation enterprise, employing a workforce of adults with learning disabilities.

**Buster's Coffee** was a South and West Yorkshire based Social Firm from 2002 to 2012 with a string of cafes and a merchant arm for packaged coffee blends.

**A Clean Sweep Co-operative Ltd** has been providing professional cleaning services in and around Bristol since 1995.

There were wholefood supermarkets, soap companies, aquarium manufacturers and packaging organisations - any business sector could produce a Social Firm, and any sector still can.

## Our work with Social Firms

Our contract with Sheffield City Council focuses on:

- Identifying and engaging with existing social enterprises in Sheffield which have the potential to become Social Firms.
- Identifying and supporting entrepreneurs to establish new Social Firms with advice, resources and networking opportunities.
- Working in 1:1 and in group settings with social enterprise leaders to outline opportunities for growth, develop their business models to meet the specific needs of the target cohort.
- Liaison with organisations involved in the delivery of employment support to people in Sheffield with LDD, neurodiversity and/or autism, including social sector organisations and local public bodies such as the Council's Adult Social Care, their Employment & Skills Service and the Department for Work & Pensions.
- Assisting entrepreneurs to provide supported employment to appropriate individuals, through job brokerage, candidate matching and advocacy.
- Providing in-work support to employees in organisations we're working with, including discretionary funding, to help start and sustain their employment.
- Identifying and signposting to other sources of support for Social Firms and their employees.
- Advising participants on self-employment and small social enterprise options, where appropriate, to help them pursue opportunities which harness the skills and/or interests they have learned or developed.
- Participation in wider activity relating to the work and health agenda through membership of the Sheffield Local Integration Board for Work & Health and the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

We will also be:

- Looking for and responding to opportunities to attract additional investment to support the development of more Social Firms in the city.
- Looking for opportunities to promote the Social Firm business model through public policy consultations and policy development at a local, regional (e.g. South Yorkshire Mayoral Authority) and national level.
- Building relationships with trusted agencies and individuals that can provide affordable specialist advice to social firms.

## Head of Social Firm Development

### Purpose of role

To lead Yes2Ventures in growing the breadth and quality of employment opportunities for people in Sheffield with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), neurodiversity and/or autism through the social firm model.

### Responsibilities

1. Promoting the benefits of the social firm model to employers in the city and their representative bodies.
2. Liaison with organisations involved in the delivery of employment support to people in Sheffield with LDD, neurodiversity and/or autism, including local public bodies and social sector organisations.
3. Supporting the establishment of new Social Firms.
4. Providing support and networking opportunities for existing social firms and other employers that currently or wish to provide supported employment.
5. Building partnerships and networks locally, regionally and nationally with organisations working on similar issues.
6. Raising funds and establishing projects to invest in the development of new Social Firms.
7. Advocating for the social firm model in public consultations and public policy development.
8. Gathering insights and feedback from Yes2Ventures' stakeholders to inform the future development of its programmes and activities.
9. Working with the board to develop an annual business plan and budget for Yes2Ventures.
10. Leading the creation of reports to funders.
11. Line management of other Yes2Ventures team members.
12. Supporting the board to fulfil its governance responsibilities.

## Head of Social Firm Development

### Person Specification

1. A confident public advocate and networker with a demonstrable track record of working collaboratively to build support for and nurture new social initiatives.
2. Understanding and experience of the national, regional and local policy context regarding adult social care and employment support for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, neurodiversity and autism.
3. Understanding of organisational development practices and experience of supporting these within similar environments such as Social Firms or other social purpose organisations.
4. High level project management skills, ideally with experience of leading these within contracts from public bodies.
5. Experience of developing and implementing business plans and budgets.
6. Income generation experience.
7. Experience of gathering insights and feedback from stakeholders and using this to contribute to the development of policy, programmes or services.
8. Experience of supporting and coaching other team members to succeed and develop.
9. Experience of working within charity or not-for-profit governance structures.
10. Personal commitment to supporting people who are disadvantaged by barriers to employment.

We're committed to ensuring our workforce reflects the diversity of our community and we positively encourage applications from all individuals irrespective of their gender, age, home country, ethnic background, sexuality, religious beliefs or disability.

# Head of Social Firm Development

## Main terms and conditions

- 30 hours per week (0.8FTE) with aspiration to extend to full-time in future when funding permits. We are open to requests for job-sharing and secondments.
- Annual salary of £40,000 (£50,000 FTE).
- Employer's pension contribution of 3% (with 5% employee contribution).
- 25 days annual leave (pro-rated for part-time staff) plus additional discretionary leave between Christmas and New Year.
- Your principal workplace will be our registered office in Sheffield, currently in Percy Street in Neepsend, with an expectation that you will work flexibly to ensure you are visible and supportive to colleagues and stakeholders across the city. This may include working remotely from time to time by agreement.

## How to apply

Your application should include the following two things:

1. A **personal statement** of no more than **three sides of A4** that explains your motivation for applying for this role and demonstrates, using clear examples, how your skills and experience meet all the points in the Person Specification.
2. An up to date, detailed **CV** including all relevant employment and volunteering history and key achievements in your most recent role(s). Please also ensure your CV has your email address, phone number and the names and contact details of two people who can provide references, one of whom should preferably be your most recent employer. We will only request references once we have chosen an applicant we wish to appoint.

Please send your application via email to [mark.powell@yes2ventures.org.uk](mailto:mark.powell@yes2ventures.org.uk).

If you would like an initial, informal discussion about the role or have any questions, please contact:

**Before 19 November:** Bill Freeman at [bill.freeman@yes2ventures.org.uk](mailto:bill.freeman@yes2ventures.org.uk)

**From 19 November:** Mark Powell at [mark.powell@yes2ventures.org.uk](mailto:mark.powell@yes2ventures.org.uk)

## Key dates

The **closing date** for applications is **2pm on Wednesday 27 November 2024**.

**Interviews** will take place in Sheffield on **Thursday 5 or Friday 6 December 2024**. In your email please tell us if you would not be available on either of these dates.

It is expected that the successful applicant will be appointed to take up post early in 2025.