



meet the buyer

**SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
TRADE FAIR**

**Conference
Report**

November 2007

Meet the Buyer was organised by the four local Social Enterprise Partnerships in Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian and Borders.

In Support of Enterprise



West Lothian
Social Economy Partnership



Our Scottish Borders
Your inspiration

Funding for the event was provided by EQUAL:



Europe and Scotland
Making it **work together**



Meet the Buyer: Conference Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 *The Partners*

Midlothian Voluntary Action (the Council for Voluntary Service in Midlothian) was awarded funding by EQUAL to run a 'Meet the Buyer' event on behalf of the four Local Social Enterprise Partnerships in Mid, East and West Lothian, and the Borders. The LSEPs involved were:

Midlothian:	Social Enterprise Alliance Midlothian (SEAM);
East Lothian:	East Lothian Social Economy Partnership (ELSEP);
West Lothian:	West Lothian Social Enterprise Partnership (WLSEP);
Borders:	Borders Chamber of Social Enterprise.

A representative from each of the Partnerships formed a small Working Group to plan the event. Anna Winters and Ruth Hutton from Communities Scotland provided support to the Working Group.

1.2 *The Proposed Event*



Information exchange

The proposal for the event outlined the following anticipated impacts:

- Networking & subsequent relationship building both inter-organisationally and between organisations and “buyers”
 - Raising awareness within the public sector of the breadth of social enterprise that exists and encouraging an appreciation of potential social added value.
- Encourage partnership working between organisations, which in turn may increase the likelihood of successful tendering and open the door to new markets.

2.0 The Event

2.1 *Marketing*

Meet the Buyer took place on 1 November 2007, and was marketed as follows:

“**Meet the Buyer**’ provides an opportunity for social enterprises to:

- Network - with each other, and with local ‘buyers’ of social enterprise goods and services;
- Find out more about successful social enterprises and learn from their experience;
- Hear about the Scottish Parliament commitment to social enterprise and statutory agency procurement processes;
- Have an update from the Scottish Government on the Social

Enterprise Strategy and Action Plan.

The event is jointly organised by the local social enterprise partnerships (LSEPs) in Mid, East and West Lothian and the Borders, with funding from EQUAL.

Who should attend?

‘Meet the Buyer’ will be of interest to:

- Social enterprises in Mid, East, and West Lothian, and the Borders;
- Procurement professionals in Mid, East, and West Lothian, and the Borders;
- Social enterprise support agencies;
- Other individuals with an interest in procurement or social enterprise issues;
- The wider voluntary sector.”

The leaflet was distributed through the LSEP’s networks by e-mail, and was followed up by telephone reminders to key social enterprises. Transport to the event was offered, but only the delegates from the Borders took up the offer.

2.2 *The Programme*

There were four speakers:

- Richard Vivian, from Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre, welcomed delegates to Midlothian;
- Helen Henry, from the Scottish Parliament, gave a presentation on the Scottish Parliament’s approach to responsible purchasing;
- Diane Camerson, from Speed Networking Scotland, outlined the benefits of networking, and facilitated a speed networking session;
- Geoff Pope, from the Scottish Government, updated the delegates on progress against the Social Enterprise Strategy and Action Plan.



Helen Henry, Scottish Parliament

More information on the programme, and the speakers is to be found in Appendices A and B, and copies of their presentations are in Appendix F.

Delegates had the choice of three morning, and three afternoon workshops as follows:

- Procurement and social enterprise in Scottish Borders;
- Childcare in West Lothian;
- Recycling opportunities for social enterprise in West Lothian;

- An introduction to Public Social Partnerships;
- Raising the profile of social enterprise: Marketing a Food Cooperative;
- Social Return on Investment.

More information on each of the workshops can be found in Appendix C, as can copies of the workshop presentations.

Several organisations had stalls at the event:

- Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre;
- Business Gateway;
- EQUAL;
- Social Enterprise Academy;
- Social Investment Scotland;
- Social Enterprise Alliance Midlothian;
- East Lothian Social Economy Partnership.

In addition, there was an Information Exchange table, where social enterprises could place their promotional materials. This was well used.

2.3 Attendance



There were 60 delegates in attendance, including speakers, stall holders, and workshop leaders. 42 different organisations were represented, which broke down as follows:

- 26 social enterprises (or aspiring social enterprises), of which:
 - 2 were from East Lothian;
 - 3 were from West Lothian;
 - 4 were from Borders;
 - 14 were from Midlothian;
 - 3 covered two or more LSEP areas;
- 8 organisations were from the statutory sector;
- 8 organisations provided support to social enterprises.

A full attendance list is in Appendix D.

Speed Networking

2.4 Delegate Evaluation

23 delegates completed evaluation forms, which were very positive about the event, with delegates particularly enjoying the Scottish Parliament presentation, and the speed networking. Comments included:

‘Excellentlly organised day - useful spread of topics affecting SES and procurement issues.’

‘Really enjoyed workshops. Very interactive.’

'Workshops were excellent and intros were already being made between organisations.'

Delegates were asked what they had found useful about the day:

Eight respondents identified networking:

'Great networking opportunity'.

'Good opportunity to network and get up to speed with development in the sector.'

Eight respondents highlighted the information they had gained through attending:

"Very useful for ideas for improving my social enterprise, finding out what others are doing and potential new supplier, advice on procurement.'

Broadened my knowledge of social economy and factors affecting business.'

Delegates were asked for suggestions for future events or activities that would help social enterprises to promote their services and to network. Suggestions included:

'Events that are shorter, and evening events, so that more people can attend.'

'More events like this please.'

A full list of delegates' comments is to be found in Appendix E.

3.0 Impact of the Event

3.1 Targets

EQUAL asked MVA to report against the following targets:

- Raising the profile of the social economy locally;
- Identifying and supporting market opportunities for new or existing social economy organisations;
- Expected impact on local policy development.



Workshop delegates

3.2 Raising the Profile

Meet the Buyer provided an opportunity for social enterprises to meet with potential purchasers of their service. Unfortunately, procurement officers from East and West Lothian were not able to attend the event, and the procurement representative from the NHS had to cancel at the last minute (although he has offered to meet with the

LSEP separately). However, the procurement officers that were in attendance, including from the Scottish Parliament, were able to see the breadth of activity in the sector.

3.3 *Identifying and supporting market opportunities*

The networking was the most positive aspect of the day identified in the feedback. Delegates highlighted the contacts that they had made on the day, and the delegates' list included telephone and e-mail contact details to allow delegates to follow up contacts made on the day.

3.4 *Expected Impact*

A very positive aspect of the event was the joint working between the LSEPs. It is to be hoped that these relationships can be maintained, and that future joint initiatives can be undertaken.

4.0 **Lessons Learned**

4.1 *Introduction*

Overall the event was very successful, with delegates extremely positive about the impact of the day. However, as with any event there are lessons to be learned for any future events.

4.2 *Budget*

The budget for the event was rather tight, particularly in the area of 'Administration' and 'Speaker/Facilitator's Fees'.

£450 (30 x £15 hours) was included in the original budget for administering the event. The true cost of administering the event by MVA staff was closer to £1200, broken down as follows:

	<i>Total</i>
Servicing the planning meetings:	115
Arranging speakers and workshops:	191
Dealing with bookings (paper, e-mail, telephone queries):	117
Venue and catering issues:	115
Support staff at the event:	432
Work after the event (chasing expenses, web etc):	96
Production of report:	153
Total	£1219

Many of the organisations that provided workshops use speaker's fees as a source of income, and there was a disparity with some organisations expecting to be paid, and others happy to provide a free workshop on behalf of their local SEP. Fortunately due to underspends in other area of the budget it proved possible to give each speaker a fee, and address the true costs of administration.

4.3 *Time*

It would have been of benefit to have a longer timescale for organising the event, particularly to allow time for a greater input into the day by purchasing officers from the local statutory agencies.

4.4 *Attendance by Social Enterprises*

The event was relatively well attended by social enterprises, with 26 social enterprises in attendance on the day. However, it took a lot of encouragement by the LSEP representatives to get organisations to attend, and there were a number of organisations that would have benefited who did not attend.

There were a number of suggestions by LSEP representatives, and from the delegates themselves on the day, as to why there had not been a greater uptake by social enterprises. East Lothian had had a similar event the previous year, which may have impacted on enterprises willingness to attend from this area. The emphasis on 'procurement' may also have discouraged smaller organisations from attending. However, the biggest, and most intractable, problem is the difficulty of social enterprise managers taking time away from direct service delivery to attend events such as Meet the Buyer.



Meet the Buyer Speed Networking

5.0 Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the event:

- The 'Meet the Buyer' event was valued by participants for the networking and information-sharing opportunities it provided;
- Delegates were keen to see this type of event run again;
- The event met the EQUAL targets of raising the profile of social enterprises, and identifying and supporting market opportunities;
- In the current environment of Full Cost Recovery and social enterprise, the budget for future events should recognise actual costs of administration, and assume that speakers will require fees;
- More realistic timescales would be useful for future events, in order to allow 'buy-in' by all partners;
- Finding time away from the day-to-day operation of social enterprises in order to attend networking events remains an issue for managers, therefore there needs to be a flexible approach to providing networking opportunities;
- The procurement staff at the local authorities, and the NHS, have indicated a willingness to work with the social enterprise sector, and this interest needs to be followed up;
- The partnership working between with four LSEPs worked well, and other joint initiatives should be considered.

6.0 More information

More information on the event can be obtained from:

Dr Lesley Kelly
Midlothian Voluntary Action
4/6 White Hart Street
Dalkeith
EH22 1AE

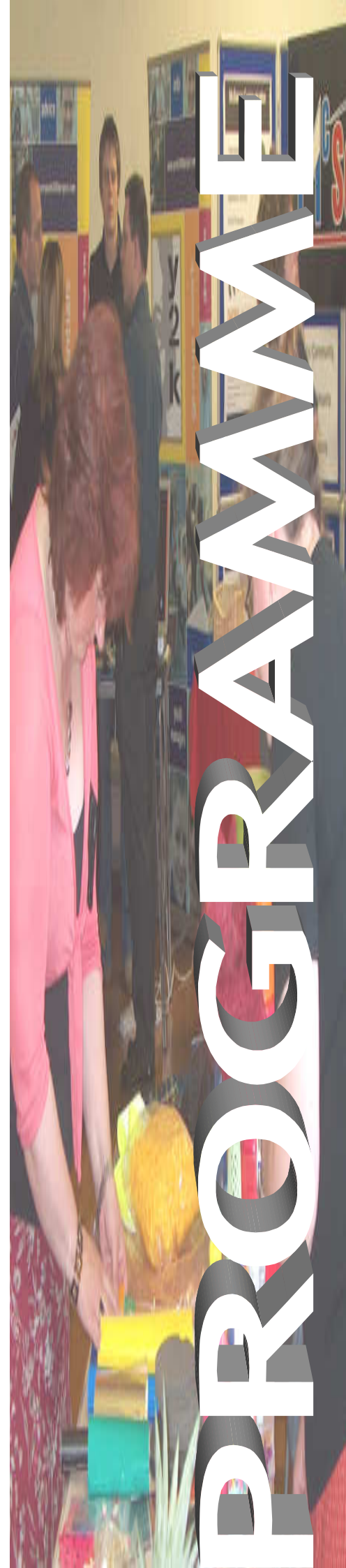
0131 663 9471
Lesley.Kelly@mvacvs.org.uk

APPENDICES

- A Programme
- B The Speakers
- C The Workshops
- D Attendance List
- E Delegate Evaluation
- F Presentations

APPENDIX A: PROGRAMME

- 10:00 - 10:30 Coffee / Registration
- 10:30 - 10:40 Welcome
*Richard Vivian, Project Coordinator
Midlothian Advice & Resource Centre*
- 10:40 - 11:00 The Scottish Parliament: Our
Approach to Responsible Purchasing
*Helen Henry, Procurement Officer,
Scottish Parliament*
- 11:00 - 11:30 Speed Networking
*Facilitated by Diane Cameron,
Speed Networking Scotland*
- 11:30 - 11:45 Coffee Break
- 11:45 - 12:45 Workshops A - C
- 12:45 - 13:30 Lunch (Informal Networking)
- 13:30 - 14:30 Workshops D - E
- 14:30 - 15:00 An update on Scotland's Social
Enterprise Strategy and Action Plan
*Geoff Pope, Social Enterprise
Manager, Social Enterprise Team,
Scottish Government*



APPENDIX B: THE SPEAKERS

Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre

Midlothian Advice & Resource Centre (MARC) has been in existence since 1982. MARC's object is to help the community and offer volunteers a chance to help in their activities. MARC operates two community stores selling a range of good quality second hand furniture and white goods, and has a range of recycling projects including recycling computers, bicycles and baby equipment.

The Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament is made up of 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament. It scrutinises the Scottish Government, scrutinises Bills and passes laws. The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB), comprising five MSPs, is responsible for ensuring that the Parliament has the facilities required to perform its business effectively. The Scottish Parliament is committed to purchasing responsibly in ways that build on the Parliament's strategic priorities and contribute to Sustainable Development.

The Social Enterprise Unit, Scottish Government

The social enterprise team is part of the Public Service Reform Directorate under the Director General for the Economy within the Scottish Government. Put simply, the team works for John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth. Currently the team delivers the social enterprise strategy, which was launched in March 2007 and has the following strategic aims:

- Raising the profile and proving the value of social enterprise;
- Opening up markets to social enterprise;
- Increasing the range of finance available to develop social enterprise;
- Developing the trading capacity of social enterprise by providing better business support.

The team is also working on the next three-year action plan for social enterprise, to provide support for the sector from 2008-11.

Kick start your day, the networking way!

In this first 30-minute session of the day you can happily talk about your business to at least 5 people you've never met before. And find out what they do at the same time!

After the session if you have a great connection or sense an immediate business opportunity, there will be the rest of the day to follow up! This session will be led by Diane Cameron of Speed Networking Scotland.

APPENDIX C: WORKSHOPS

MORNING OPTIONS (11:45 TO 12:45)

WORKSHOP A: Procurement and social enterprise in Scottish Borders

Procurement can seem a bit of a maze to all of us, and in Scottish Borders we set out to demystify the process for social enterprises, starting with a guide to organisations seeking to secure contracts with the local authority and NHS. Representatives from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Scottish Enterprise Borders, the Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber and the Social Enterprise Partnership came together to meet for the first time and together developed a guide and cd-rom. Hear about the experience, lessons learned and why the process is far from over in this session.

WORKSHOP B: Childcare in West Lothian - Broxburn Family and Community Development Centre

One enterprise, amongst others, run by Broxburn Family Centre is an out of school care project. But how sustainable is a childcare social enterprise in the current political, economical and policy environment? Broxburn Family Centre is at the core of a major sector initiative being developed in West Lothian, which is designed to address some of the core issues affecting childcare providers across the district. Key to this process is the design and implementation of a more sustainable social enterprise model to bring the required professionalism and business expertise required for success. This workshop gives an opportunity to hear & discuss a range of childcare sustainability issues.

WORKSHOP C: Recycling opportunities for social enterprise in West Lothian - Almond Enterprises Ltd.

The Landfill Directive sets a series of landfill reduction targets to be achieved over the next 15 years, with the aim of gradually reducing the amount of municipal and industrial waste that is disposed of in landfill sites. These Directives will help to increase the demand for companies and organisations that can collect and sort waste. Almond Enterprises Ltd, a social enterprise subsidiary of Almond Housing Association, is exploring the market and current provisions for recycling services. This will allow a thorough analysis of viable opportunities for starting a recycling project in West Lothian. Anyone with knowledge of recycling or just a thirst for knowledge, is welcome to come along to this session!

AFTERNOON OPTIONS (13:30 TO 14:30)

WORKSHOP D: An Introduction to Public Social Partnerships (PSP) - Forth Sector

Public Social Partnership (PSP) is a new model for contracting between public bodies and social enterprises and voluntary organisations. PSPs allow public bodies to use the contracting process to create added social benefit in the community and to engage service users in the design of services. Two PSPs have been piloted in Scotland, in Renfrewshire and North Lanarkshire. The Renfrewshire pilot focused on services for the elderly, and in North Lanarkshire the focus was on furniture-related services for homeless people. This session will look at the key issues that arose from the pilots.

WORKSHOP E: Raising the Profile of Social Enterprise: Marketing a Food Cooperative West Lothian Food and Health Development/ West Lothian Council

West Lothian Food and Health Development (WELFEHD) support food co-ops throughout West Lothian in partnership with West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership. The food co-ops work directly in the local community offering high quality, low cost local produce. Each location is run by volunteers, which means costs can be kept to a minimum. West Lothian Food and Health Development supply fresh fruit and vegetables to the food co-ops, educational establishments, small businesses and workplaces. This workshop will look at how effective marketing is essential for sustaining a social enterprise. This workshop examines the experience of promoting the service of the Food Co-op and WELFEHD in West Lothian, covering operations, branding, marketing planning and campaign development.

WORKSHOP F: Social Return on Investment - Haldane Associates

Social enterprises create social added value, but have you ever thought we should be able to estimate just how much value is created? 'Social Return on Investment' is a method of doing just that - estimating social value in financial terms and comparing it to the investment required to produce this value. The workshop will explore what SROI is and how to implement it within an organisation. It will use material from recently produced case studies from Scotland, and demonstrate the results.

APPENDIX D: ATTENDANCE LIST

1. Accessible Art Company	Gordon Duncan
2. Almond Enterprises Ltd	Fiona Pearson
3. BFHS	Peter Munro
4. Borders Chamber of Commerce	Margaret Simpson
5. Broxburn Family and Community Development Centre	Raymond Branton
6. Business Gateway	Jim Simpson
7. Communities Scotland	R. McCormick
8. Communities Scotland	Ruth Hutton
9. Communities Scotland	Shona MacPherson
10. Community Health Improvement and Regeneration Project	Andrew Broadfoot
11. Cyrenians	Luca Pornaro
12. East Lothian Council	Dougie Grierson
13. ELCAP	Margaret Elliot
14. Forth Sector	Lee Wilson
15. Friends of Midlothian Children	Dr. Jacqueline McDonnell
16. Green Banana	Andy Whiteman
17. Haldane Associates	Sheila Durie
18. Health in Mind	Theo Dijkman
19. HELPP	Tom Hall
20. HomeAid West Lothian	Jackie Agnew
21. Individual	Bernie Haswell
22. Loanhead After School Club	Irene Hogg
23. MALANI	William ???
24. MandS Consultancy	M Simpson
25. Mayfield and Easthouses Trust	Pat Bowie
26. McSence	Jim Ramsay
27. Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre	Richard Vivian
28. Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre	Bob Paul
29. Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre	Liz Campbell
30. Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre	Alison Stables
31. Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre	Derek Mitchell
32. Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre	Bryan Pottinger
33. Midlothian Childcare and Early Years Partnership	Laurence McIntosh
34. Midlothian Council	John Quinn
35. Midlothian Council	Norman Catto
36. Midlothian Council	Ann Kivlin
37. Midlothian Council	Lexie Campbell
38. Midlothian Sure Start	Karen Hooton

39. Midlothian Voluntary Action	Lesley Kelly
40. Midlothian Voluntary Action	Margaret Nisbet
41. Midlothian Voluntary Action	William Liu
42. Midlothian Voluntary Action	Margaret Mackay
43. Outside the Box	Anne Connor
44. Scottish Borders	Derek Nash
45. Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian	Michael Kornacki
46. Scottish Government	Geoff Pope
47. Scottish Government	Kerry Edwards
48. Scottish Parliament	Helen Henry
49. SCVO	Ea O'Neill
50. SCVO	Sarah Brophy
51. Social Enterprise Academy	Jayne Rowe
52. Social Enterprise Team, Scottish Government	Gurthrie Handley
53. Social Investment Scotland	Lindsay Plenderleith
54. Speed Networking Scotland	Diane Cameron
55. Stand Int.	Zoe Clements
56. St. Davids Bradbury Day Centre	Mary Lothian
57. West Lothian Council	Angela Moohan
58. West Lothian Council	Sharon Houston
59. West Lothian Council	Helen Ward
60. Y2K	Kevin Ross

APPENDIX E: EVALUATION



Meet the Buyer: Social Enterprise Trade Fair

“Raise the awareness - Make the connections”

Thursday 1 November 10.30am - 3pm
74 The Loan, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9AQ

In Support of Enterprise



West Lothian
Social Economy Partnership



Our Scottish Borders
Your inspiration

EVALUATION: 61 in attendance, 23 forms returned

How useful did you find the presentations/workshops? (please circle):

	Low				High
The Scottish Parliament: Our approach to responsible purchasing	1	2 (1)	3 (4)	4 (13)	5 (1)
Speed Networking	1 (1)	2	3 (6)	4 (10)	5 (3)
Workshop A: Procurement and social enterprise in Scottish Borders	1 (2)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (3)
Workshop B: Childcare in West Lothian	1	2	3	4 (2)	5
Workshop C: Recycling opportunities for social enterprise in West Lothian	1	2	3 (1)	4 (7)	5
Workshop D: An Introduction to Public Social Partnerships	1	2	3 (1)	4 (8)	5 (1)
Workshop E: Raising the Profile of Social Enterprise: Marketing a Food Cooperative	1	2	3	4	5 (3)
Workshop F: Social Return on Investment	1	2	3	4 (3)	5 (3)
Update on Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy	1	2 (1)	3 (3)	4 (2)	5 (3)

If you have any comments on the presentations/workshops please tell us below:

Excellent organised day - useful spread of topics affecting SES and Procurement issues.
 Really enjoyed workshops. Very interactive.
 Excellent event.
 Geoff Pope's presentation was very good.
 Unfortunately presentation of Workshop A was rather aggressive and patronising. Facilitator related poorly to audience. Overall event was useful and successful though.
 Need more events for buying, selling, marketing and planning.
 Speakers could have benefited from microphones
 Workshop F was the most relevant to my organisation.
 Workshops were excellent and intros were already being made between organisations

Please rate:

	Low			High		
The catering	1	(3)	3	4	5	
The venue	1	2	3	4	5	
The organisation of the event	1	2	3	4	5	
			(2)	(13)	(7)	

If you have any comments on the catering/ venue/ organisation of the event please tell us below:

Good venue - clean.
Very good building
Fresh juice could have been supplied
Good venue
Pleasant venue
Excellent all round
Poor vegetarian choices
Excellent - particularly those who stayed around for eating at the end of the second workshop

If you have found today useful please tell us why:

Very useful for ideas for improving my social enterprise, funding out what others are doing and potential new supplier, advice on procurement.
Networking and contact. More information on procurement.
Broadened my knowledge of social economy and factors affecting businesses
Very good networking
Procurement very good. Networking, support & information great.
Good networking opportunities
Networking with others
Good opportunity to network and get up to speed with development in the sector
Great networking opportunity
Very informative
Useful and comprehensive information delivered during the event.
Partnership working within our area very useful
Well organised, useful information.
Renewed some contacts.

If not, please tell us what we could have done better:

More buyers in attendance from West Lothian
Difficulty sometimes hearing the speaker
Nothing!

Do have any suggestions for future events or activities that would help social enterprises to promote their services and to network?

Events that are shorter, and evening events, so that more people can attend.
Should be organised more often
More events like this please
Microphone some speakers in main hall
The map in the flyer was terrible - too small to read as it was, and it didn't remain readable on paper when expanded.
Earlier notification

THANK YOU!

