



Case Study: Action Together Tameside Social Economy Network

We launched Tameside Social Economy Network in October 2024. This network is co-facilitated with the following partners; Build a Business in GM Libraries, Tameside Means Business and GM Business Growth.

The purpose was to create a space where social enterprises and community businesses could connect with one another and key support providers. The network aims to improve access to business development resources, foster peer learning, and address common barriers to sustainability and growth.

Social enterprises in Tameside shared a range of challenges, particularly around growth and sustainability. Key themes included pricing products competitively, understanding market demand, business planning and navigating commissioned contracts. Many organisations were unaware of the full range of free business support available locally.

The first network meeting revealed a clear demand for workforce development support tailored to the needs of social enterprises. Skills gaps were identified around pricing, marketing and strategic planning, and attendees also expressed interest in more opportunities to network and collaborate.

E26 Thematic Areas:

Through E26, Action Together has begun to respond to identified needs by commissioning targeted workforce development workshops and providing ongoing facilitation of the network. This includes connecting attendees to wider business support offers and consultants.

Contract Bidding and Marketing – The network provided a space to explore challenges around commissioned contracts, product pricing, and market positioning.

Mentoring and Coaching – While not formal mentoring, the network created space for reflective discussion and peer exchange, with participants benefiting from shared learning and collaborative problem solving.

Outcomes:

The launch of the Tameside Social Economy Network has resulted in stronger local connections, increased awareness of support services, and the identification of skill gaps. Direct outcomes include commissioning a Pricing a Product training session and the planning of a Planning for Success workshop. Several attendees also reported initiating conversations around partnership working and future collaboration.

Insights and Lessons:

Social enterprises benefit from collaborative spaces where challenges can be discussed honestly.

Facilitated networking events can be powerful tools for uncovering shared barriers and surfacing local solutions.

Listening closely to participants helps ensure follow-up support is timely and targeted.

Questions for other Social Enterprise organisations:

Do you have access to a peer network where you can share ideas and challenges?





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Are there underused business support services you could be tapping into?

Reflections:

"Met some contacts for potential partnership working. Great space to discuss the challenges and what would support us all to meet them. Good to see that challenges are shared (we are not alone...)"
"Thanks for organising, feels like a really collaborative space already!"

"Useful reminder of the free business resources and services available and that I need to tap into these more"

"Appreciated the opportunity to network with other social enterprises"

Link: <https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/tameside-social-economy-network>

Contact: Action Together Tameside - Sian: sian.goodwin@actiontogether.org.uk

