

# THE FURNITURE SCHEME

## SUPPORTING YOUR COMMUNITY

*Social Impact Report 2016*



*Making a difference worth millions*

# Everybody benefits...

Did you know that the Furniture Scheme exists to support people from all walks of life in south Shropshire?

We do this in all sorts of ways and have been doing so for years.

We've never really tried to measure exactly what our activities are worth to the community and the people we help before...

*...but now we have, and we think you'll be pretty impressed with the results.*



We are a charity and everything we do seeks to benefit local people

# SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

Of course, we know exactly how much we spend on our different projects and operations – it's all in our accounts – but that's not the full financial picture.

When you give somebody more confidence, better life chances or a new skill, there's nearly always a knock-on effect. They in turn are likely to put more into the community and take less out.

For every pound we spend on supporting local people, many more pounds are generated or saved.

Social value and social impact is like an investment in local people and our communities.

As you can imagine, working out just how much each pound spent is truly worth is very complicated. So this year we commissioned FUSE Enterprise CIC, working with specialists Make an Impact CIC, to compile The Furniture Scheme's very first Social Impact Report. We think it makes for an interesting read.

You can find a copy of the full report on our website [www.furniturescheme.co.uk](http://www.furniturescheme.co.uk)

**This summary picks out some of the key findings.**



*For every £1 invested an average of £4.46 social return on investment is achieved*

**In total our investment in people and activities adds up to an annual benefit to society worth:**

**£2.7 MILLION**

We're very proud of this and want to thank all the people that help us to achieve what we do, through donating, buying in our shops, taking part in our activities, volunteering their time, supporting our events and fundraising.

**All of this makes it possible for us to achieve our vision:**

*Improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people in south Shropshire*



When you donate items to us, or buy in our shops, the money doesn't go to shareholders. Any income we make goes straight back in to achieving our objectives:



We see value in everything, especially people

# A difference you can measure

An important part of our Social Impact Report is the Social Return on Investment (SROI) figures. Working out these figures is complicated, but understanding what they mean is easy.

Our experts looked at three main areas where the Furniture Scheme makes a difference for local people and a wider benefit for Shropshire:

- Training, volunteering and employment
- Creation of social enterprises and sustainable community centres
- Improving the environment

They talked to some of our stakeholders, interrogated the information and data we collect and then applied recognised formulas to work out how much each pound spent was worth, in terms of its value to society.

Putting money into doing good things for people should make a positive difference...



Now we can see just how much difference  
it makes in monetary value

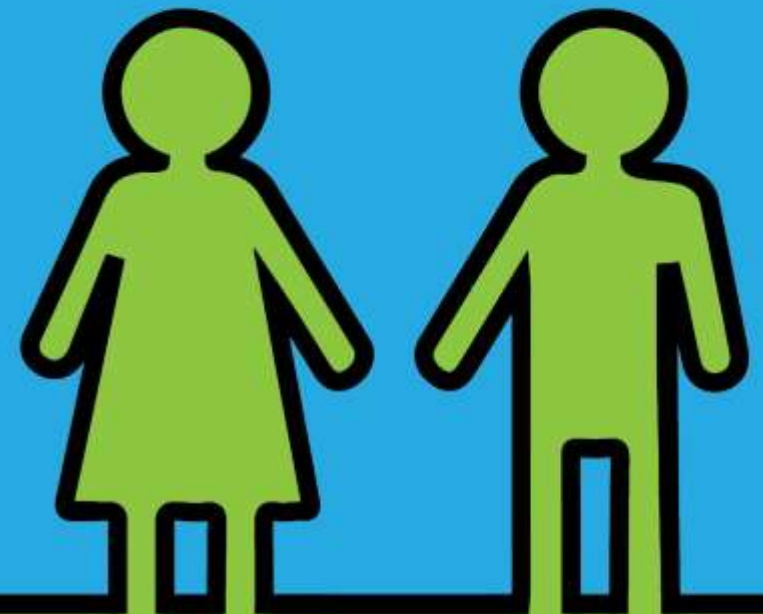
# Training, volunteering and employment

We provide training, volunteering and employment opportunities across all of our operations. This includes:

- Volunteer and work placements at Rockspring Community Centre, the Warehouse, the Carpentry Workshop and Renaissance in Ludlow.
- Volunteering at the Charity Bookshop, and training and volunteer work placements at CasCA in Craven Arms.

In the past year we have provided placements to 120 individuals.  
108 of these have volunteered over 12 months.  
25 of these gained employment.

We hope to gather more data about our placements which will further improve our SROI in future years.



**Social Return on Investment = £3.31**  
for every £1 spent

# Creation of social enterprises and sustainable community centres

We manage the Rockspring Community Centre and CasCA.

Both provide a range of activities and services for local people.

In addition we have initiated a number of community groups and helped new social enterprises to set up.

A key part of operating the community centres is to support individuals in returning to work, increasing their confidence and gaining access to support locally.

Our community centres support those who feel most socially isolated, build a stronger sense of community and help to reduce loneliness.



**Social Return on Investment = £5.07**  
for every £1 spent



# Improving the environment

The heart of The Furniture Scheme is providing low cost furniture to people on low income or in crisis.

We collect and receive items of unwanted furniture and household goods, saving them from landfill, and distribute them to people in need, or sell them at low cost to help people on low incomes.

Sales income is ploughed back into the charity to support the services, activities and opportunities we offer local people.

We sell furniture at our Warehouse and at Renaissance in Ludlow. We also have a charity bookshop in Craven Arms and are developing an online shop.

Some of the items we receive are of a higher value, so we repair, restore or upcycle at our workshop, creating something special, giving furniture a new lease of life.



**Social Return on Investment = £4.99**

for every £1 spent

# Case study...

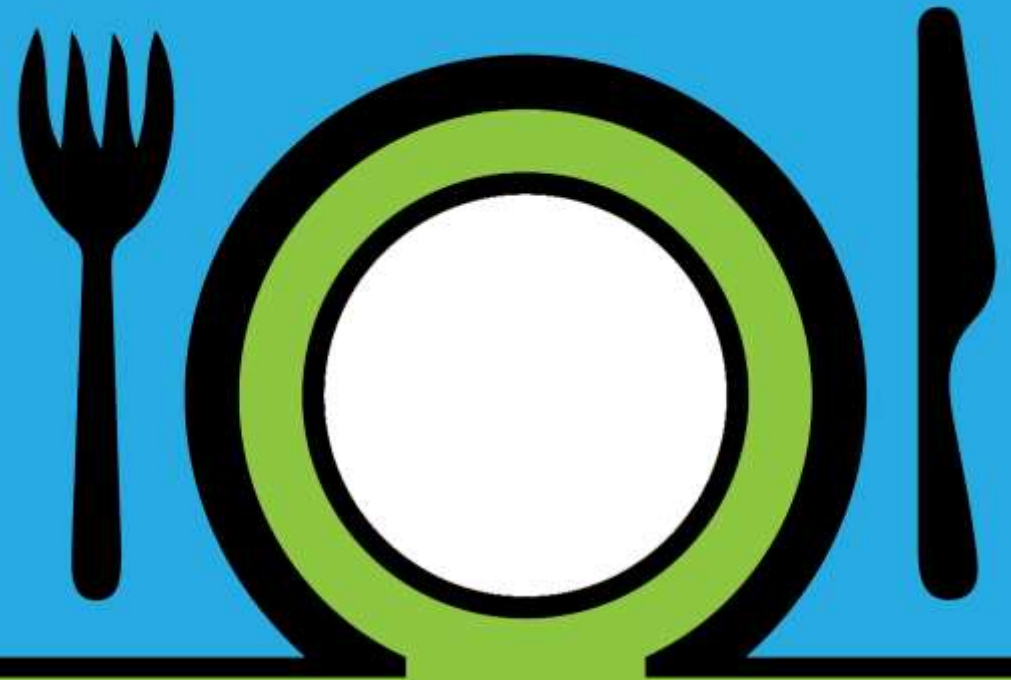
AB volunteers in the kitchen at Rockspring, having been referred from Enable, a supported employment service for people with disabilities. AB lives at home and is supported by her parents.

During her time as a volunteer, with support from staff and the other volunteers, her self-confidence has really increased.

When she first came along she was extremely nervous and very quiet and needed constant supervision with any task.

She is now confident in all aspects of her role as kitchen assistant, including laying out places, serving meals, clearing away and using the dishwasher.

While coming to the centre AB has also used the IT facilities, culminating in applying for, and securing, part time paid employment.



*“I’m really not good at interviews; I get very nervous and forget the questions.”*

## *Things you may not know about The Furniture Scheme...*

**We are a charity and rely on goodwill, support & donations to undertake our work**

**On average it costs £1,000 to provide an emergency home starter package for those in need or in crisis**

**It costs £1,500 per work placement and trainee - we support more than 120 each year**

**Fuel for one van costs £3,750 a year & enables us to collect and deliver furniture to people facing financial difficulties**

**We help prevent 201 tonnes of waste going to landfill each year**

**Each year local people provide 18,260 hours of volunteering with us**

**Our community centres offer positive opportunities to people of all ages**

**We see value in everything, especially people**

*If you think you can help us in any way we would really like to hear from you*

*We can only achieve what we do with the help, generosity and commitment of local people and our partners.*

*Thank you for your support and for helping us to make a difference.*

For more information contact us on:

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Find us on Facebook and Twitter



**The Furniture Scheme is part of the Wrekin Housing Group.  
All WHG partners are committed to delivering social value for local communities.**