

Pluss vision – People of all abilities are inspired to achieve a career

Pluss is a social enterprise that supports thousands of people with disabilities each year to achieve employment and a career.

Pluss business purpose is to provide services that support the employment of people with disabilities and other disadvantages, always to include those considered furthest from the labour market.

1. Executive Summary

One way Pluss achieves its vision is to establish new social enterprises that employ people with disabilities facing the most significant employment barriers. Pluss places the management of the new enterprises in to the hands of its employees, with a view to the enterprises quickly becoming independent, financially viable businesses run by their own staff.

And so begins the story of Future Clean

Future Clean focuses on delivering the maximum number of paid jobs for people with disabilities in the heart of the local community, whilst making use of an exciting eco-car cleaning system.

Operating from two busy Plymouth city car parks, Monday to Saturday, customers can pay from £6 to have their cars cleaned ready for their return from the shops.

2. Background

Whilst supporting a customer on Workstep, we became aware of an innovative new car washing and valeting system. It was immediately obvious that this system delivered major potential for creating jobs for people with disabilities furthest from the labour market, in a sustainable environment.

Not at all costly to set up, it is hugely environmentally friendly using only half a litre of water to wash a car (the size of a small bottle of water) and with a zero tolerance of water or debris reaching the ground. All cleaning products are bio-degradable. It is an uncomplicated, extremely portable system, about the size of a normal tool bag but lighter, and can easily be carried with one hand. This means it is accessible for people with complex physical and learning disabilities and has an excellent fit with both self and mainstream employment opportunities.

The two main outcomes of the enterprise are:

1. To deliver the maximum number of paid jobs for people with disabilities furthest from the labour market, using a sustainable model that champions social, environmental and economic progress.
2. To create a simple model that can be replicated nationally at car parks across the country. Work Choice will be a principle vehicle to deliver this model.

3. Our Approach

To get Future Clean up and running, we made use of available pump priming monies through the DWP ESF funded trans-national project and sought business start up advice from Co-Active social enterprise support.

We then developed partnerships with 2G and Plymouth City Council Car Parks division. Pluss delivers and manages the new enterprise, 2G are the pioneers of the

system and Plymouth City Council provides the sites.

2G provided training covering the whole range of services from basic wash to full valet. One weeks training was cascaded to Future Clean operatives within a Plymouth business park car park, providing a safe environment in which to train.

Every member of the team has a disability and is supported by Workstep (apart from the Future Jobs Fund post). Two job coaches were recruited to take overall responsibility for day to day management of Future Clean and for coaching incoming trainees, teaching them how to operate the cleaning system and develop their skills.

Both job coaches are ex-service personnel, with one having recently been repatriated from Afghanistan following injury during live engagements. Both job Coaches have excellent training ability and a great value base for people with learning and other disabilities. The whole team were involved in the set up of the new business including planning and marketing.

Dave Smith, 50, Job Coach. *Prior to working with Pluss, Dave spent 25 years with the Royal Marines. Dave has multiple disabilities including hearing loss, sciatica, and back, leg, arm, shoulder and dexterity impairments.*

“Basically my job is working with disabled adults, teaching them the trade. Its great, a hands-on job and it was a challenge to me as I was heavily involved in the set up, giving my ideas to make it work.

We all did the training and then put together the training plan. Together, we sorted the kit, the van and the marketing; we promote the business everywhere we go. We also worked hard to get on with the car park wardens – they were a bit unsure at first – but they’re not now!

Before this, I applied for lots of jobs. It can be hard because usually as soon as you mention disability employers just don’t want to know.

This job has really picked me up out of the dump. It’s given me something to get up for in the mornings – even this morning with the wet weather!! They are a great bunch of guys and girls. We keep everything light hearted and have a laugh. A happy atmosphere makes for a better workforce. “



4. Barriers/Challenges:

Our Local Authority understandably had some concerns. Previous car wash projects had caused significant damage to car parks structures because of vast quantities of water, chemicals and lack of drainage. There were also keen to find out more about the business case for employing people with disabilities.

We overcame this by engaging with local councillors, social services departments and encouraging direct contact with the council car parks division to present the enterprise in a positive light.

5. Output/Results

Social inclusion - In four weeks, the enterprise has delivered five paid jobs for people with moderate to severe learning disabilities, an individual with a complex mental health issue and an individual with multiple physical disabilities. It currently offers work trials to 6 other people with learning disabilities; two of whom receive 1:1

individual support due to behaviour that challenges. The project has also delivered a Future Jobs Fund position for 25 hours per week.

Pluss has also developed excellent links with the ex-services community which is a considerable size in Plymouth. Through this partnership, we actively encouraged applications from unemployed ex-service personnel. They have proved highly skilled in terms of training, motivation and overcoming obstacles. This has had an immense impact on the quality and commercial delivery of Future Clean.

Ryan Chasteauneuf, 26, Job Coach. *In March 2009, Ryan was medically discharged on his return from serving in the Army in Afghanistan. Whilst on patrol, he was attacked by fire arms, which damaged his hearing and left him with post-traumatic stress and obsessive compulsive disorder.*

"I was pretty miserable before, I couldn't pay my bills and was juggling money every month. Despite getting compensation from the Army, and using this money to retrain, I couldn't find a job.

I got in touch with Pluss through the Royal British Legion. I also have dyslexia and my spelling is pretty atrocious. This and everything else made things pretty difficult.

Pluss helped me fill in application forms, helped me identify jobs that I would be interested in and then the post with Future Clean came about. They also helped me claim disability living allowance which helps me with my income.

Now I am a lot happier. I am very glad to be teaching again, I used to teach in the Army.

That's the thing Pluss have helped me with most – to find a job that brings out the thing I am good at. Working at 'Future Clean' has made an amazing difference."



Changing perception - This model is about bringing employment for people with complex disabilities slap bang in to the middle of the community. Here, they are engaging with members of the public; demonstrating every day just what people with disabilities **can** do. At the same time it offers a team environment where individuals are fully supported by trained coaches.

Employment for people furthest from the labour market - By sharing best practise with our partners and sub-contractors, Pluss plans to replicate this model in every city across the country. By doing so, the DWP can deliver truly sustainable paid jobs for people who face the most complex barriers to employment.

The future

Future Clean was launched in one of Plymouth's quieter car parks on the 19th April 2010. We have just entered in to our fourth week of trading. Customer demand and satisfaction had been so successful that Future Clean has just opened its doors at a second, busier City Centre car park (17th May 2010).

We are now in liaison with Exeter & Somerset Councils to pilot further projects.

John Pothecary, 44, Future Cleaner. *John works for Future Clean for 16 hours a week. John has a learning disability.*

"I had been out of work for a little while. Sarah at Pluss told me about Future Clean. We went to do training for a week with Dave and Ryan and now I am employed 16 hours a week.

It's good, cleaning all the different cars and meeting all the different people. I cleaned 2 jaguars last week and a Mercedes today. Sparkling!

I approach customers and say "Hello Sir / Madam, would you like your car cleaned today?"

It's so nice to be working again. I was out of a job for 2 years and it was miserable. Its good to be out and about and I am very happy to earn my own money at last.



Nathan Simpson, 19, Future Cleaner. *Nathan is employed by Pluss through the Future Jobs Fund.*

I was on Job Seekers Allowance before and I had applied for loads of jobs, with no joy. It made me feel a bit low about myself. I filled in an application form for Future Jobs Fund and I was interested in this job.

It's really good, what this enterprise is about; giving people with disabilities a chance to have a job and giving them a skill in life. It's a fun atmosphere with jokes flying around but also serious when it needs to be. Everyone is friendly and makes an effort.

I hope to join the RAF and this gives me a trade skill, it shows I can work as part of a team and work with all sorts of people. It also shows that I have a non – discriminative attitude.

I would so much rather have a job like this than somewhere like McDonalds. It helps people. Some of my friends leave a day at work and don't feel a thing. I walk away with a good feeling, I am making a difference and it makes you want to come back the next day.



Jason Eyles, 21, Trainee future cleaner *Jason is a trainee future cleaner currently undertaking a work trial. Jason has a learning disability.*

"I enjoy it here and like cleaning the cars. Dave and Ryan help me and show me what I have to do, and the order it all comes in. I find some things are easier and some of the things I am still learning. "

