

PRESS RELEASE

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South West business is ‘Star’ quality employer for disabled people

South West based business Pluss, is among five outstanding organisations in the UK to be officially awarded a special status for the quality of their business and the employment they provide for severely disadvantaged people. Pluss is to receive the new Star Social Firm award for creating rewarding jobs within a market-led business for people who would otherwise have substantial problems finding employment.

Pluss provides employment and equipment services to disabled people. It does this by offering a range of training and recruitment services and through direct employment in its own manufacturing and mobility equipment businesses.

The company is dedicated to creating quality employment opportunities at all levels and more than 50 per cent of the organisation’s workforce has a disability; from operatives on the factory floor to Senior Management.

Social Firms create jobs for disabled people within a real business context; this includes people with physical and learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, and people with long term health conditions. They are orientated around enterprise, employment and empowerment and like any other business they are run by custom, not charity. Those special companies that have been awarded Star Social Firms status are the very best, setting a benchmark in the sector. Star Social Firms like Pluss have been independently assessed and found to be sustainable operations that have a sophisticated business approach in areas like financial management, marketing, HR and forecasting.

Martin Davies, Managing Director of Pluss is delighted with being accredited with the Star Social Firms quality mark. He says:

“Star Social Firm status is a great recognition of our team’s commitment and talent. We are proud to demonstrate that you can run a commercially sound business while staying true to your ethical visions and helping disadvantaged people fulfil their potential in a good job.”

Sally Reynolds, Chief Executive of Social Firms UK hopes to see Pluss enjoying increased income and publicity as a result of becoming a Star Social Firm; thus enabling it to provide even more great employment. She says:

“We are delighted that Pluss has been awarded the Star Social Firm quality mark. We hope it will help potential customers understand that by buying a product from a Star Social Firm like Pluss they are increasing employment opportunities for people who face extensive difficulties. The whole concept of Star Social Firms enables people and businesses to use their consumer power to make purchasing decisions that have a positive impact on society.”

Pluss will be awarded their Star award at a ceremony in Tavistock Place, London on Tuesday 5th February 2008 by Nigel Kershaw, Chair of the Big Issue and Social Enterprise Ambassador.

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Notes to Editors

About Pluss

Already identified as one of the best of its kind by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, Pluss has supported over 2,000 people in to work and training over the last year and has an annual turnover of £20 million. It is the largest Social Firm in the UK.

Pluss also runs two commercial businesses across 30 sites where they directly employ 500 people, 260 of whom have a disability. The ‘Equipping’ business provides mobility equipment to over 200,000 elderly and disabled people across the South West and the ‘Manufacturing’ side has contracts with companies such as BT and Vi-Spring.

The company’s vision is to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled and empowered to reach their goals. Pluss is owned by Plymouth City, Devon County, Somerset County and Torbay Councils, and is a company limited by guarantee that does not distribute profits.

Visit www.pluss.org.uk

For more information and case studies on Pluss please contact

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About Social Firms UK

Social Firms UK is the registered national charity dedicated to supporting the development of Social Firms. Social Firms UK is launching the Star Social Firm quality mark for first-class businesses which provide quality employment for severely disadvantaged people. Visit www.socialfirmsuk.co.uk