

PRESS RELEASE

Friday 21st December 2007

Bagging work opportunities for people with disabilities

Hundreds and hundreds of completely recycled bags were handed out for free to Plymouth people in the city centre last night during late night shopping.

The bags were produced by adults with a learning disability at Pluss, who teamed up with Plymouth City Council's recycling team to give away the recycled bags and encourage the public to minimise waste over the Christmas period.

Pluss, the largest Social Firm in the UK, came up with the idea of producing a recycled shopping bag, geared to replacing plastic carrier bags, following the national press coverage of the Modbury town ban on carrier bags.

They approached Plymouth City Council's recycling team who embraced the idea as it met all their recycling criteria with the added benefit of supporting people with disabilities in training and employment.

"Everything about the bags is recycled and produced here by adults with a learning disability" explains Rod Burnett, Development Manager at Pluss. "The sewing machines used have been sourced from surplus stock within local manufacturing companies and the fabric and thread has been kindly donated by Vi-Spring Ltd in Plymouth.

The stencil for the 'Recycle Plymouth' logo was artfully crafted from the plastic top of a ham pack reducing the cost of print to just 3p per bag. This also means we don't need to transport the bag to the printers decreasing its carbon footprint even further. In reality the only part of this bag which has not been recycled is the ink that prints the logo."

It is through manufacturing products such as this that Pluss offers an invaluable training service to disabled people, equipping them with the skills and confidence to move forward into work.

Councillor Michael Leaves, Cabinet Member for Environmental Regulation and Streetscene said: "This is a great idea and I look forward to seeing people carrying their shopping around Plymouth.

"Not only is this good for the environment, but it helps people with learning disabilities develop work skills."

For more information please contact Geraldine Scott-Smith, Marketing Manager on 01752 306657 or Geraldine.scott-smith@pluss.org.uk

Notes for editors:

Plymouth City Council's Recycling Roadshow Bus and Pluss trainees were outside the Body Shop on Armada Way at late night shopping on Thursday 20th December.

Pluss provides employment support and training to over 2,000 people with disabilities in Devon and Somerset (over 700 in Plymouth alone). It offers a one-stop-shop on disability issues for employers and is the largest provider of disability employment services in South West England. Pluss also provides direct employment for over 260 disabled people in its mobility equipment and manufacturing businesses.

Within this, Pluss 'Dragon Products' provides work training to over 110 people with learning disabilities. The aim is to equip people with the skills, confidence and independence needed to go to work. Pluss Dragon offers work training in its recycling unit and in production of accessories such as cards, bags and household furnishings.

Pluss is a Local Authority Controlled Company owned by Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council, Torbay Council and Somerset Council.

Contact details:

Freephone 0800 91 777 92 or email: working@pluss.org.uk

You can also visit our website at www.pluss.org.uk