

PRESS RELEASE

Monday 17th December 2007

Recycled bags in Plymouth brings work opportunities for people with disabilities

A Plymouth organisation that provides work skills training for people with learning disabilities has teamed up with Plymouth City Council to produce material recycled bags which will be handed out to the general public at late-night shopping on Thursday.

Pluss and Plymouth City Council will be in the city centre giving away the recycled bags and offering advice on the importance of recycling and waste minimisation 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 will be outside the Body Shop on Armada Way between 5pm – 7pm on Thursday 20th December.

They will be handing out the re-usable bags and on hand to answer any questions the public may have about recycling and waste minimisation. They will also be handing out leaflets to remind the public of collections over the Christmas period.

Weather permitting a Pluss bagpiper may also serenade the crew.

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.

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.

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