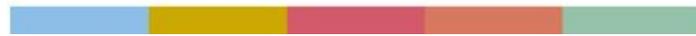




NOW



NOW Group SROI Evaluation 2017-18

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1. Executive Summary

This report presents a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of the services delivered by the NOW Group from April 2017 – March 2018.

NOW provide a range of services that support people with learning difficulties and autism to realise their full potential and change their lives for the better for example through providing support to transfer to a post school life, sourcing and providing suitable training courses and gaining voluntary, part-time or full-time paid work. A family service is also offered to support new and expectant parents with a learning difficulty or autism

“The people we support have barriers to employment and learning, including all levels of learning difficulty and learning disability, autism, and Autistic Spectrum Condition. They help us shape our work to meet their needs and they keep us focused on making a difference.”

NOW Group website

In 2007, NOW Group were one of the first organisations in Northern Ireland to use the Social Return on Investment (SROI) model to measure the impact of their work across all of their stakeholder groups. The subsequent years has seen the organisation significantly expand its service portfolio across learning disability and autism, impacting on a much wider and diverse stakeholder base and delivering increasing social return on investment for funders.

This trend has continued in 2017/18, for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 with **the £1,346,696 invested in the period generating £16,404,642 of social value**. The study’s results were extrapolated over a five-year period, in line with SROI standard methodology. This produced a ratio of social return of **£12 for every £1** invested in the service which is broken down by the various stakeholders in Figure 1.

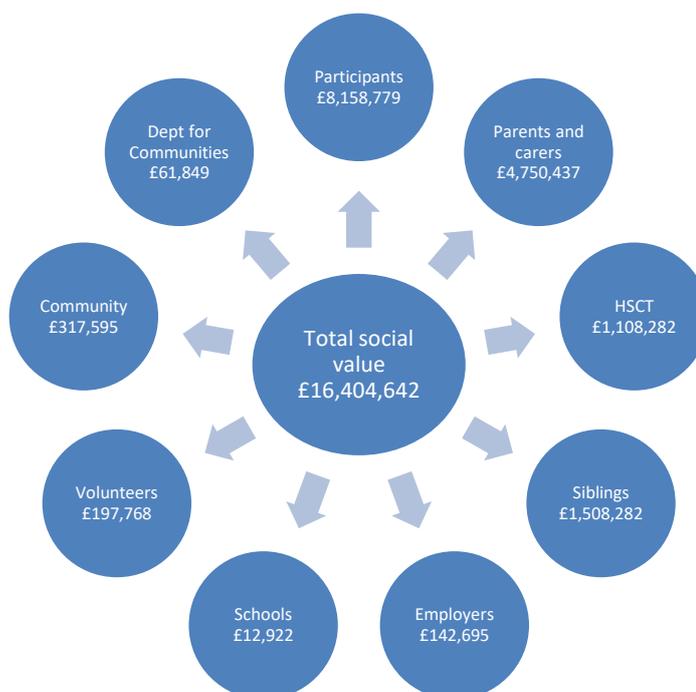


Figure 1 NOW Group stakeholders' social value

This ratio represents an increase from **£10 for every £1** invested in the service in 2016/17 and enhances the evidence base underpinning the impact of NOW's services for their stakeholders. This increased return can be attributed to the key outcomes from the service experienced by stakeholders which are summarised below.

Stakeholder	Proposed impact
Participants	Improvements in: qualifications achieved, enhanced career opportunities, engagement with others, personal independence, self-esteem, income, health and wellbeing, loneliness and communication skills
Parents/Carers	Reduction of stress and anxiety, increased support at home, more free time and family cohesion
Siblings	Improvements in health and wellbeing through greater access to parents/carers and greater family cohesion
HSCT	Reduction in day care costs and time savings for social workers through support offered by NOW staff
Employers	Increased resources, support for disability employment issues and development of disability awareness in the workplace
Community	Access to facilities, opportunities for employability and increased awareness of disability issues (and equality) and longer terms benefits derived from the production of health service staff
Schools	Benefits of extracurricular activities provided by NOW such as careers advice, support for parents during the transition process, money management, career planning courses and supported work experience
Volunteers	Increased self-confidence, communication and employability skills
Department for Communities	Reduction in social security benefit payments
Private Sector & General Public	Private sector organisations and general public are more aware of social enterprises and add to their supply chains

Table 1 Stakeholder outcomes

A number of case study video links are included throughout this report to showcase the impact of the NOW services.

2. Introduction

NOW Group is a social enterprise that supports people with learning difficulties and autism into sustainable jobs. It is the parent organisation of two social enterprise businesses – Loaf Catering and Gauge NI, a research and evaluation business – the profits of both go back into the work of NOW.

The NOW Group services reviewed for this study were:

- Employment and training
- Transition services
- Gaining Independent NOW (GIN)
- Family service
- Volunteering
- Fandom
- Kidnap Wednesday
- Community activities
- JAM (Just a Minute)

NOW's services are delivered across a number of sites, one of these is The Hive which is located in the heart of Belfast City Centre and from early 2018 became the organisation's headquarters. NOW's participant groups continue to meet here, and the venue is also made available to other community groups and organisations for no charge. Funders of the above services are the Department for the Economy, Department for Communities, the European Social Fund, the Big Lottery Fund, North Down and Ards Borough Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Hazelwood College, Thornfield and Hillcroft School Partnership and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The people that NOW support have barriers to employment and learning, including all levels of learning difficulty and learning disability, autism and autistic spectrum condition. They help the organisation plan and shape their work to meet their needs and keep NOW focused on making a real difference to the lives of those who use their services. User involvement in service design and delivery has facilitated the development of pathways from volunteering through to training and employment and on-going supports to ensure such impacts can be sustained.

“We are passionate about supporting people with learning difficulties and autism into jobs with a future. We do this by offering a range of services that support people at whatever stage they are - whether that is just leaving school or college, unemployed, returning to work or graduates. We also offer a family service for new or expectant parents with a learning difficulty or autism and social groups.”

NOW Group website

2.1 Social value

The social change that occurs as a result of NOW Group's services for all stakeholders and the value attributed to this change applied through robust financial proxies is the focus of this study. Project evaluations will often focus on the achievement of objectives and the quality of delivery. SROI evaluations, in addition to assessing how a project is delivered and the effectiveness of its key processes, focus on the outcomes and impact to participants and stakeholders. Such impact and consequences can have a profound effect on the life of participants and their family and friends and are identified through changes in stakeholder behaviours, lifestyles and activities. The changes that have been identified and evidenced in this evaluation include:

- Participants gaining qualifications which help to improve career opportunities.
- Participants engaging more with peer groups and reducing the time they would spend on their own.
- Participants gaining paid employment and making a financial contribution to the local economy.
- Increasing levels of self-esteem and personal confidence among participants.
- Increasing family cohesion as families spend more time together, are happier and participants can have discussions with siblings on topics they now have in common with them such as employment and learning.
- Parents and next of kin have increasing levels of confidence in their son or daughters present and future lives with a resultant positive impact on their health and wellbeing.
- Siblings benefiting from the additional time available from parents during respite.
- Employers developing a greater understanding of responsibilities and support required for staff and customers with disabilities.
- Volunteers developing personal and employability skills as a result of supporting and working with NOW participants.
- Support and resources provided to health and education professionals helping to free time for those most in need.
- Participants becoming 'peer models' in local communities and encouraging others to join and understand NOW services.
- Hiring of NOW facilities provides support to community groups and not for profit organisations during challenging economic times.
- Private sector organisations becoming more aware of and informed about social enterprises and including such enterprises in their supply chain.
- The general public are more aware and have a greater understanding of disability and diversity issues which is enhanced by the on-going increase in the NOW Group media reach which in 2017/18 was estimated at 14,083,843.

2.2 Methodology

The methodology deployed for this study included a desk top analysis of all 2017/18 NOW Group service data, focus group discussions with service users and organisational ambassadors, telephone interviews with a sample of employers and parents in addition to regular engagement with NOW staff.

3. NOW Group Services

3.1 Employment Service

Having a job is a key feature of social inclusion. It provides not only financial reward but many other positive gains including social networks, status, increased confidence and a structured and meaningful lifestyle. The labour market has however traditionally marginalised and excluded people with disabilities.

NOW provides assistance and support to participants seeking to find or keep employment or voluntary work. People with disabilities can face difficulties with their confidence levels and have limited practical experience as they seek employment. Employers may also not fully understand the potential of applicants or the reasonable adjustments required to help the employee contribute to their maximum ability. Once in employment the staff member and employers may need assistance to ensure the employee's potential is enabled to flourish and to manage issues that can arise as the employee faces the day to day requirements of their role.

In 2017/18 the employment service operated across four geographical council areas; Belfast, Ards & North Down, Antrim & Newtownabbey and Mid & East Antrim. Within these respective geographic areas, the Workforce III programme was delivered, which is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014 – 2020, the Department for Economy and the Department for Communities. In addition to this funding was also provided through a match funding initiative through the Belfast Trust and local borough councils with Ards & North Down and Antrim & Newtownabbey match funding Workforce III programme in their respective areas.

Another innovative NOW employment programme, Workable NI is also administered and funded by the Department for Communities. It is a flexible programme which assists people with disabilities to return to work or remain in their current job of at least 10 hours per week or more. 2017/18 was an extremely successful year for the Employment Team; **successfully assisting 60 participants into paid employment, supporting 86 employees sustain employment through the Workable NI programme and securing 25 voluntary job positions, along with 106 work placement opportunities in a variety of occupational areas.**

NOW's employment team offer a job club service across the four geographical council areas, which focus specifically on developing employability skills and sourcing opportunities. The job club model is hugely successful within the employment team, with 74% of jobs coming directly from respective job clubs. The employment team also ran four skills group, which focus on increasing and promoting independence amongst participants, along with exploring and securing voluntary and work placement opportunities.

A summary of the key outputs of the employment service is offered in Table 2.

Programme	2017/18 Outputs
Workforce 111	121 new referrals
Workforce 111	175 participants supported
Workable NI	48 new referrals
Workable NI	86 employees supported
All	35 full time jobs secured
All	25 part time jobs secured
All	106 work experience positions achieved
All	25 voluntary positions achieved

Table 2: 2017/18 Employment Outputs

A video case study on the employment service featuring participant Andrew Howell who NOW helped to secure a job at a Eurospar can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOZrKwNW3Ws>



3.2 Training Service

NOW Group's training service assists people with learning difficulties and autism tackle the barriers they face when looking for paid employment through the provision of innovative training courses. Participants can benefit from both accredited and non-accredited courses delivered in a manner that suits the learning needs, styles and abilities of all respective participants. In 2017/18 the training team added further courses to enhance employment opportunities for participants, tailoring training to local labour market trends. A full list of training courses is outlined below:

- Catering training - provides basic training and nationally recognised qualifications to enable individuals to get jobs in the catering industry.
- Retail academy – delivered in partnership with NI Hospice, 6 participants completed an OCN Level 1 in Retail. 12-week long training course incorporated with a 6-week work placement opportunity with NI Hospice, developing job-required skills and building confidence and motivation.
- Money management - "Managing a personal budget" provides individuals with the experience and skills required to manage their bank account, understand personal finances and budgeting.

- Route training – this enables individuals to practice and gain the skills required for travelling independently in a safe environment i.e. from home to NOW Group offices.
- Pre-employment skills - introduces the world of work and helps participants understand their rights in employment and what is expected of them as employees.
- Social Enterprise Programme – 12-week training course which entailed the creation of a project that can be sold, generate income.
- Essential skills in literacy and ICT, which encourages participants to engage in qualification-based study in subjects often sought as a basic requirement by employers.

Table 3 illustrates the 2017/18 training outputs.

Service	2017/18 Outputs
Training	Catering students achieved 26 catering qualifications including NVQs at Level 1 in Food Preparation & Cooking and Food &
Training	14 people attained Essential Skills Literacy qualifications
Training	322 qualifications were achieved by 175 participants

Table 3: 2017/18 Training Outputs

3.3 Transition Service

The Transition Service is an individual and innovative service that supports students with different levels of learning abilities in their final years of school to explore future options and gain independence through training, mentoring and sampling work placements. The aim is to make the move to further education, training or employment as smooth as possible by working with individuals, parents and key professionals to plan a pathway through the often daunting move from school into the world of further education, training or employment. NOW's Transition Service also provides support and guidance for parents and carers delivering informal information sessions on the transition process, assistance with applying to further education colleges and sourcing expert advice on benefits or other relevant topics.

Transition II is a programme for 18-30-year olds who have a learning disability and are not yet work ready. 19 participants are on the service which operates five days a week with two dedicated support staff. The aim of the programme is to increase opportunities for participants to gain the skills, confidence and training to transition into employment or training services. In addition, the service promotes independent living and social skills which incorporate a variety of activities delivered by NOW staff and external agencies including route training, money and time management, healthy lifestyle, communication skills, music and drama workshops, volunteering and preparation for work.

In 2017-18 the participants raised £1,827.50 for local charities including Children in Need, NI Hospice, Macmillan Cancer Support and NI Children's Hospice. They have done this through a range of fundraising activities including a Christmas fair, a sponsored pyjama day, tea and coffee mornings and Carol singing. Four participants carried out a week's work experience in a local gym and five participants gained Essential skills – entry Level 1 qualification. Transition II participants were

awarded certificates for successfully completing "The Reading Challenge" campaign by Libraries N.I. to encourage book reading. Internal evaluations of the service in 2017/18 found a 100% satisfaction rating from parents/carers of participants in Transition II.

A video case study on the Transition service can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IY01Jekhl4o>



"My son is offered a range of experiences and skills training ideally suited to and much needed by him. NOW have helped him build his confidence socially and in attempting things he has never attempted and have helped bring his abilities out." **Parent of Transition II participant**

"NOW have helped my son in many different ways he is more willing to accept change, sits and chats with me about everyday activities, NOW have given him more confidence." **Parent of Transition II participant**

3.4 Family Service

The Family Service programme provides one to one and group-based support to participants with mild to moderate learning difficulties, who are an expectant parent or a parent with a child under 5 years old, live in the Greater Belfast area attend either the Royal Jubilee or Mater maternity units.

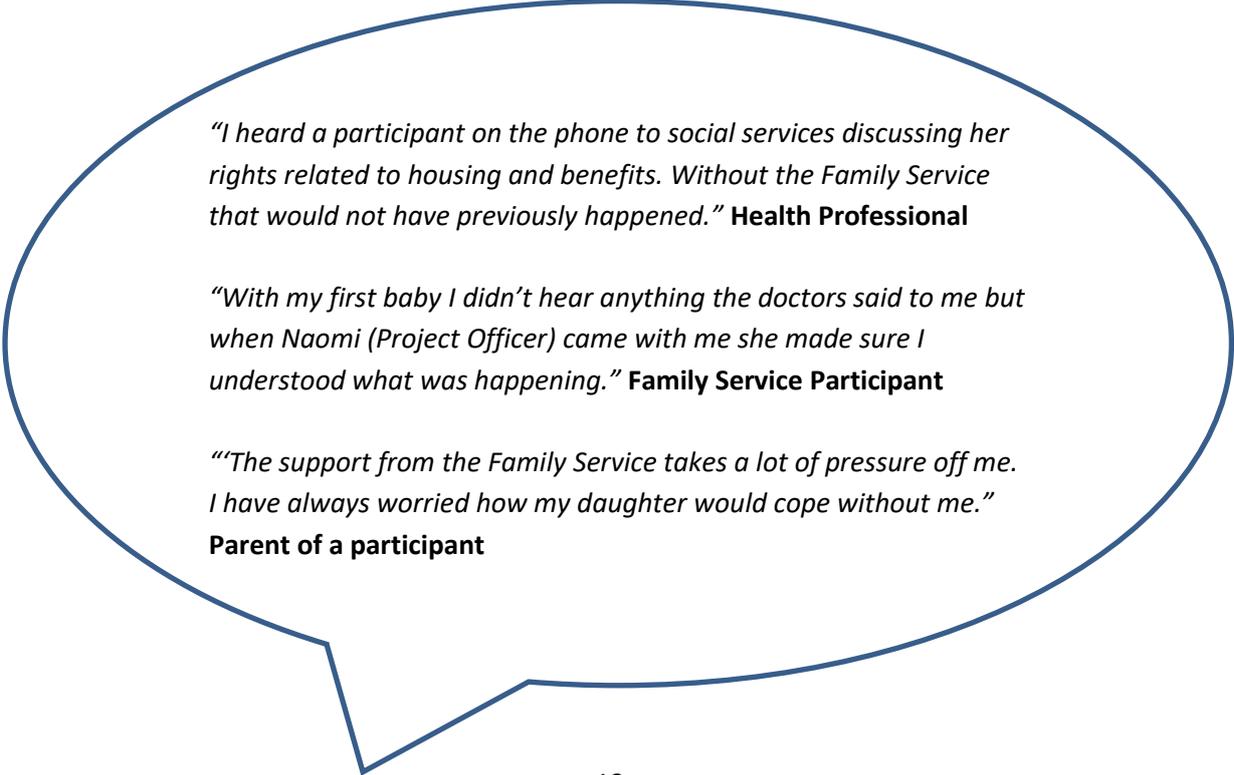
One to one practical support includes home visits and meetings when the parent is requiring help and advice, accompaniment to medical appointments and help to signpost other services. The group

sessions, normally held at The Hive on the Grosvenor Road in Belfast, include a range of personal development and parent related topics helping to support the parent with practical guidance and the opportunity to interact with others in a similar situation.

The programme also utilises the services of placement staff, for example student nurses, and guest speakers to help maximise the participants understanding of a range of relevant topics and opinions. The programme is unique as it focuses on support to parents (primarily mothers) with a learning difficulty, seeking to address a gap in existing services, develop an effective service delivery model and provide a 'best practice model' to potentially service a greater number of parents in future years.

The programme ultimately seeks to decrease the numbers of health service 'crisis interventions' for participants, develop parent's confidence to manage during the pre and post-natal stages, provide a complementary and 'added value' support to health workers and offers support to involved parents, grandparents and carers of participants in the form of respite and mentoring to participants.

In 2017-18 the Family Service delivered a wide range of support and activities to 45 participants. The service received referrals from a range of sources including social work, health visiting and maternity services. We have continued to provide one to one support to participants, visiting them in their homes, completing 70 home visits per month. The service has supported participants to attend activities in their local Sure Start, receive support from Parenting NI, get benefits advice for Employers for Childcare and other key organisations. Three families receiving support from the service have had their children successfully de-registered from Child Protection. The service also provided opportunities for peer to peer support with participants, holding weekly group meet ups at The Hive and establishing a craft club for parents in 2017/18. Participants have been involved in organising a family dinner event at Loaf Cafe Bakery, day trips to Portrush and the Ulster museum and a Christmas Party and Halloween Party.



"I heard a participant on the phone to social services discussing her rights related to housing and benefits. Without the Family Service that would not have previously happened." **Health Professional**

"With my first baby I didn't hear anything the doctors said to me but when Naomi (Project Officer) came with me she made sure I understood what was happening." **Family Service Participant**

"The support from the Family Service takes a lot of pressure off me. I have always worried how my daughter would cope without me."
Parent of a participant

A video case study about the Family Service featuring participant Samantha Rice and her son Leo can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edfYKSWWneo>



3.5 Gain Independence NOW (G.I.N)

NOW Group was commissioned by Belfast Health & Social Care Trust to develop a short-term project which would enhance and create additional capacity and independence for a group of adults with learning difficulties. The project, named Gaining Independence NOW (GIN), began in April 2017. The focus of Gaining Independence NOW (GIN) was to increase independence and practical living skills for participants. Support and training included practical life skills which supported participants in terms of confidence and motivation and their ability to deal with everyday situations. GIN was delivered across a number of sites in Belfast, including The Hive and Loaf Cafe Bakery and the outputs were:

- 30 skills Development sessions delivered
- 111 sessions delivered overall
- 224 hours of direct support provided
- 25 accredited qualifications achieved
- 4 people continue to volunteer with other NOW services
- 7 people have joined Kidnap Wednesday (NOW Social Group)

During the project a new 'Cinema Club' was formed to facilitate participants to attend the cinema on Tuesdays. This has been an important outcome of GIN project and keeps participants connected and provides an opportunity to tackle social isolation.



“Meeting new people has been great and we have made good friends.”

GIN Participant

“For me it’s about getting grades as well as having fun. I am never able to learn through one way that they do in school. Here we have been able to learn in so many different ways.” **GIN Participant**

“My attitude has changed. I’m much more positive now about things. I also do a bit more walking.” **GIN Participant**

“Before this course started I wasn’t doing anything. There were times I couldn’t even get out of bed, so this has helped me get focused again.”

GIN Participant

“We are learning how to travel on the bus. I came down last week by myself. I also went into the town on the bus which was the first time I have ever done that.” **GIN Participant**

3.6 Fandom

Fandom is a volunteer led social forum for young adults who are socially isolated and have a high functioning form of autism or Asperger’s. Membership has stayed at its 20 member capacity this year with a steady flow of new participants joining when there is a vacancy. The group has continued to carry out activities based around their interests in comics, videogames and movies. These activities have helped to forge their friendships with each other and improve teamwork skills when doing group-based games, including use of a new range of Nintendo Switch consoles. They have organised a number of themed nights which allow members of the group to lead an evening at Fandom based on their own interests. Themes so far have included a quiz night, movie night, arts

night and 'Just Dance' game night. A member of Fandom has also started a new creative writing group, Tales of Creativity, during 2017/18 which is held once a month in The Hive.

3.7 Kidnap Wednesday

Kidnap Wednesday meets weekly in the Black Box in Belfast and provides an opportunity for adults with learning difficulties to make new friends and engage in the community by taking part in events and volunteering. This year the group welcomed seven new members and four new volunteers. A range of enjoyable events were held at the Black Box for participants including cooking demonstrations, yoga sessions, darts competitions and picnics. The group volunteered at events including the Belfast City Marathon and knitted hats for premature babies at Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital. They also had the opportunity to take part in a number of day trips throughout the year including attending the Balmoral Show and played a few rounds of Crazy Golf.

3.8 Volunteering

NOW provides participants and external stakeholders an opportunity to gain new personal and employability related experience through a range of volunteering options. These include opportunities for external individuals supporting initiatives such as Fandom and Kidnap Wednesday, internal opportunities for course participants to volunteer on NOW activities and students aiming for a career in the health profession who benefit from attending participant sessions, learning from observation and receiving feedback and coaching from experienced NOW personnel.

The Volunteer Service supports NOW Group in all areas of its work, continually striving to develop and embed a culture of volunteering in the organisation and very much value the work and input of all volunteers. NOW Group provided placements for students undertaking qualifications in Psychology, Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Marketing through Queens University, University of Ulster and Belfast Metropolitan College. These roles have been mutually beneficial, and the relationships continue to grow. Continued success with our partnerships with European Voluntary Service (EVS), Intern Europe and Erasmus + saw NOW Group host volunteers from a range of European countries. Overall in 2017/18 the volunteering outputs were

- 64 volunteers took part in a range of roles throughout the last financial year, donating a total of 2,142 hours
- 17 university and school placements, donating a total of 1243 hours
- 4 international placements, donating a total of 1349 hours

3.9 Ambassadors

2017-2018 was the second year of the Ambassadors scheme. The Ambassadors are a group of NOW Group participants who represent the organisation at events, in promotional campaigns and provide feedback about services.

This year the organisation widened the pool of Ambassadors and recruited participants from across all NOW's services. 14 Ambassadors were appointed for one year, each with their own skills and knowledge to actively promote NOW and support their activities. Ambassadors took part in a range

of activities including bi-monthly meetings, focus groups, speaking at employer engagement events, PR photo shoots and career fairs.

3.10 JAM Card

The JAM Card, which was created by NOW Group participants in 2012, has experienced an exciting year of growth and development. The card which says 'Just a minute' on one side and 'Please be patient I have a learning difficulty on the other' allows people to ask for a minute of patience in any situation they need it including in shops, restaurants and public transport.

NOW Group recognised the potential to reach more people and increase the functionality of the JAM Card by developing the card into an app. In 2015 NOW took part in the Techies in Residence programme through Building Change Trust and were paired with a digital expert to create an app. The potential was clear and resulted in NOW securing £100,000 of funding from Big Lottery and Nominet Trust for the period September 2016 to March 2017 which precipitated a significant growth in usage with 7000 cards distributed and 700 downloads of the App within this timeline.

An independent evaluation for the JAM Card project was completed in May 2017 and cited numerous examples which captured the impact of the JAM Card in breaking down the communication barriers that people with learning disabilities face. People reported positive change in terms of feeling more 'confident', 'relaxed' and 'empowered' when using the JAM Card. There has been equally positive feedback in terms of how service providers have responded to the JAM Card when produced by users, with 91% of people with learning disabilities rating them as being 'helpful' or 'very helpful'. Those who have used the card felt that it has made things easier for them when accessing services.

Significant momentum has built within the JAM Card project in a short period of time. 2017/18 has witnessed further significant growth in usage with currently 8672 cards and 1461 app downloads activated across all of the council areas in Northern Ireland (See Figure 2). The range of user conditions is testament to its impact with 21 different conditions listed by users with learning difficulties, Asperger's, autism, ADHD and Down Syndrome the most prominent. In November 2017 NOW introduced training for businesses to become JAM Card Friendly. Training is available as an online e-learning course or a face to face workshop and ensures that staff understand what the JAM Card is and how to provide excellent customer service to users. Over 50 businesses across Northern Ireland already recognise the JAM Card and 3470 individuals have received training on it.

A video case study on the JAM Card can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h06uqAWu40w>



Council Location	% of card users
Belfast	23%
North Down & Ards	8%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	4%
Antrim & Newtownabbey	8%
Newry Mourne & Down	6%
Mid & East Antrim	11%
Mid Ulster	2%
Derry & Strabane	4%
CGGBC	6%
ABC	12%
Fermanagh & Omagh	5%
Rest of UK	11%

Figure 2: Council location of JAM Card Users

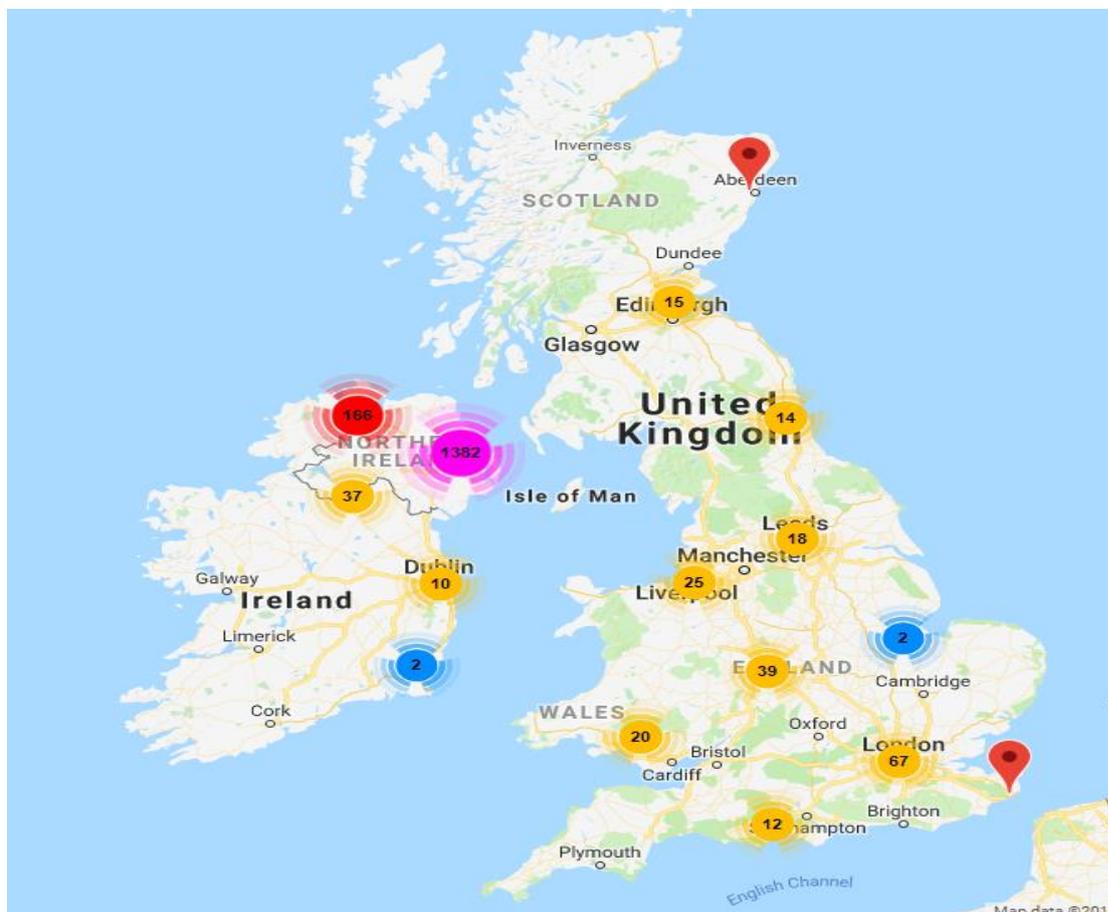


Figure 3: Location of App Users across the UK & Ireland

3.11 Loaf Catering, Cafes & Pottery

Loaf Catering is a social enterprise delivering outside catering across Belfast - from meetings to larger special occasions. It also operates 2 cafes: Loaf Cafe Bakery, located beside the Royal Victoria Hospital on Belfast's Grosvenor Road and The Bobbin Cafe at Belfast City Hall. Loaf is proud of its contribution to the overall NOW ethos by providing reinvestment to NOW services, work

opportunities for participants and the community and raising awareness of social enterprise and learning disability to engaged employers and visiting customers.

“I booked outside catering with Loaf for a family event. The food was a great hit as the combination of options on the menu appealed to both children and adults. Food was delivered on time, freshly made and very tasty. Great food with a great concept. Thank you to the team for the excellent food and service.” **Loaf Catering customer**

“Had lunch with my friend here today & absolutely loved it. Have wanted to try Loaf for ages as the concept is fantastic, a social enterprise empowering people with learning difficulties and autism, and it did not disappoint. The decor is modern & cool, the staff were so friendly and the food... I had a gorgeous, fresh toasty and a massive sausage roll, and the price was super reasonable. There was just a lovely, welcoming, inclusive atmosphere and I fully intend to recommend and return when I can. Great job and please say thanks to the hard-working guys in the kitchen.” **Loaf Café Bakery customer**

See further review of Loaf at:

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186470-d8364424-r578240064-Loaf_Catering_and_Cafes-Belfast_Northern_Ireland.html#

4. SROI Study

The following section provides a comprehensive insight into the principles, stages and materiality concepts associated with SROI.

Principles of SROI

SROI is an approach to understanding and managing the value of the social, economic and environmental outcomes created by an activity or an organisation. It is based on a set of principles that are applied within a framework.

SROI seeks to include the values of people that are often excluded from markets in the same terms as used in markets, that is, money, to give people a voice in resource allocation decisions. SROI is a framework to structure thinking and understanding. It's a story not a number. The story should show how you understand the value created, manage it and can prove it. SROI is based on the following seven principles:

Principle	Details
1. Involve stakeholders	Understand the way in which the organisation creates change through a dialogue with stakeholders
2. Understand what changes	Acknowledge and articulate all the values, objectives and stakeholders of the organisation before agreeing which aspects of the organisation are to be included in the scope; and determine what must be included in the account in order that stakeholders can make reasonable decisions
3. Value what matters	Use financial proxies for indicators to include the values of those excluded from markets in same terms as used in markets
4. Only include what is material	Articulate clearly how activities create change and evaluate this through the evidence gathered
5. Do not over-claim	Make comparisons of performance and impact using appropriate benchmarks, targets and external standards.
6. Be transparent	Demonstrate the basis on which the findings may be considered accurate and honest and that they will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders
7. Verify the result	Ensure appropriate independent verification of the account

Table 4: Principles of SROI

Stages of SROI

Carrying out an SROI analysis involves six stages:

Stage	Details
1. Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders	It is important to have clear boundaries about what your SROI analysis will cover, who will be involved in the process, and how.
2. Mapping outcomes.	Through engaging with your stakeholders, you will develop an impact map, or theory of change, which shows the relationship between inputs, outputs, and outcomes
3. Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value	This stage involves finding data to show whether outcomes have happened and then valuing them
4. Establishing impact	Having collected evidence on outcomes and monetised them, those aspects of change that would have happened anyway or are a result of other factors are eliminated from consideration
5. Calculating the SROI	This stage involves adding up all the benefits, subtracting any negatives, and comparing the result to the investment. This is also where the sensitivity of the results can be tested.
6. Reporting, using, and embedding	Easily forgotten, this vital last step involves sharing findings with stakeholders and responding to them, embedding good outcomes processes, and verifying the report

Table 5: Stages of SROI

Materiality

In evaluating the social impact of the selected services, the value being saved or created can be viewed in terms of how narrow these are to selected services. Some impacts will be very narrow and likely to confer tangible savings for an organisation over a short timeframe whilst others will be far less immediate, as illustrated opposite.

4.1 Methodology and approach

Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis assigns a monetary value to the social and environmental benefit that has been created by an organisation by identifying indicators of value which can be allocated a financial proxy. Comparing this value to the investment required to achieve that impact produces an SROI ratio. It takes standard financial measures of economic return a step further by capturing social as well as financial value.

A key principle in SROI is 'Involve Stakeholders' to assess if and how they are affected by the intervention or service. The stakeholders identified and the proposed impact for them is then tested throughout the research and stakeholder engagement phases. Following the stages of the SROI process, the identified outcomes are evidenced through research and data collection to shape the SROI Impact Map.

This SROI analysis has been a collaborative effort between the Gauge NI evaluation consultant, the staff working at NOW and identified stakeholders including participants, parents, volunteers and employers. The project plan adopted to complete the agreed evaluative Social Return on Investment report is detailed in Table 6.

Stage	Summary of Approach
Project initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project initiation meeting with NOW Group ▪ Agree scope, identify stakeholders and outline activities
Desk Review and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme of consultation agreed ▪ Review of the strategic context ▪ Stakeholder Analysis ▪ Collation and organisation of data, ▪ Developed Stakeholder Map and Evaluation Framework for discussion
Stakeholder Consultation & Mapping Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic stakeholder consultations ▪ Collate data from project ▪ Completion of service user focus groups, parent phone interviews, health professional 1 to 1s by telephone, employer interviews and meetings/email communication with volunteers ▪ Completion of quotes and comments
Data Analysis and SROI Calculation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of findings ▪ SROI Calculation ▪ Sensitivity analysis
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Production of draft report ▪ Production of final report.

Table 6: Evaluation Framework

4.2 Scope of the study

This SROI study for NOW Group is retrospective, covering a study period of April 2017 to March 2018 with results extrapolated over a five year period. The following Stakeholder Map was produced in consultation and in agreement with the NOW management and project staff. The most significant stakeholder group, which will account for the most social value generated, is the participant group.

Stakeholder	Proposed impact	Type of engagement
Participants	Increased educational attainment Employment and work experience gained Increased disposable income Improved personal functioning through additional 'soft skills' Independence for daily tasks Reduced isolation and loneliness Transfer to post school learning activities	Participant assessments (Outcome Star) Focus groups Project staff Parents Volunteers Video testimonies
Parents & Carers	Additional free time/respite Reduced anxiety Additional help at home Improved quality of life Family cohesion	Telephone interviews Case studies
Employers	Access to new staff resources Improved awareness of learning disabilities Increase in employment for people with learning disabilities Understanding and compliance with disability best practice	1 to 1 telephone Interviews
Community	Increased awareness of disability issues and services at NOW Opportunities for volunteering at NOW Availability of facilities to hold meetings and progress community business Peer 'best practice' models in communities and awareness of other communities	NOW statistics and information Social media research Interviews with NOW staff Focus groups and 1 to 1s with participants
Schools	Benefits of extracurricular activities provided by NOW such as careers advice, support for parents during the transition process, money management, career planning courses and supported work experience. Teachers learning new skills re employability	Secondary data and discussions with NOW staff
HSCT	Freeing daycare hours Time freed up for other tasks	Secondary data and discussions with NOW staff
Siblings	Increased wellbeing through greater engagement with parents	Telephone interviews with parents
Volunteers	Increased employability skills, confidence and communication skills	1 to 1 meetings and written answers to questions
Department for Communities	More participants finding paid employment resulting in lower job-related benefit payments	Statistical analysis provided by NOW

Table 7: NOW Group Stakeholders

4.3 Theory of Change

The work of NOW Group is primarily to see change in the lives of participants so this is where the main Theory of Change will be reflected and which provides a framework for evaluating social impact, by making explicit the relationships between activities and desired outcomes, and by describing the ‘chain of events’ that relates one outcome to another.¹ The Theory of Change is central to SROI, as it “tells the story” of how the organisation or programme of activity utilises its inputs to produce outputs which, in turn, create outcomes – and how stakeholders experience the changes these outcomes bring about.

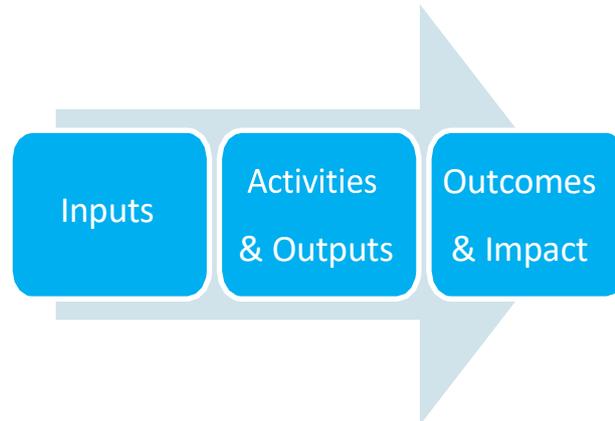


Figure 4: Theory of Change

This study presents the inputs, outputs and outcomes and the links between each, in a way that the overall theory of how NOW Group services creates change for each stakeholder is unveiled. Consultation and research with each stakeholder group through the study period helped to build an understanding of what changes were experienced, and how. Whilst all stakeholders experienced change, some were more significant than others.

It is evident from research and engagement with participants that many have been on a ‘journey’ across a range of NOW programmes. An example of this journey could be as follows:

1. Initial participation on a Transitions programme at school
2. Transfer to a training programme at NOW e.g. hospitality skills
3. Attends employability/ personal development related classes to improve readiness for work
4. Participates in a placement at The Bobbin gaining specific work experience
5. Gets support from a Job Coach to develop a CV based on qualifications and work experience
6. Gets support from an Employment Officer to apply for jobs and obtains an interview
7. Gets support from Employment Officer to prepare for the interview and is accompanied to the interview
8. Client obtains employment and is provided with ‘on the job’ support via Workable NI
9. Client continues to attend NOW through the Fandom group
10. Client volunteers with NOW supporting participants in a similar situation to point 1
11. Client becomes a NOW Ambassador
12. Potentially client achieves employment with NOW

¹ <http://www.socialimpactscotland.org.uk/understanding-social-impact/methods-and-tools/theory-of-change/>

Key questions relevant to the Theory of Change for NOW Group services are:

1. *Who* are you seeking to influence or benefit?

NOW Group seeks to benefit people with learning disabilities, autism and ASD.

2. *What* benefits are you seeking to achieve?

NOW Group provides a progression route from school to training and, for some, employment. It also seeks to provide pre and post-natal participants with support focused on motherhood and individual development.

3. *When* will you achieve them?

Over the period April 2017-March 2018.

4. *How* will you and others make this happen?

This is achieved through intensive 1:1-person centred support with beneficiaries and project staff engaging with schools, employers, social workers and parents in transitions, training and employment and family services.

5. *Where* and under what circumstances will you do your work?

This is completed in the context of a Health Service working to challenging budgets while seeking to support a growing number of participants with learning difficulties and ASD.

6. *Why* do you believe your theory will bear out?

As a result of the interventions the beneficiaries have improved access to employment, increased skills and significantly improved levels of personal functioning (softer skills) that further enhance employment prospects as well as improving their lives, and the lives of those close to them in a more general sense.

5. Impact

This section will examine the impact of NOW services illustrating the journey of change experienced by participants

5.1 Position of participants before engaging with NOW Group

Before engaging with NOW Group many participants find themselves isolated, lacking direction on careers and education, unable to maximise existing services such as schooling and further education and are reliant on parents and carers for support. Focus groups and questionnaires also helped to identify that many participants had life experiences which reinforced some of the perceived negativities in their lives. This included failure to get interviews for jobs, bullying, unsuitable educational methods and stressful social environments.

Research with parents and participants provided an insight into a typical day of many participants before joining NOW. They could spend much of their day at home in their room, completely focused on computer games and television. The participants had little or no access to support services and little in the way of hope and aspiration. Even when employment and job hunting was an aspiration a lack of skill, experience and personal confidence limited any efforts they may have made. Time spent with the 'outside world' may have involved situations 'outside a comfort zone' and further enforce the belief that isolation and withdrawal was the appropriate response.

For participants with more developed skills there can still be challenges related to job hunting and career development. Recent research by the PMI Health Group found that 37% of UK workers believed that disability is a barrier to career progression, while almost 1 in 5 respondents said that employers fail to make adequate provision for them or their colleagues needs. The report also identified that 45% of UK businesses are nervous about hiring an employee with a disability citing issues such as health and safety, concerns about the interview process and failing to meet the requirements of discrimination laws.²

5.2 Changes created through NOW Group services

The main changes experienced by participants can be summarised as follows:

- a) Gaining employment or making positive progress towards that goal
- b) Improvement in aspects of everyday life including engagement with peers and family
- c) Gaining qualifications
- d) Enhanced life and soft skills that contribute to everyday functioning

Issue	% change as a result of NOW Services
Isolation and loneliness	50%
Health and wellbeing	31%
Stress & anxiety	30%
Productive use of time	28%
Confidence & self-esteem	26%
Communication Skills	24%
Social skills/relationship	24%
Independence	18%

Table 8: Soft outcomes from service user engagement

The issues chosen for measurement are based on the projected outcomes for participants and correlate closely to the *Learning Disability Star* (Triangle Consulting, 2012). Health and wellbeing and

² <http://www.pmihealthgroup.co.uk/news/news-releases/disability-still-seen-as-a-barrier-to-career-progression1/#sthash.4Xv5YIN2.dpbs> <http://www.managers.org.uk/insights/news/2016/november/disability-discrimination-still-blocking-employee-career-progression>

loneliness and isolation were explored during this year’s evaluation based on results from the 2016/17 SROI evaluation.

The percentages indicate the journey made by the participant during their time on NOW initiatives. The information for analysis was derived from Outcome Star information, compiled by NOW staff and recorded at the beginning, middle and (for those applicable) the end of their NOW involvement. These were available for employment and Transition 2 participants. The evaluation consultant also conducted focus groups with participants from training and employment services. Interviews with parents of participants also helped to confirm the information being provided through participant engagement with stories of change and impact bringing further objective evidence of impact.

The ‘journey’ that participants make from entering NOW services to the current phase in their lives was evident. It was clear that significant numbers of participants placed a major responsibility for the positive changes in their lives on their experiences at NOW and the support from its staff. The SROI Impact Map does provide recognition to others such as parents for participant progress but the final discounted outcomes attribute much of the impact to the NOW interventions and the tailored support they use to maintain participant engagement and the ability of NOW to get participants to engage in the first place. An example of the ‘journey’ undertaken by a participant is articulated overleaf:



Figure 5: NOW Service User Journey

5.3 Factors contributing to the identified changes in participants

Discussions with each stakeholder group (including participants) helped to identify which elements of the NOW Group services they felt were most significant in contributing to the outcomes and impact. The following can be noted as most important factors to stakeholders effecting change:

- Staff work on a client centred basis focusing on the individual needs of participants.
- Group sizes help each participant to learn and create a comfortable environment for learning for those with learning disabilities.
- The learning environment is respectful of all.
- The availability of placement and volunteering opportunities within NOW and with client

friendly employers.

- Flexibility and variety of staff support ranging from coaching and training methods to 'in activity' support such as attending an interview with the client.

Discussions with a range of parents and other stakeholders clearly highlighted the value they placed on NOW services and the confidence they have in the staff's professional ability.

NOW continuously seeks to innovate and provide new and updated services to participants. It is conscious of the capability of participants from the outset to ensure appropriate learning methods however it seeks to maximise the potential of all participants. For example, the Fandom group shapes its activities around the mutual interests of attendees in subjects such as films and computer games. The GIN group encourages participants to travel, cook and socialise in a way that they may not previously have done.

Group dynamics, a willingness to support peers and the additional experiences and support from volunteers also helps to create a successful learning environment.

6. SROI Results

The following narrative is offered as a description of the social impact of NOW services to underpin the SROI figure in the Impact Map and to provide a rationale for the data and financial values used. A SROI ratio of **£12: £1** has been calculated based on the data provided and the financial proxies utilised in the Impact Map. This is based on a Total Present Value of **£16,406,156** against an investment (input) of **£1,346,696** in 2017/18.

6.1 Verifying the result

In order to help verify the calculation of social value a series of discount factors are applied.

6.2 Discounting

It is necessary to "discount" the values generated by each of the financial proxies in order to ensure a realistic and credible figure is utilised. The following methods are most commonly used with the SROI model:

Deadweight: An assessment of how much of each of the outcomes would have happened anyway, without the intervention of NOW services providing them i.e. that the participant user would have taken action to alter behaviour. For example, that a young person on leaving school is informed and motivated enough to take action such as enrolling in additional training, volunteer or access employment without the intervention of the programme.

Displacement: An assessment of how much of each of the outcomes displaced other activities or outcomes that would otherwise have occurred. For example, that the work of NOW displaced that of similar projects or activities such as that provided by other youth providers e.g. Youth Action, Further Education Colleges, Jobs and Benefits Offices or Job Assist Centres.

Attribution: An assessment of how much of each of the outcomes was generated by the contributions of other organisations or people e.g. referral sources, family members etc. For example, it is possible that parents can have an impact on the development of independent behaviours of the participants.

Drop-off: In future years, beyond the initial year of service delivery, the amount of each outcome that can be directly attributed to the project will be greatly reduced as it becomes more influenced by other factors and the original intervention impact diminishes. Coupled with the discount rate of 3.5% suggested by HM Treasury guidance this ensures credibility of forecasting social value.

6.3 Outputs

As a result of the investment NOW services generated social value for stakeholders as per Table 9 overleaf:

Group	Impact Value	% of Impact
Participants	£8,158,779	49.73%
Increased levels of income as a result of employment		
Improved life and career opportunities through additional qualifications obtained		
Increased levels of engagement with friends and family		
Improved ability to communicate in a range of situations		
Improved levels of self-care through more independent living		
Improved levels of self esteem		
Increased ability to manage stressful situations		
Reductions in levels of loneliness and isolation		
Improved health and wellbeing (linked to exercise and better eating habits)		
Transfer from school to a new learning environment		
Parents & Carers	£4,750,437	28.96%
Reduction in stress and anxiety as a result of improved wellbeing of a family member		
Increased levels of support (and self-management) by the child while at home (and respite provided when child is participating on NOW activities)		
Improvements in family cohesion		
Siblings	£1,508,082	9.19%
Increased personal time with parents/carers as participants take time at NOW and grow more independent leading to improved personal wellbeing, reduced anxiety and improved relationships.		
Community	£317,595	1.94%
Greater awareness of learning disability		
Access to facilities to host community events		
Access to volunteering opportunities		
Future health professionals accessing NOW mentoring/coaching and feedback		
Health and Social Care Trusts	£1,108,282	6.76%
Reduction in daycare costs		
Reduction in hours required from social workers as a result of NOW interventions with participants		
Employers	£142,695	0.87%
Improved capacity and production as a result of voluntary placements		
Improved organizational knowledge of disability legislation and best practice		
Changes in workplace attitudes to working with employees with learning difficulties		
Schools	£12,922	0.08%
Benefits of extracurricular activities provided by NOW		
Volunteers	£197,768	1.21%
Increased self confidence		
Improved communication in challenging situations		
Enhanced personal and technical skills for career development		
Department for Communities	£180,394	0.57%
Reduction in unemployment benefit budget		
Total	£16,406,156	100%

Table 9: SROI values per stakeholder

6.3 Participants

The main beneficiaries of NOW Group are those directly supported i.e. the participants. The research evidence for participant impact was derived from Outcome Star reviews, focus group questionnaires and feedback and reflective evidence from parents & NOW staff. The total valued outcome for participants is proposed at **£8,158,28**.

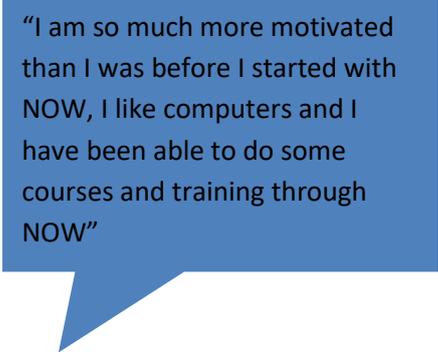
For many of the participants the goal of employment and progressing to employment is a primary motivator for engagement with NOW. Employment and being more employable provide many benefits for participants. Those who were successful in achieving and sustaining employment reported their enhanced status in the household as they now have similar daily experiences and challenges in their working lives as siblings and parents. Participants also reported increased disposable income, greater confidence that relationships with partners can be fulfilling and lasting as a result of the income and stability that comes with employment and an aspiration of having a place of their own to live in. The focus group included contributions from NOW Ambassadors who have become role models for others to achieve employment and lead full and independent lives.



“I have a routine every day, I love my job and it has made a massive difference to my life. I am independent and feel much more in control”



“I have been with NOW for over 10 years. I was a trainee in the Café at the start and I have also done some training in retail. The staff have supported me always and I now have a paid job.”



“I am so much more motivated than I was before I started with NOW, I like computers and I have been able to do some courses and training through NOW”



“I always dreamed of getting a job but never though it would happen, I have now been working for over one year and it is all due to the NOW staff, they are fantastic”

Participants were also positive about the social and recreational benefits of the NOW services. These included socialising with people of similar age and interests, having fun, feeling respected and confidently communicating with others. Participants are now also meeting independently of the group as friendships develop and confidence in meeting/travelling independently flourishes.

“I have met many people through NOW’s services and I now go out socially. I am out of the house more and have my own group of friends.”

“The JAM Card has made a big difference to me, I am much more confident using public transport and asking for things in shops. I couldn’t have done this before.”

“Meeting new people has been great, I am shy, and It was hard at first, but it is easier now due to people in the group having the same interests and experiences.”

“I have gained confidence and feel less stressed.”

6.4 Parents and carers

Parents and carers were the second group in terms of SROI benefit realising just over **£3,102,486** of the overall value. Discussions with parents and with participants in focus groups all provided consistent evidence of the impact NOW services had on parents. Parents face many anxieties such as concerns for their son or daughter’s mental health as a result of withdrawal and isolation, the impact on family cohesion as the participant may become more isolated from siblings due to the development of different life paths, limited time with other family members as there may be no respite when looking after their son or daughter with a learning difficulty or autism. There can be parental isolation as their own social life and that with their spouse/partner suffers as a result of home life pressures.

Parents can also fear for the longer-term future for the participant believing that opportunities for employment and independent living may be an impossible dream. A theme of conversations with parents during research was that this viewpoint was changing and resulting reductions in parent’s anxiety and stress were significant.

“I can now see my child living on his own in future, he has become much more independent and he now has a job.”

“We can now go out more socially as our son is more capable and likes his own space in the house.”

Parents suggested there were few, if any, alternatives for their son or daughter and that changes in behaviour were largely as a result of the input of the NOW team as there was no other intervention. This feedback is reflected in the calculations of deadweight, displacement and attribution in the SROI Impact Map.

6.5 Employers

A 2015 survey conducted by Mencap³ identified that 23% of employers felt that their staff would not be happy working with a colleague who had learning disabilities and 45% of employers who had no experience hiring staff with learning disability felt it would be difficult for the public to deal with them. It further suggested that 65% of adults with learning disabilities in the UK want to find employment but only 7% have managed to achieve it.

Telephone interviews were used to identify that employers realised **£142,695** value representing just under 1% of the overall value generated. Employers were able to identify and evidence the following outcomes:

- An increase in disability awareness for those staff who interact with the relevant staff member
- The positive contribution and qualities that staff with learning disabilities bring to the workplace
- The value of NOW mentoring for those occasions when the employer may not be sure how to manage the situation
- A comfort with the range of reasonable adjustments that can be made to maximize the staff member's potential
- The ability to identify and avoid potential situations which may cause the staff member unnecessary concern or stress
- Appreciation of workplace diversity
- Mediation and mentoring between employee and manager to ensure sustainability of job.

6.6 Schools

The research for this report has identified a benefit to schools of **£12,922**. This outcome derives from the additional value added to the schools, teachers and pupils as a result of transition support. In 2017/18, a NOW staff member worked 25 hours per week across three schools: Hillcroft, Thornfield and Hazelwood. Discussions with NOW identified benefits of extracurricular activities provided by the NOW intervention such as careers advice, support for parents on the transition process, money management and career planning courses.

6.7 Health and Social Care Trusts

Benefits and outcomes for the Health Service have been identified as follows:

- Reduced daycare hours (Health and Social Care Trust based saving)

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/nov/10/companies-fear-employing-people-learning-disabilities-survey-reveals-mencap-ian-duncan-smith>

- Time saved by Social Workers as a result of referral support from NOW staff

The total valued outcome for this stakeholder group is proposed at **£1,108,282** accounting for 6.76% of the overall SROI value.

6.8 Siblings

Siblings have been identified as indirect beneficiaries of the NOW Group. Discussions with parents and participants identified the peer influence participants can have on brothers/sisters e.g. desire to get into employment, improve life chances and study. It also identified that home life for siblings can improve as interaction with the participant can improve and common issues are identified for discussion. Siblings can also benefit from the additional time parents have as a result of respite time. The value attributed to siblings is **£1,508,082**.

6.9 Volunteers

Outcomes for NOW volunteers included, enhanced confidence to engage in different and sometimes challenging situations, work experience leading to enhanced employability skills and improved communication skills. The value attributed to volunteers was **£197,768**.

6.10 Community

The community represents a wide range of stakeholders who have been impacted as a result of a range of NOW projects and services. The research has identified a number of indicators of positive impact on the local community and these include:

- The hire of The Hive on the Grosvenor Road in Belfast to 12 organisations and charities with 65.5 hours of use being provided free to the participants. Usage of The Hive without cost has provided not for profit community organisations in the area with vital support at challenging times due to lack of funding.
- NOW facilitates volunteering opportunities for members of the community including those who wish to sample working with participants with a learning disability, those who are studying for qualifications in this 'field' and who wish to widen their practical experience and those who wish to 'give something back' to an organisation such as NOW. The number of voluntary hours supported by NOW for those from the community was 2998.
- The JAM Card (an initiative to support individuals with learning difficulties in everyday situations) now has close to 9,000 cards in circulation (with 1672 being distributed to new participants in 2017/18). Research conducted for the 2017 JAM card evaluation (carried out by Gauge NI) confirms that participants experience positive impact in the areas of communication, reduced stress and confidence. Focus groups conducted for the report also provided evidence that users of the JAM card felt 'confident, relaxed and/or empowered'. Other participant quotes (extracted from the report) include:

“I think the card is a fantastic idea and a lot handier for him when he is paying for things when this seems to cause him stress or for being searched at the airport when he needs a minute to prepare himself for being touched!”

“My daughter used it when she was being rushed trying to get change out. The person behind the till said, ‘Take as much time as you need.’”

Championing the inclusion of people with learning disabilities into the local community, society and the workforce is a key driver of NOW Group’s work who have developed training materials for service providers to support the roll out of the JAM Card and raise awareness about the needs and ability of people with learning disabilities. This has enabled an increased level of engagement with a wide and diverse range of organisations, businesses and individuals and can assist in tackling some of the underlying challenges facing people with learning and communication difficulties.

The social enterprise cafes operated by Loaf play a role in educating customers and the wider public on issues related to social enterprise and learning disability. Improved awareness of social enterprises within the private sector has also been recognised with many social enterprises now included within their supply chains. The CEO NOW Group works closely with Social Enterprise Northern Ireland (SENI) to increase opportunities for social enterprise supply chains.

This study has identified that NOW helps to communicate a positive message to the local community on matters related to disability and social enterprises. This was evidenced through social media reviews at Loaf and the Bobbin and through comment cards completed by customers at Loaf Café Bakery. Wider community engagement is enhanced through the NOW Social Media reach which exceeded 14 million in 2017/18

The overall value accrued by the community and general public was **£325,425**

7. Conclusions

NOW continues to create significant social impact for its wide range of stakeholders. The organisation is committed to enhancing the lives of participants with learning disabilities and facilitating a greater understanding of disability in society. NOW influences a range of stakeholders both directly and indirectly by the impact its services have on participants and those they engage with.

NOW has continued to expand its service delivery and social enterprise offering in 2017/18, this has enabled more participants to access NOW services which has served to increase the total social value accrued by the Group from £10:1 in 2016/17 to 12:1 in 2017/18. This SROI study has identified sound evidence of the impact NOW's services on nine stakeholders encompassing twenty-nine distinct outcomes. In keeping the culture of continuous improvement which has been a catalyst for the growth of the NOW Group in recent years, we have identified a number of recommendations to add value to organisation's impact measurement process.

7.1 Outcome Star

We would highlight that the Outcome Star tools were of limited value to this evaluation with only a small number of follow up assessments measuring distance travelled available. It is recommended that NOW reassess the value of Outcome Star as it's key tool for measuring participant outcomes. When utilized at it's optimum this tool is highly effective in generating participant impact data, however significant staff resources are required to ensure that the necessary level of baseline, midway and end stage follow ups are achieved.

7.2 Consultation with Parents

Parental questionnaires available for this evaluation were designed to survey satisfaction levels with the services and the activities offered but did not include questions to measure impact. We would therefore recommend that for future SROI evaluations, an impact focussed questionnaire survey is designed to capture parental data on the impact of participant improvement on themselves in relation to improved well-being, reduction in stress, increased respite and improved family cohesion. It should also seek to measure similar impacts for siblings based on the perspective of the parent/s.

7.3 Consultation with Volunteers

We would recommend that a questionnaire is designed to measure the impact achieved by volunteers through their role with NOW shaped around increase, in personal and career development skills, confidence, communication skills and improvements in overall well-being. The questionnaire could also include participant satisfaction questions, for example, the induction, relationships with NOW staff and the volunteer handbook. It is also recommended that volunteers should be encouraged to disclose their key reasons for volunteering at application stage and what they hope to achieve during their period of engagement. The extent to which such ambitions have been achieved could also then be measured through the annual questionnaire.

7.4 Customer Insight

Anecdotal evidence from staff working at Loaf indicates that a growing number of businesses and private customers are more aware of disability related issues through their engagement with NOW's catering business and the increasing number of JAM Card businesses would add credibility to this. It is recommended that research is completed with business customers to establish the extent to which their business is more aware of disability related issues as a result of doing business with Loaf and improvements that they have implemented as a result of same enhanced knowledge.

7.5 SROI Integration with Performance Management

Year on year NOW staff continue to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of SROI. It is recommended that NOW performance management discussions with staff should include planning and detail of SROI evidence within individual workplans, to promote an ongoing social value culture and proactively identify evidence for the annual social impact evaluation process. This could feed into a quarterly review of SROI impact, to maintain momentum of SROI measurement and provide opportunities for ongoing reflection of social value generated.

7.6 Employer Engagement

Employer research highlighted benefits of engaging with NOW. Participants are supported and visited by Job Coaches who advise employers and support NOW participants in the daily challenges of working life. It is recommended that employer representatives should be surveyed annually on how the experience of working with NOW is impacting on the wider organization including contribution to strategic business objectives.

7.7 Data Capture

It is recommended that NOW maintains comprehensive records of the hours worked by participants on unpaid placement and voluntary roles with external employers and similarly for the number of daycare hours not required for purchase by Health & Social Care Trusts due to participation in employment and other NOW training activities. Furthermore, periodic discussions with Health & Social Care Trust professionals is recommend to gather qualitative evidence of the impact of NOW training activities in the provision of positive pathways of personal, social and emotional development.

Appendix 1 Impact Map