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SOCIAL IMPACT
REPORT 2018
METHODOLOGY
AND LIMITATIONS



METHODOLOGY

As a law firm, we state that our purpose is to improve lives, communities and society, but we haven't assessed the social impact that our work with our clients generates. We wanted to demonstrate how we positively contribute to social change by considering a selection of our cases and clients and identifying how we secured optimal social benefit. We set up an internal steering group to define the parameters for our first social impact report and commissioned an external agency, the Connectives, to assure our reporting and validate our research.

The steering group identified the key stakeholder groups of:

- Customers
- Internal staff
- External partner organisations

Working with independent consultants, the Connectives, and adopting a social accounting methodology, we engaged the stakeholder groups in focus groups and one-to-one interviews to highlight delivery of positive social and economic impact on individuals, communities and society. Using the secondary data, we were able to establish proxy financial values that can realistically estimate the economic values of the social benefit. These values translate directly to the activities, or demonstrable outcomes of our activity ensuring the total economic value is appropriate.

SCOPE

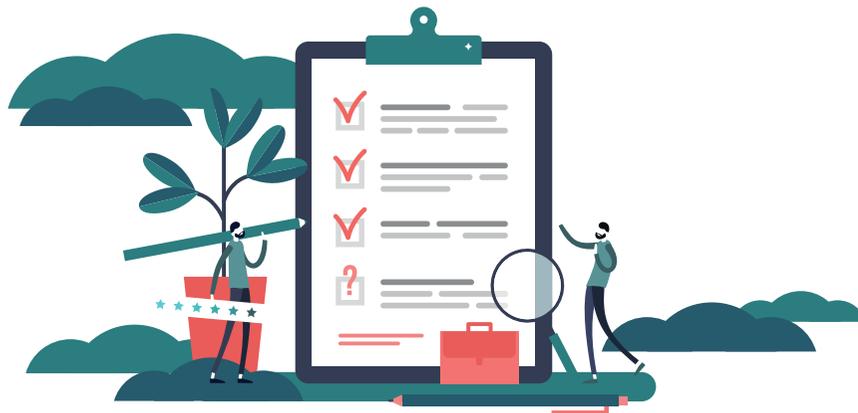
This report delivers a robust social impact assessment of our activities during the accounting period April 2017 to March 2018, encompassing impacts on:

- Individuals
- Communities
- Society



METHODOLOGY AND PLANNING

We selected the SAN methodology as it enables assessment of both qualitative and quantitative data and is driven by the voice of the person served, i.e. our key stakeholder groups. In a crowded landscape of social impact assessment tools, we believe that this approach enables the assessment of a breadth of data, and a confidence that the findings are relevant to the direct beneficiary groups, i.e. it is a reflection of their lived experience rather than received wisdom.



This report follows the Social Audit Network's recommended social accounting cycle (bit.ly/socialaccountingcycle) to ensure that it complies with the underpinning principles and appropriate application of the method.

The economic impact assessment provided is based upon Social Return on Investment principles utilising agreed financial proxies for each social outcome evidenced. We have used proxy values from trusted sources including central government departments and research from leading universities, as well as Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT) who, in their own words, have 'created the largest bank of methodologically consistent and robust social values ever produced. HACT explain that the values are calculated through statistical analyses of four large national UK datasets that contain data on well-being and life circumstances:

- British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)
- Understanding Society
- The Crime Survey for England and Wales
- The Taking Part survey

WE HAVE USED PROXY VALUES FROM TRUSTED SOURCES



These datasets include people's responses to well-being questions, and questions on many aspects and circumstances of their lives such as employment status, marital status, health status, whether they volunteer, play sports, live in a safe area, and so on, resulting in a wide range of values.

Most values come from the BHPS, which has been completed each year by more than 10,000 of the same individuals since 1991 and so incorporates over 20 years of panel data. The values are extremely robust due to the sheer vastness of these datasets and the methods in which they are derived. As all the data used to create the bank of values has come from central government sources, it is considered to

be the most trusted value set available to us at this time. While this does not allow for comparison in performance between organisations and activity programmes it offers the most comprehensive and nationally agreed proxies to date.

The overall objective of this assessment was to test whether we are creating social value from our activities with our clients and in the manner in which the business operates. An internal Steering Group made up of team members most closely associated with our breadth of activities worked with the Connectives to ensure that we identified all potential material impacts and consultation processes that would ensure we could effectively identify and capture these impacts.

The process of compiling the impact architecture informed the thinking around the indicators that we would need to evidence change. This then drove the process of designing a series of engagement questions that the Connectives used in a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including customers, internal staff and external partner organisations. The questions were intended to ensure that we could identify indicators from the responses elicited and that the data generated through the consultation could evidence the impact secured. Additionally, the steering group and the Connectives interpreted the data and tested conclusions to ensure the removal of any potential bias and/or subjectivity.

We have also accessed secondary data to establish the financial proxy values that can be realistically applied to estimate the economic value of the social benefit derived from this programme. These values are from the HACT database and other central government sources. The values we have selected translate directly to the activities or demonstrable outcomes of ACS activity ensuring that the total economic value claimed is appropriate. The application of a percentage discount to the values reflects the level of attribution that we believe is reasonable, considering the responses from the stakeholder groups.



Activity	Proxy value per person (£)	Source	No. Of cases	Attribution rate applied %	Social value generated (£)	Cumulative total social value (£)	SROI ratio Total social value/total investment
Children avoiding entry to the care system	131,000	NAO Report - Children in care (2014)	130	50	8,515,000	8,515,000	£1:£11.38
A young person not in education or employment over their lifetime	56,301	York University - Estimating the lifetime cost of NEET: 16-18-year-olds not in Education, Employment or Training (2010)	130	50	3,659,565	12,174,565	£1:£4.89
Cost of anti-social behaviour per property	6,403	Community Investment Values from Social Value Bank	145	50	464,218	13,290,783	£1:£11.16
Total						13,290,783	£1:£12.84

INDICATIVE ECONOMIC VALUE:

The enumeration of any social impact is notoriously difficult and often receives criticism from within the research and evaluation field as sources of data are very limited and have little testing. As we were keen to provide an enumerative assessment of impact, we have adopted the Social Return On Investment (SROI) method, however the proxies used in this process often come from small sources that sometimes only a handful of organisations have been able to test and contribute to the bank of proxies and so, as with all economic impact assessments, this should be treated with caution.

To enumerate this impact, the HACT social value bank and central government sources have been used to provide proxy values for the impacts we believe have been indicated either fully or partially, through the data we have collected. The activity undertaken to develop the HACT social value bank

has created the "largest bank of methodologically consistent and robust social values ever produced. The values can provide a basic assessment of social impact, provide evidence of value for money, and compare the impact of different programmes". (<http://www.hact.org.uk/social-value-bank>).

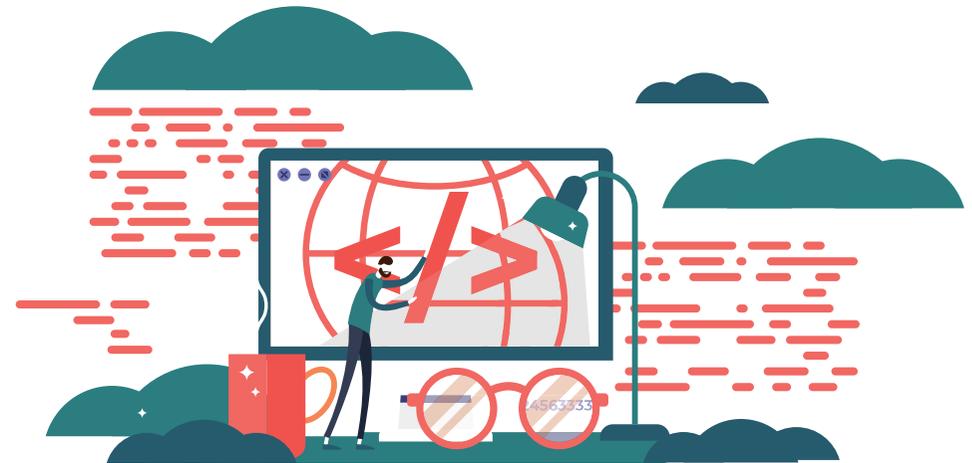
The values have been applied to the activities and the resulting notional social value calculated. The attribution rates have been conservatively estimated based upon the likely contribution of our activities to the delivery of the outputs identified. This has been summarised below and demonstrates that for every £1

invested in activity, we anticipate that £12.84 of social value has been created. The figure is calculated by totalling the SROI values indicated throughout the report, and this is then divided by the total funds invested by us in the delivery of these services during the reporting period (Apr 17-Mar 18).

Stakeholders	Organisations	How were they involved or consulted?	No. Of respondents
Customers	N/A	One-to-one telephone interviews to inform anonymised case studies	8
Internal staff	N/A	Focus groups x 2 One-to-one interviews	35 10
External partner organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cafcass • The Brandon Trust • St James Place Partnership • Frankel Topping • PPS Vet • SCOPE 	One-to-one telephone interviews	6

METHODOLOGICAL AND DATA LIMITATIONS

We recognise that there are limitations to the methods (SAN and SROI) and assessment and have sought to capture these here:



- The researcher in qualitative research cannot be entirely removed from the subject, and inevitably their own perspective will become part of the findings. By securing assurance services from the Connectives to comment on our analysis of the data gathered during this assessment we have sought to negate this potential bias.
- The enumeration of any social impact is notoriously difficult and often receives criticism from within the research and evaluation field. As we were keen to provide an enumerative assessment of impact, we have adopted the SROI method, however the proxies used in this process often come from small sources where sometimes only a handful of organisation have been able to test and contribute to the bank of proxies and so as with all economic impact assessments this should be treated with caution.



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