

Devon and Somerset Development Programme FAQs

What will I learn on the course?

The key areas the course will focus on are:

- Business Planning – reviewing and assessing your current business model
- Leadership – understanding and optimising your role in the development process.
- Developing your market position – understanding your customers and develop a market strategy
- Impact Measurement – assess your position and impact.
- Opportunities for Growth – Maintaining existing and sourcing new business partners
- Sales- how to sell your products, your organisation and yourself
- Financial sustainability – looking at your income streams
- Pitching and Presenting – how to get your message across with confidence and impact

Where will the course take place?

Central Exeter venues, where possible we like to support local social enterprises. We endeavour to make these accessible by public transport. We have selected Exeter as the host city for this as it is relatively accessible from both Somerset and rural Devon areas, unfortunately due to the nature of the course some attendees will always have to travel further than others.

What times do the study days start and finish?

Study days are usually 9.30-16.30.

Do I have to pay for the course?

This course is provided for FREE, all you need to do is get yourself to the venue where it is hosted. However, please be aware that our programmes are very competitive and if you are not attending someone else is missing out on that opportunity. Your place is fully funded by the European Enhance Social Enterprise Fund and so although it may not cost you anything it does cost them approx. £2500 per student.



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The Heart of the South West Enhance Social Enterprise Programme is receiving funding from the England European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds growth Programme 2014-2020.



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What if I can't make a certain study day?

We expect all students to attend all the study days and to have made space in their diary to do this. A minimum of 80% attendance is expected to complete the course, unless exceptional circumstances. If you are unable to attend unexpectedly e.g. sickness you will need to let the learning manager know as soon as possible. Please do not apply if you already know you are unable to attend more than 20% of the dates.

What if I have particular needs which may prevent me from fully taking part in the Learning Programme?

If you have any particular needs or there are any barriers which may prevent you from taking part in the programme please contact us to discuss either by phone on 01803847060 or email dsse.applications@dartington.org. We are keen to enable people with disabilities and with other specific needs to access our programmes and to adapt to the needs of our students.

What happens if my project will work with children, or adults in vulnerable situations?

If your project works with children under 18 years old or adults in vulnerable situations, you may need criminal records checks for staff and volunteers. Vulnerable situations includes health or personal care, assistance with finances or shopping because of age, illness or disability, transport to day centres, or other types of social work or therapeutic support. We expect at this stage of your development for you to have in place policies around safe guarding and if applicable DBS checks in place for staff and volunteers and we may ask you about this at application. This area is not specifically covered by the course but if you think you may need more help with this, let us know and we can signpost you to support around safeguarding policies and DBS checks.

Can I apply if my project is hosted by a larger organisation?

Your organisation should have a legal structure and have had this in place for over a year, it should be financially independent, have its own staff and have an annual turnover of over £15k for this course to be relevant (exceptions can be made depending on circumstance). Your project may be hosted by a larger and older organisation. If so, it will have to have a degree of independence within that organisation. Please include details of this in your application and this will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Can I apply if I have a full-time job?

You can apply to the programme if you are in full-time employment as long as you are able to manage your project and attend the learning programme in a way that fits in with your employment commitments.



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Can I apply for this programme if I have criminal convictions?

Previous SSE Fellows have included people who have criminal convictions, some of whom have used their experience in prisons to make a difference to the lives of ex-offenders. You do not need to let us know about previous convictions unless they are relevant to your application.

If you have unspent convictions for fraud or any convictions which may affect your ability to run your project, including working with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable, you must let us know, as we may undertake checks during the course of the application assessment.

Can I apply if I have already been on an SSE Programme?

This depends on which courses you have been on, how they were funded and in what capacity (e.g. was this for a different project) so please query this with us. If there were exceptional circumstances as to why you did not complete the previous SSE programme, we may consider your application, please discuss this with us first.

Can I apply if unsuccessful in the past?

If you or someone else from your organisation or project has applied before and not been successful, you are welcome to apply again. We often have people on our programme who are applying for the second or third time, and whose ideas or plans have developed since they first applied. However, we would suggest that you check the feedback you received in the past. If in doubt, you can contact us.

Can more than one person from our project apply?

We will only assess applications from one person from your project or organisation. Please decide who you would like to attend the programme and they should be the one to apply. Because of the way the Learning Programme works and how the trust within the group is built, it is important that it is the same applicant who attends all the sessions. In general, we will not allow others from your project to attend the programme in your place. We focus on working with and building the skills of the individual entrepreneur rather than the organisation as a whole.

What is State-Aid and can I apply if I have had more than €200,000?

Support from the Enhance Social Enterprise will be provided under the De Minimis Regulation (1407/2013) which allows businesses to receive up to €200,000 of State Aid assistance over a three year period. The State Aid Rules cover ANY public funding that you have received during the current and previous two financial years. We will require you to declare previous funding before receiving support to ensure that the value of the assistance you receive via Enhance Social Enterprise does not bring you over the €200,000 threshold.



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If you are over this threshold unfortunately we are unable to support you through our programme. If you are still unsure you may need to query funders and grant bodies to understand if you have received state aid. If in doubt, please contact us.

Can I apply if I am connected to SSE or to any of the funders of this Programme?

No. We cannot accept applications from people who work for or are trustees of SSE, any of its host organisations, or any of the funders of this programme. We also cannot accept applications from people who are closely connected to staff or trustees. This includes people with a financial or close family connection to staff or trustees. If you are unsure, please contact us.

Can I apply if I am supporting other businesses including social enterprise?

We do not usually accept applicants whose main work is providing training or business support services primarily to other businesses, including social enterprises or charities. This would include training, fundraising or management support. However, we sometimes consider applications where the services provided are mainly back office support services, such as HR, accountancy or office space, or where training is provided for people who are unemployed in order to help them access employment. If in doubt, please contact us.

Can I apply if my project is controlled by a public sector organisation?

We do accept applications from projects which are public sector roll outs, or set up with the support of local authorities, as long as they are now fully independent. However we do not usually accept applications from projects or organisations that are controlled by a public sector organisation. If in doubt, please contact us.

Key Contact Details

If you still need any advice on your application, please contact us on 01803 847066 or by email to dsse.applications@dartington.org

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect the programme, please see our [Complaints Procedure](#).



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