

## Press Release

### Key Role for Third Sector in Health Service Delivery

3 May 2007

Specialist law firm The Projects Partnership, together with The Centre for Public Innovation, hosted a major conference on *"New Directions in Health & Social Care - Opportunities for the Third Sector"* on 3 May at London's Commonwealth Club. The event, supported by Allied Irish Bank, included keynote speakers from the Department of Health, Partnerships for Health, the Futurebuilders fund and several social enterprise pathfinder schemes. Delegates were drawn from charities, housing associations, social enterprises and public sector commissioners. The aim of the event was to explore the opportunities and challenges for not-for-profits becoming more involved in delivering health and social care services and infrastructure for Primary Care Trusts, local authorities and other commissioners, as part of the Government's reforms of the NHS.

Delegates heard that there are now over 35,000 third sector organisations delivering health and social care services, receiving a £12bn slice of the total £87bn UK budget for health and social care. Richard Cienicala, Deputy Director of Provider Development at DoH said "Government believes the Third Sector has a major part to play in achieving cultural change and innovation in health services. There is a strong political will to make this happen."

Sue White, Head of the Social Enterprise Unit at the Department, said: "Social enterprises will in future play a key role in the future direction of healthcare delivery. Under new commissioning guidance, PCTs and other NHS bodies will be encouraged to consider these alternative models when procuring services for their community."

Mark Johnson, Managing Director of The Projects Partnership commented, "We are seeing Government embrace an exciting new model of partnership for delivery of public services. PFI is increasingly being side-lined in favour of partnerships with the not-for-profit sector. The sector will play an important role in introducing competition and choice, a better focus on patients' needs, combined with a strong set of values and the opportunity to innovate outside of traditional public sector rules. We are delighted to be involved in this exciting area of work."

**-ENDS-**

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#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The Projects Partnership Limited is a specialist law firm established by Mark Johnson in 2001 in Bankside, London, SE1. Johnson was formerly head of public services at a well-known City firm. The Projects Partnership has a specialist focus on public service contracts and partnership projects, working with local authorities, government departments, service providers and not-for-profits.
2. Government has actively encouraged more involvement by the third sector in public service delivery since 1997. A programme of work culminated in a Treasury Cross-Cutting Review in 2006 and the founding of a new Office of the Third Sector within the Cabinet Office, as well as a new social enterprise unit within the Department of Health, which has established a £74 million seedcorn fund to support fledgling social entrepreneurs in taking over NHS services.
3. Futurebuilders is a Cabinet Office-backed fund set up to invest in third sector organisations who wish to provide public services under contract to public sector bodies.