

PRESS RELEASE

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Novas short listed for Enterprising Solutions Award

Novas is delighted to announce that it is one of fifteen organisations short listed for the 2007 Enterprising Solutions Awards, with the winners to be announced in October.

The Enterprising Solutions Awards (ESA) are designed to "find the UK's most dynamic and innovative social enterprises" - businesses that trade for a social purpose.

First place wins a cash prize of £10,000 and free membership of the Coalition. Three other finalists will receive £5,000 each.

The awards are run by the Social Enterprise Coalition on behalf of RBS, NatWest and the Cabinet Office, in association with The Observer, Capacity Builders, DfES and the DTI.

Maria Donoghue-Mills, Chief Executive of Novas, says,

'Being short-listed in the Enterprising Solutions Awards is a fantastic achievement, recognising Novas as a social business, delivering social objectives, primarily employment and training, to disadvantaged groups.'

Social enterprises run by Novas include a designer clothes shop, art centres, a translation service and coffee shops.

Winners will be announced on October 17 at an awards ceremony.

ENDS

Press contact:

Alexandra Pryce
Marketing & Communications Manager
020 7424 3060
alexandra.pryce@novas.org

NOTES TO EDITOR

Novas is at the cutting edge of tackling social disadvantage through creating inclusive employment in social enterprises, providing flexible community based support services to vulnerable people and offering quality art and cultural programmes, which involve the wider community in understanding complex social issues.

Novas was established in 1998 and over the last three years the organisation has transformed itself from predominately a provider of large hostels for homeless people to be at the cutting edge of tackling social disadvantage through social enterprise, innovation and positive impact.

We aim to change lives through arts, enterprise and community support, developing opportunities for individuals and communities through community support, education, training, employment, art, culture and regeneration. We have developed a strong reputation for the delivery of quality community-based services, and for new and innovative approaches together with people who experience inequality, exclusion and discrimination.

We run a cutting edge designer clothes shop; contemporary urban centres offering integrated arts, performance, small business development and community activity; community support services working together with 6,000 people a year with customer input at every level; a translation and interpreting service utilising the skills of over 200 Black and Refugee people, and coffee shops offering fair trade and organic produce.

Our initiatives positively change the lives of people, including those experiencing homelessness, health issues, prejudice and isolation; and they all contribute to bringing communities together. All profits are reinvested back into Novas learning and development programmes for disadvantaged groups, and at least 50% of all jobs created are targeted for these groups.

We develop innovative community empowerment strategies that integrate our services and those that face deep exclusion to be at the centre of our communities, not on the margins. We are currently remodelling many of our large hostels to raise the living standards for people who are homeless, within buildings that will become a part of their local communities through business, market space, cultural quarters, performance spaces, retail and restaurants. These projects will also offer learning, cultural and enterprise space for a wide range of individuals and communities who experience exclusion.

We have many case histories of how disadvantaged people have successfully turned their lives around, and are successfully contributing to their communities. We can also set up media interviews with them.