

11<sup>TH</sup> October 2010

## **SOCIAL ECONOMY MASTERCLASS TO TAKE PULSE OF HEALTH SECTOR**

The second in a series of masterclasses, aimed at urging local organisations to find out more about the social economy, is to address the Health Sector. The event will feature two case study presentations, given by Margaret Elliott OBE (Founder of Sunderland Home Care Associates) and Ciaran Sheehan (MD of Care Circle Ltd). The event will be chaired by Professor Patrick Johnston, Dean, Head of the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science, Queen's University Belfast.

Speaking at the event launch Ciaran Sheehan said: "There is an opportunity to promote and explore the potential synergy between the Health and Social Economy sectors and to develop thinking on how the two can work in partnership to deliver real benefits for all. "The social economy sector is well-positioned to help the Executive meet many of its social and economic goals and has a unique contribution to make to the broad health service in Northern Ireland".

Ciaran was recently awarded IoD 'Director of the Year – Large Company' in his role as MD of Care Circle. Care Circle is a highly respected and rapidly expanding Private Nursing Home and Domiciliary Group that now employs over 360 people. The company has been formally recognised for its people practices and focus on its community and on its corporate social responsibilities. Ciaran also has extensive experience in setting up social economy businesses in the health arena.

The series of masterclasses is aimed at giving guidance on best practice to social entrepreneurs, policy-makers, business leaders and public sector managers. The series is the brainchild of the School for Social Entrepreneurs in Ireland – a joint venture of the Flax Trust and the University of Ulster. The SSEI has organised the events with the support of partner organisations UCIT, the Social Economy Network, Enterprise NI and Charity Bank. Funding has been provided by DETI and Invest NI.

Ken O'Neill, Chairman of SSEI explained: "It is hoped that this masterclass series will act as a catalyst to create greater awareness of the opportunities available in Northern Ireland for social enterprises, the public sector and the private sector to benefit from each other.

"Each masterclass will feature an international case study and a local one with a view to sharing best practice, building relationships and highlighting the opportunities that exist in the social economy. For the Health event we are delighted to welcome Margaret Elliott OBE, who has been a leading light in the Social Economy movement for many years. Some 15 years ago she founded the employee-owned Sunderland Home Care Associates, which is now one of the largest employee-owned home care companies in the UK. It has gained national and international recognition for its employee ownership and participation model and we are thrilled that she has agreed to come to Belfast to share her story with us".

The event is being hosted by Queen's University Belfast and will take place in The Canada Room on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October from 6.15pm-8.15pm. According to Professor Paddy Johnston, who is Chairing the event, Queen's University is delighted to play a part in this masterclass series aimed at stimulating opportunities for economic growth within the social economy sector.

“A focus on ideas, entrepreneurship and venture capital is the way forward and is a sustainable way for Northern Ireland to prosper,” Professor Johnston commented. “At Queen’s we have exciting plans to create a new Institute of Health Sciences research centre. This will place Northern Ireland as a world leader in the fields of medicine and biomedical research – a strategy that will stimulate business activity in Belfast and further afield. This initiative is sure to have a massive impact on health service provision in Northern Ireland and Ireland and place the region in a position to create a whole range of jobs.”

Professor Ken O'Neill, Senior Consultant, Value the Person Training & Development Company. A world-renowned expert in entrepreneurial leadership development and small businesses, Ken is Emeritus Professor of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development at the University of Ulster, where he has played a central role over many years in the expansion of the university's pioneering activities in these fields, with particular emphasis on management training and development for owner-managers.

Professor Patrick Johnston Johnston is Director, Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology and Professor of Oncology, School of Biomedical Sciences, Queen's University Belfast. He is also a founder of Almac Diagnostics, the Northern Ireland based biotech which recently expanded to North America. His research focuses on potential therapies for colorectal cancer and has resulted in a number of prestigious landmark publications