

Step Into My Shoes

The concept of 'Step into my Shoes' is simple – a voluntary and community organisation or social enterprise is paired up with a private business and a senior member of staff from each organisation commits to step into each other's shoes for a day and learn about how the 'other side' works.

The aim of Step into my Shoes' was to improve cross-sector understanding through finding out more about the organisations work, as well as the operational environments and wider contexts in which they work. Other potential benefits for taking part were:

- The opportunity to raise an organisations profile within the other sector
- Direct insight into how the other sector works or into a particular client group
- The potential for cross-sector referrals
- A free 'hands on' professional development opportunity for your staff
- The opportunity to demonstrate a private companies commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility
- The possibility of forging mutually beneficial cross-sector partnerships

The initiative was based on a successful scheme run by NCVO called 'A Day in my Life' which pairs together staff from vcs organisations with civil servants. The success of the scheme lies in effective brokering between both parties and identifying a suitable match of business and vco to ensure that both organisations benefit from the experience. To ensure suitable matches were found organisations were asked to specify what sort of organisation they would want to be matched with and what they hoped to gain from the experience.

The initiative was publicized through both the VCSA and private sector networks. Whilst we had interest from 4 organisations wishing to take part in the scheme only two of these came to fruition:

- Shrewsbury Dial-a-ride and Arriva
- Bridges and Alpha Marketing

Impact acted as the broker in terms of finding a suitable match and once one was secured liaised with both parties to ensure compatibility and to sort out the practical arrangements. Participating organisations were provided with guidance on how to make the most of their 'Step into my Shoes' experience and were asked to complete evaluation forms on completion of both visits.