

About Substance

Substance is an experienced social research company working in the youth, sport and community development sectors. We help projects and organisations delivering personal, community and social development to improve and demonstrate impact and value.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We work with Government, local authorities, housing associations, youth organisations, football clubs and national initiatives to devise and implement effective monitoring and evaluation strategies. Utilising our unique monitoring and evaluation software, Views (formerly SPRS) evaluations have included Positive Futures, Kickz and the DCMS Mentoring programme among many others.

Research

We undertake both large scale national research and smaller, focused projects spanning sport, culture, the community and voluntary sector and youth development. Our approach is action research - working with individuals, organisations and policy makers to guide the process and embed the findings in their future practice.

Plings

Plings collects structured activity information from local authorities, the voluntary sector, community groups, national sports governing bodies and other networks. It then publishes it into spaces where young people are likely to find it, including social networking sites, mobile phones and leaflets. In addition, Plings provides feedback tools for young people and parents and analytics tools for local authorities and national voluntary sector networks in order to support better planning and commissioning.

Organisation and Programme Development

We use research, monitoring and evaluation to provide support to organisational, national programme and policy development. This has included work with national government departments, local authorities, national charities such as the Football League Trust and youth intervention programmes such as Positive Futures and Kickz.

The Substance Social Audit 2006-2010

Substance was founded in November 2005 and began trading in 2006. 2010 marked our 5th birthday and we undertook a social audit of the company in order to demonstrate the performance and impact we have made. This audit aims to evidence both external impacts of the organisation's work as well as its operations and internal impacts and performance. This is a Summary Report and the full version is available at www.substance.coop

Substance Social Audit Framework

Section A – External Audit	Section B – Internal Audit
1. Impact of Work	7. Governance
2. External Stakeholder Survey	8. Financial Performance
3. Local Economic Contribution	9. Member Economic Participation
4. Ethical Procurement and Investment	10. Member Democratic Participation
5. Investment in Community and Cooperative Initiatives	11. Staff Participation in Training and Education
6. Environmental Impact	12. Staff Injury and Absenteeism
	13. Staff Profile
	14. Future Developments

Section A: External Audit

1. Positive Social Impact - Substance's Work

Substance's aim is to deliver progressive social change through our work. To achieve this we have delivered:

- 65 research reports in 5 years
- 4 national conferences
- Nearly 50 other events
- Monitoring and evaluation services (www.views.coop) for 390 organisations that has helped them record:
 - Nearly half a million participants
 - 222,429 outcomes and 39,952 qualifications
- Plings (www.plings.net) which has had 494,447 Plings activities listed in 211 local authority areas and has 36 voluntary sector networks.

2. External Stakeholders

A survey of 72 external stakeholders said that:

- 67% were either 'satisfied' (39.1%) or 'very satisfied' (27.5%)
- Only 4.3% had been 'unsatisfied'
- 87.5% respondents said Substance had a positive impact on their organisations
- 75% said Substance had a positive social impact on people they work with

3. Local Economic Impact

Substance has created 11 jobs in the Greater Manchester area since 2005. The total spending in Greater Manchester area on salaries and goods and services from 2006-2010 was £1,676,781. This is an average of £335,356 per year.

4. Ethical Procurement and Investment

Environmentally friendly and fair trade products are sourced where possible and Substance is about to introduce a new ethical procurement policy.

5. Investment in Third Sector and Community Enterprises

Substance works heavily with the third sector and public sector, with 60% of clients in the third sector and 31% with the public sector. We have made £2000 in donations to community and charitable organisations in 2010, alongside donations of equipment, office space and staff time of at least 3 days per month. Staff also undertake volunteering out of work time and we have had 6 studentships/internships to date.

6. Environmental

Substance is committed to environmental sustainability. 76.3% of company expenditure on travel is for public transport. 38.5% of travel to work is by public transport and 15.4% is by bicycle, supported by a company cycle scheme that has allowed over £2000 worth of cycles to be bought by staff. We source environmentally friendly products and the proportion of bags of waste recycled to not recycled is 2:1. Energy used per square metre of office space is 97 kWh (National Energy Foundation baseline suggests 100kWh per m² as low).

Section B – Internal Audit

7. Governance

Substance is established as an Industrial and Provident Society and is a bona fide workers cooperative. Substance is democratically owned and run and has an elected Board of Directors. We are a member of CoopsUK and of Cooperatives North West. Substance’s Objects are to:

- o Provide research, consultancy and policy advice and ancillary services
- o Facilitate practice based implementation
- o Be of benefit to its members and the wider community

Our governance is underpinned by an extensive range of company and staff policies, meeting all regulatory requirements.

8. Financial Performance and Reinvestment

Substance has had a rapidly growing turnover and surplus in its first four years of trading¹. This performance has allowed us to reinvest heavily in the business – in both our staff and over £800,000 in product and business development. Our success has also allowed Substance to remain entirely debt free. We were ranked 17th in Social Enterprise magazine’s RBS SE100 index in 2010.

9. Member Economic Participation

80% of all wages have gone to members of the Coop with a ratio of 12 members to 4 other employees as of January 2011. We have a member share scheme and a ratio of around 1:4 lowest to highest wage.

10. Member Democratic Participation

Substance AGMs and General Meetings have a 100% member attendance. There is a 98% attendance rate at company away days. We have an individual staff review process, approved by members, as well as online staff communication and company meetings for all staff.

11. Education and Training

A total of 46 training days were provided between 2006-2010 at an average of 26 hours per employee per year, and nearly £7,000 spent on staff training in 2009 and 2010. Substance staff have attended 49 separate conferences and seminars and have a wide range of informal ‘on the job’ learning.

12. Staff Injury, Absenteeism and Retention

There have been no staff injuries at work and very low rates of absenteeism, although record keeping is acknowledged as being poor. Only one member of staff has left the organization in 5 years.

13. Staff Profile

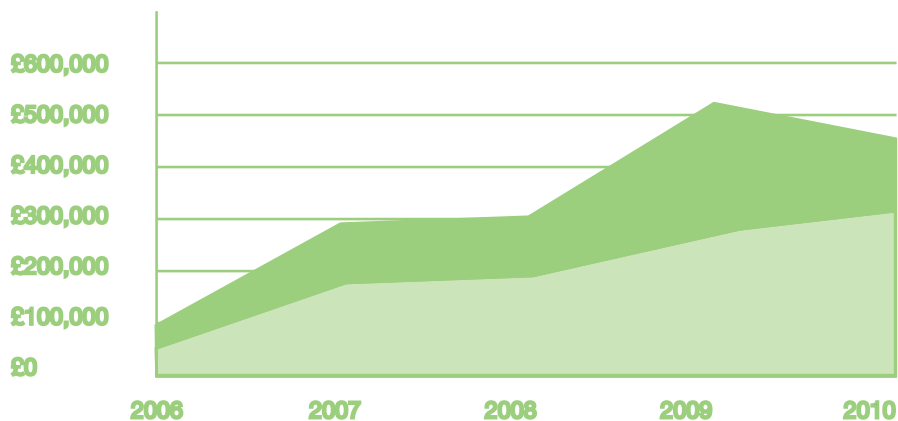
Substance has generous employment conditions set out in Member and Staff Handbooks; a ratio of 75% male to 25% female; no disabled staff; and most describe themselves as ‘white’, with one ‘mixed’ and one ‘other’. Substance is a young company with an average age of 35, 11 of whom are based in Greater Manchester and 5 elsewhere.

14. Future Developments

In terms of policies, we are in the process of implementing an Ethical Procurement Policy, a new procurement procedure and better absenteeism reporting. In order to improve our social auditing – and that of others - Substance is developing an online tool that will work with its new Views monitoring and evaluation platform to:

- Create easy methods of data collection and storage
- Allow real time analysis of performance and statistics
- Automate calculations from accounting and other data
- Create a flexible modular approach to suit individual business needs
- Create easy and flexible methods of reporting

Expenditure on Staff Salaries and Goods & Services in Greater Manchester 2006 - 2010



¹ 2010 is yet to be audited

substance.

3rd Floor
Fourways House
Hilton St
Manchester
M1 2EJ
0161 244 5418
www.substance.coop
info@substance.coop

A full version of the *Substance Social Audit Report 2006-2010* is available on our website.

