

**CIC Annual Report 2012 for Going For Independence CIC (GFI)**  
**Company Registration No. 6729549**  
**GFI Year ending 20 October 2012**

**Social Audit Report – Part 1 – Description of the company's activities**

**About Going For Independence CIC and the work that we do**

When people are affected by a temporary or more permanent loss of mobility or develop a sensory impairment they need the right information and support as soon as possible to help them to maximise their ability to regain, retain and maintain their independence.

GFI has now been running for four years and during 2012 we developed partnerships and links with a number of key organisations that share our vision for people to be empowered to live independently with choice and control over their lives.

**Our core business**

The key aim of GFI is to enable individuals to be able to access independent Occupational Therapy services and the right advice and information about equipment, gadgets and adaptations (including Telecare) to help them to live independently with the best possible quality of life. To this aim we run a helpline and a Directory and represent our stakeholders on numerous panels and groups.

**Impacts from the change in the welfare state**

Throughout the UK the effects of the financial downturn continue to be felt and welfare reform is set to change how people of all ages manage their lives, access work and leisure and cope with disabling conditions.

Charities are losing core funding and not-for-profit organisations are evolving although it is not easy for them to access financial business support funding and there is significant competition for grants. Going For Independence is currently not attracting a lot of interest in its purchased services however its free Helpline and Directory continue to be popular, providing information, support and guidance for people finding themselves facing life changing situations and looking for solutions for both themselves and their families and friends. Our charitable work, therefore, is growing.

**Services with and for specialist charities**

Going For Independence is well placed as a not for profit organisation to offer bespoke services and awareness training for specialist charities who want to improve the support they provide for their members. We are developing a series of training courses aiming for better outcomes for older people using Personal Budgets and Direct Payments and now

are also covering the introduction of the Personal Independence Payments which will start to replace Disabled Living Allowance (DLA) from April 2013.

GFI continues to work with national charities including Assist UK and Ricability, and is developing joint work with local charities in Croydon and in other areas of the UK.

### **Office Move**

Before setting up the Going For Independence CIC and between 1970 and 1990 the MD of GFI worked in the North East of England and in mid 2012 GFI moved its office from London to the north east. We are now looking at establishing links with local organisations in the NE and making contact with new networks to further the work of GFI, as well as keeping our contacts and outreach in the London area. Moving to new premises is one of our strategies for sustainability and has made it possible for us to reduce our overheads significantly.

### **COESI – the Centre of Excellence for Sensory Impairment**

The GFI CIC is a founder member (and the only company amongst charities) of the COESI Consortium of organisations supporting people with sensory impairments and disabilities in the Croydon area: These organisations are the Going For Independence CIC, Croydon Hearing Resource Centre, Croydon Deaf Children's Society, Croydon Visual, Croydon Disability Forum and Disability Croydon.

COESI is a charity and social enterprise able to contract for a wide range of services for people with physical and sensory impairments, both across the London region and with national reach. COESI will be working in other areas of the UK to develop Consortia groups to bring organisations together and to lever in funding to help develop joint services and fill gaps in provision for people with sensory and physical impairments.

### **The GFI CIC has benefited the community in the following ways:-**

During 2012 we provided help and advice to over 50 people on the helpline, directly assisting family members and individuals, and we have delivered talks about social enterprise and income generation to over 200 people at conferences and seminars in the voluntary sector.

The MD of GFI is a Trustee for the Centre of Excellence for Sensory Impairment and the GFI Team provide free management services for the COESI website.

GFI offers new ways of working in a challenging environment, and we are developing a national network of self-employed people and volunteers to work with us.

The GFI Directory is aimed at helping people to find an independent OT and related / complementary equipment services (<http://directory.goingforindependence.org>).

Our social enterprise offers **free** directory entries for OTs, Independent Living Centres, Adaptation companies and associated businesses and our membership is growing. As a trusted social enterprise, the national charity Assist UK signpost people to this directory from its online equipment sales portal. We currently have 206 organisations on the directory and we will be investing further in its development and promotion in 2013.

## **Part 2 – Consultation with stakeholders**

The company's stakeholders include older and disabled people, young people and children with disabilities, their families, friends and carers, Occupational Therapists and health and social care professionals. GFI services cover the whole of the UK, and we have an Advisory Group made up of members representing organisations and individuals.

During 2012 the GFI Advisory Group met once before the office moved north and we are very grateful to its volunteer members, most of whom are located in London and the south of England, who agreed to continue to be involved with GFI through newsletters, online consultations and emails and to contribute to service developments offering their insights, knowledge and experience for the benefit of the services we provide.

GFI is a member of the Croydon Voluntary Sector Service Providers for Older People group (VoSSPOP).

In May 2012 Pam Bennett, the MD of GFI, spoke at Naidex (the national conference and exhibition showcasing equipment) to Occupational Therapists and the public about working independently and social enterprise and promoted the GFI Directory. Positive feedback on our work was received from those who attended.

Early in 2012 GFI was invited by Capita to participate in its consultation prior to tendering for the DWP contract for the delivery of PIP Assessments. As the new assessments will be carried out by Occupational Therapists and other health professionals it is relevant that GFI is a member of their Executive Collaboration Forum, which is made up of key national organisations representing disabled people. We will continue to engage with them and help to ensure that the assessment process for the new PIP benefit is as good as it can be and is fair and transparent. The MD attends the ECF meetings representing both GFI and the Centre of Excellence for Sensory Impairments.

## **Summary**

GFI has the ability to constantly develop to ensure that it provides best quality and relevant services for people, helping them to stay independent. Partnering with charities on new and innovative projects helps GFI to stay focused on working for the benefit of people in the community and helps the charities to develop their income generating strategies for a sustainable future.

Pam Bennett - MD Going For Independence CIC  
December 2012