

Phone Co-op awarded Social Enterprise Mark

The Phone Co-op has become the first telecoms provider to be awarded the Social Enterprise Mark.

The Social Enterprise Mark identifies businesses which meet defined criteria for social enterprise, and aims to help consumers recognise that businesses displaying the Mark are trading to benefit people and planet.

Vivian Woodell, chief executive of The Phone Co-op, commented, “We are delighted that The Phone Co-op has been awarded the Social Enterprise Mark. In the extremely competitive world of telecoms we are proving that it is possible to run a successful business whilst behaving ethically and with a sense of social and environmental responsibility. The Mark demonstrates our commitment to trading for the benefit of our consumers and society, rather than for the pursuit of private profits.

“The decision to award us the Mark also recognises the contribution co-operatives make to the economy and society and have been doing for over 160 years. This is an exciting time for the social enterprise movement and the mark is an important step in raising awareness of what social enterprises do in order to get more people to buy from, engage with, start up and work for social enterprises. We are optimistic about what the Mark can achieve and excited to be a part of it.”

Social Enterprise Mark Champion, Lucy Findlay, added, “We are absolutely thrilled that so many social enterprises are applying and succeeding in getting the Mark. The Mark is about raising awareness of social enterprises and the benefits they offer, to as many people as possible, and we’re very pleased to have some great social enterprises, such as The Phone Co-op, in the first wave of new Mark holders. They have proved that they are businesses that deliver huge social benefits through their services.”

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Notes to editors:

The **Social Enterprise Mark** is supported by the Office of the Third Sector, the National Lottery through the BIG Lottery Fund and Capacity Builders. To find out more, visit www.socialenterprisemark.org.uk

The Phone Co-op is the UK’s only telecommunications co-operative, procuring telecommunications services on behalf of its customers, many of whom are co-operatives, charities and other not-for-profit organisations. Over the past 12 years The Phone Co-op’s service has been taken up by over 15,000 customers, including Midcounties, Channel Islands, Southern, East of England, and Radstock Co-operative Societies, Suma Wholefoods, Christian Aid, Amnesty International, Triodos Bank, the Centre for Alternative Technology, Manchester City Council and Unison. As a co-operative owned by its customer members, The Phone Co-op distributes any profits which are

not re-invested back to members via a dividend based on each member's spend and through a loan fund which supports other co-operatives. For more information, visit www.thephone.coop