

The **co-operative** loan fund borrower case study.

CM Solutions:

Helping communities find their voice

CM Solutions is Sheffield-based social enterprise that has been using its expertise to assist community media since it was set up in 2004.

The company was established as a consultancy spin-off company from the Community Media Association (CMA) to meet the need for professional support services for the growing community media sector. CMA provided the necessary start-up support for the business. CM Solutions sought financial assistance from The Co-operative Loan Fund to help get the enterprise up and running as an employee-owned enterprise.

The main services offered by CM Solutions include:

- Research and evaluation - independent research, assessment and evaluation including quantitative and qualitative audience and market research, comparative research, feasibility studies, social impact assessment, campaign evaluation and policy analysis.
- Business development - support for social enterprise and community organisations including business planning, financial forecasts, company structure and registration, staff and board development, fund-raising and strategic planning.
- Technical support in areas including broadband connectivity, wireless Internet, content management systems and streaming media.

Since it was established, CM Solutions has worked with community media organisations throughout the UK, including eight community radio licence applications, support with many funding applications, a feasibility study for community television, an investigation into neighbourhood broadband connectivity, evaluation of two broadcast campaigns, comparative international research into sustainable community radio and many other projects.

CM Solutions is also currently working in partnership with the CMA to deliver a programme of grant funding, business advice and technical support for community media in South

Yorkshire. The initiative, entitled 'Turn Up The Volume' is supported by Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire and The Humber, and by the European Regional Development Fund under the South Yorkshire European Union Objective 1 Programme and aims to support 50 community-based media and communication projects in the region.

All future profits of CM Solutions will be used to benefit community media initiatives.

For further information contact CM Solutions on 0114 220 1426, or go to www.cmso.co.uk

For more information about The Co-operative Loan Fund please contact the fund managers, Co-operative & Community Finance, on 0117 916 6750 , email info@co-opandcommunityfinance.coop or visit www.co-operativeloanfund.co.uk

