‘Starting-up, Not Slowing Down’:

Social Entrepreneurs in an Ageing Society

by

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To my dad Omar, whose life was cut short before we met, my mother Mahbouba, who passed away just as I embarked on my PhD journey, and my beautiful daughter Yasmine, who has been my bedrock during this thesis.
Declaration of Originality

This thesis and the work to which it refers are the results of my own efforts. Any ideas, data, images, or text resulting from the work of others (whether published or unpublished) are fully identified as such within the work and attributed to their originator in the text, bibliography or in footnotes. This thesis has not been submitted in whole or in part for any other academic degree or professional qualification. I agree that the University has the right to submit my work to the plagiarism detection service ‘TurnitinUK’ for originality checks. Whether or not drafts have been so-assessed, the University reserves the right to require an electronic version of the final document (as submitted) for assessment as above.

Zeineb Djebali

1st November 2018

- Please note the researcher was known as Zeineb Cox during this research. However, since then, the researcher is known as Zeineb Djebali.
Abstract

A growing body of literature examines entrepreneurial intentions of people aged fifty and over who can be referred to as ‘later life’ entrepreneurs (e.g. Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003). However, there is a significant gap in our knowledge about entrepreneurial (social) intentions for people in the same age group. This study uses qualitative research incorporating twenty-eight in-depth interviews with social entrepreneurs aged fifty and over as well as seven expert interviews with members of the Age Action Alliance. These were used to explore the factors these social entrepreneurs consider important in their decision to set up their social enterprises, their ‘everyday’ lives, and the challenges they face and how they might be supported. An interpretive social constructionist approach was adopted to examine and make sense of the participants’ daily lived experiences, from their perspectives. Data was analysed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and the findings revealed the participants were driven by ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives, with each having a different interpretation of the factors they considered important in influencing their entrepreneurial (social) intentions, affecting their social orientations and their entrepreneurial (social) identity. The participants displayed a strong sense of commitment to the social need they identified. Nevertheless, despite some perceiving income generation to be significant for facilitating their ability to achieve their social objectives, others viewed income generation to be incompatible with their social mission.

This study examines the subjective views of social entrepreneurs aged fifty and over and the ways in which they construct their ‘everyday lives’ as social entrepreneurs. It provides insights about the interplay between the participants’ motives for setting up their social enterprises and their age and entrepreneurial (social) identity. In addition, this study provides an in-depth understanding of the benefits the participants gained during the social entrepreneurial process, whilst bringing significant insights into the challenges and barriers they experienced and how they might be supported. As such, this study extends theoretical and empirical research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise by developing our understanding of the ‘everyday’ lived experiences of social entrepreneurs in ‘later life’ from their own perspectives. It is recommended this study be used as a guide for policy makers and organisations that are supporting social entrepreneurs in this age group. Future research should, therefore, be carried out to examine entrepreneurial (social) intentions of different age groups, as more investigation is needed to explain whether the support required by social entrepreneurs is age specific. Furthermore, it is suggested this study could be useful for academic researchers who would like to further their knowledge on the underlying factors that drive those aged fifty and over to become social entrepreneurs and how they view their ‘everyday’ lives from their perspectives.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Age Action Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Centre for Policy and Ageing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Defined Contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWP</td>
<td>Department for Work and Pensions</td>
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<td>DRA</td>
<td>Default Retirement Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTI</td>
<td>Department for Trade and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSA</td>
<td>Financial Services Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILC</td>
<td>International Longevity Centre</td>
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<td>LLSEs</td>
<td>Later Life Social Entrepreneurs</td>
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<td>LLEs</td>
<td>Later Life Entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIACE</td>
<td>National Institute for Adult Continuing Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEST</td>
<td>National Employment Saving Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ONS</td>
<td>Office for National Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRIME</td>
<td>Prince’s Initiative for Mature Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>School for Social Entrepreneurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>State Pension Age</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<td>WP</td>
<td>Work Programme</td>
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Rationale for the Research

Over the last decade, the UK population has undergone a shift in its age structure with more people aged fifty and over (50+) claiming their state pensions than those in the workplace (Casey, et al., 2003; Dustmann, et al., 2015; ONS, 2017a). This has fiscal implications on public resources and a significant loss of valuable experience and skills of this age group (Tinsley, 2012). In response, government agencies and policy makers in the UK have begun to examine policy reforms to extending work, involvement, and entrepreneurship for those aged 50+ (DWP, 2014b; Casey, et al., 2003; Phillipson and Smith, 2005). However, this research suggests there are a number of factors influencing ‘older’ peoples’ decision to exit or remain in the labour market. These can include, wealth, health, pension arrangements, care responsibilities, education, family structure, and gender (Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Berry, 2010; Foster, et al., 2014; Higgs, et al., 2003).

Extending the participation of those aged 50+ has become one of the cornerstones of the UK government’s agenda (DWP, 2014b). This has been driven by the decrease in fertility rates, resulting in an increase in dependency ratio, with the proportion of ‘older’ people in the overall population higher than their younger counterparts (ONS, 2017a; b). In addition, the effect of the so-called ‘baby boomer’ generation can be seen in a large number of people aged 50+ approaching retirement compared to those in the labour workforce. Besides, increased life expectancy means ‘older’ people are spending more years in retirement than in the workplace, presenting fiscal implications on social, health care and pension systems (e.g. Coupland, et al., 2008; Fealy and McNamara, 2009; Luborsky and Sankar, 1993). As such, new policy reforms have been introduced by the UK government to extend the participation of those aged 50+. These include anti-age discrimination laws that legally protect ‘older’ workers against ageism in employment, training, and education (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017; Legislation.gov.uk, 2010). In addition, the Default Retirement Age (DRA) of sixty-five was abolished in 2011, allowing ‘older workers’ to choose when to retire (Pension Act 2011; Pensions Policy Institute, 2015a; b). Despite significant improvements on the policy level, age discrimination in the workplace and long-term unemployment continue to be barriers faced by those aged 50+ in employment situations (Casey, et al., 2003; Foster, et al., 2014; PRIME, 2015a;b; Sinclair, et al., 2013; Tinsley, 2012).
Research has revealed that ‘older’ people are changing their perceptions of what it means to be ‘old’ and the retirement process (e.g. Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013; Beehr and Bennett; 2015; Schafer and Shippee, 2009). As such, many no longer perceive their chronological age as a barrier to continued participation, but rather an opportunity to bridge back into employment, volunteering, and entrepreneurship (Gray, 2009; Onyx and Warburton, 2003). Therefore, policy makers, researchers, and practitioners have begun to recognise the prospects of those aged 50+ as the next generation of entrepreneurs (Baucus and Human 1994; Galbraith and Latham, 1996).

Despite existing research on age and entrepreneurial intentions, research on ‘later life’ entrepreneurs is limited (Stumbitz, et al., 2012; Weber and Schaper, 2003). Part of this problem is the focus on positive entrepreneurial opportunities, mainly for the younger generation (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2007; 2008; 2009), creating reluctance among possible future ‘older’ entrepreneurs (Galbraith and Latham, 1996; Kautonen, et al., 2011) and an artificial generation gap, stereotyping individuals based on their age. Many ‘older’ people are perceived to become entrepreneurs to avoid unemployment and a ‘poverty trap’ (Biehl, et al., 2013; Curran and Blackburn, 2001). In addition, although age has been seen positively in some of the entrepreneurship literature (e.g. Singh and DeNoble, 2003), it has also sometimes been portrayed as a barrier to entrepreneurship (e.g. Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Lévesque and Minniti, 2006). For instance, Singh and DeNoble (2003) note, pull factors such as self-fulfilment, flexibility, and independence positively influence entrepreneurial intentions. However, Lévesque and Minniti (2006) argue, if the income to be gained from starting a business is less than paid wages, entrepreneurial intentions decline with age.

However, such stereotypes tend to ignore the very real benefits and assets of ‘older’ people (Deal, 2008) who have advantages that go far beyond experience (Wadhwa, et al., 2010; Wadhwa, 2012). These can include the desire to ‘put back’ into society through meaningful social activity and engagement, management, leadership, industrial and technical experience, better business, and social and political networks, all of which influence their entrepreneurial intentions (Singh and DeNoble, 2003). Say and Patrickson (2012, p. 133), for example, found that knowledge, extensive social networks, and risk attitudes related to ‘uncertainty and uncontrollable environment factors’, may contribute to successful outcomes for entrepreneurial ventures.

Furthermore, contrary to stereotypes (Kautonen, et al., 2011), in high-growth technology industries ‘older’ entrepreneurs outnumber younger ones, with twice as many over 50s as under 25s and on the whole, being actually more likely to create breakthrough innovations (Wadhwa, et al., 2010; Wadhwa, 2012). People aged 50+ who are technology-oriented are much more likely to initiate a business venture relying on their technical skills than younger individuals (Baucus and Human, 1994). However,
‘older’ former public-sector workers, when compared to ‘older’ private sector workers, have been found to be more risk averse (Cannon and Kurowska, 2013). Nevertheless, this age group, among social entrepreneurs, as with other ‘older’ people in the society, can suffer from diminishing levels of energy and health as well as experiencing ageist attitudes towards them (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2007; 2008; 2009; Weber and Schaper, 2003).

A distinction between ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions for people aged 50+ who are known as ‘later life’ entrepreneurs, is commonly found in literature (e.g. Kautonen, 2008; Kautonen and Palmroos, 2010; Weber and Schaper, 2003). Self-fulfilment, flexibility, and independence have been found to be amongst the ‘pull’ factors influencing their decision to start a business. However, others may become entrepreneurs out of necessity (push factors) due to ageism, job dissatisfaction, lack of employment opportunities and low income in retirement (e.g. Kautonen, 2008; Walker and Webster, 2007; Weber and Schaper, 2003).

Although research has provided significant insights into the factors influencing those aged 50+ and their entrepreneurial intentions, limited research has examined the experiences of ‘later life’ social entrepreneurs (LLSEs) (Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Singh and De Noble, 2003; Weber and Schaper 2003). My study, therefore, addresses these limitations by examining the experiences of those who have set up a social enterprise for social or environmental purposes. Although embedded within social entrepreneurship as the broader academic field of enquiry, I recognise there are still many overlapping areas with mainstream entrepreneurship literature. In addition, given my empirical focus on the UK context, the age of 50+ is of particular importance since it is often used as a guideline by policy makers to introduce new policy reforms for those ‘aged 50 to state pension age’, such as the ‘Fuller Working Lives: Framework for Actions’ (DWP, 2014b).

Academic and practitioner literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has enhanced our understanding of the role played by social entrepreneurs in addressing the most pressing social needs that have been unmet by not-for-profit and private sector organisations (e.g. Cornforth, 2014; Dees, 2001; Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Leadbeater, 1997). The focus of this literature has been on defining the term social enterprise (e.g. Martin and Osberg, 2007; Peredo and McLean, 2006), social entrepreneurial traits, the differences between commercially driven entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs (e.g. Dees, 2001; Shaw and Carter, 2007; Weerawardena, et al., 2003), and the social entrepreneurial process (e.g. Perrini, et al., 2010). In addition, research has examined the blurred boundaries of social enterprises due to their ‘hybridity’ and the ways in which social entrepreneurs differ in their entrepreneurial (social) orientations (e.g. Massetti, 2008; Stumbitz, 2013; Zahra, et al., 2009).
Although the social enterprise field is academically underdeveloped with competing conceptualisations (e.g. Peredo and McLean, 2006; Trivedi and Stokols, 2011; Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006), two main literature strands have been identified. One focuses on social value creation and social innovation, demonstrating the innovative solutions presented by social enterprises to address pressing social needs (e.g. Dees, 2001; Leadbeater, 1997). The other argues social enterprises are often ‘hybrid’ organisations combining for-profit trading activity with an explicit social mission (e.g. Boschee, 2001; Boschee and McClurg, 2003). It emphasises how, due to funding pressures, social enterprises seek alternative revenue streams to financially sustain their organisations and achieve their social mission (e.g. Boschee, 2001; Dees and Elias, 1998; Di Domenico, et al., 2010).

However, the ‘hybridity’ of social enterprises has been argued to blur the boundaries between not-for-profit and private sector organisations and undermined the role of those who create social value without the pursuit of income (e.g. Caulier-Grice, et al., 2012; Dees and Elias, 1998; Nicholls, 2010a). Yet, social enterprises adopt for-profit trading activity in the pursuit of their social mission (e.g. Boschee, 2001; Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Mair and Schoen, 2007). A social enterprise is therefore ‘a business with primarily social objectives whose surplus is reinvested for that purpose rather than driven by the need to maximise profit for owners and shareholders’ (Ashoka, 2014). As such, the term ‘social enterprise’ is used in this thesis to refer to ‘hybrid’ organisations that trade for the benefits of their social mission. However, it is also acknowledged that the exact definition of social enterprise and the way this is understood on the ground depends on the social entrepreneurs themselves as the participants involved in this study, and the ways in which they define the term from their own perspectives.

This thesis aims to address this gap in social enterprise and social entrepreneurship literature by adopting social constructionism as a theoretical foundation, giving priority to the voices and perspectives of those involved (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 2003). Within this context, the aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the factors LLSEs consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise, the way they interpret their ‘everyday’ lives, the challenges they face and how they might be supported.

1.2 Research Questions

Due to limited research examining the ‘everyday’ life experiences of social entrepreneurs in ‘later life’ (LLSEs) (Stumbitz, et al., 2012), three research questions have been iteratively developed from the
critical review of literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise and refined during the research process. These are:

1. What are the factors LLSEs consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise?
2. How do LLSEs view their everyday lives from their own perspectives?
3. How do they explain the challenges they face and how they might be supported?

The above research questions are predominately exploratory to gain access to the subjective views of LLSEs by identifying, probing, and examining the meanings they attach to their experience and the issues that concern them. As noted by Luckmann (2008):

‘Whereas the human world, too, should be looked at from the ‘outside’, that is, as a reality that is to be objectively observed, described, and as best as one can, explained…the human world also has ‘an inside’, that is a world of individual subjects, of persons…the social worlds are made by people for people’ (Luckmann, 2008, p. 280).

The study is funded by a collaborative partnership between the ESRC South East Doctoral Centre (SEDTC) and UnLtd, a charity supporting social entrepreneurs based in the UK through funding awards, mentoring, and professional support (UnLtd, 2015). Hence, the participants in this study are LLSEs who have been funded through UnLtd core award programmes. Due to the collaborative nature of my research, I have, from the beginning, immersed myself in the setting of UnLtd through pre-arranged visits with my collaborative supervisors and others based at UnLtd to gain a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which they support social entrepreneurs. At the time this study was conducted, UnLtd coordinated the Age Action Alliance (AAA) working group on ‘valuing the contribution of older people’ and hence brokered my access to this group to gain a better understanding of the associated policy context.

Using social constructionism as a theoretical lens, I was able to gain a deep understanding, through the participants’ accounts, of their ‘everyday’ lives as social entrepreneurs. Therefore, this thesis offers new theoretical and empirical contributions by demonstrating the interplay of age and entrepreneurial (social) intentions, providing a deep understanding of the participants’ views and perceptions about their age identity and the ways in which these have shaped their decision to become social entrepreneurs. This and other contributions of the research are discussed further in Section 1.3 below.
1.3 Empirical and Theoretical Contributions

As discussed in this chapter and in greater detail in Chapter Two, the entrepreneurship literature has examined ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’ (e.g. Kautonen, 2008; Kautonen and Palmroos, 2010; Weber and Schaper, 2003). However, studies have found that experience, social networks, knowledge, and skill sets increase ‘older’ people’s entrepreneurial intentions (e.g. Kautonen, et al., 2011; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Wadhwa, et al., 2010). In addition, the review of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise literature demonstrates social entrepreneurs have an explicit social mission and may adopt business strategies in the pursuit of their social mission (Braga, et al., 2014; Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Soviana, 2015). However, while research demonstrates social entrepreneurs differ in their social orientations, with some perceiving income generation to be incompatible with their social mission (Massetti, 2008; Stumbitz, 2013), there is limited work examining the ‘everyday’ life experiences of LLSEs from their own perspectives and standpoints (e.g. Stumbitz, et al., 2012; Stumbitz, 2013).

This study addresses this research gap through empirical evidence collected from twenty-eight in-depth interviews with LLSEs who have been funded through UnLtd core award programmes. In addition, seven in-depth interviews were conducted with AAA committee members ‘on valuing the contribution of older people’ to gain an in-depth understanding of the policy context in which such social entrepreneurs are embedded. Hence, to my knowledge, this is the first qualitative study that examines the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs aged 50+ in the UK, leading to an in-depth understanding of their perceptions of their lived experiences, the challenges they face and how they might be supported.

The findings of this study further highlight the role employers and government policies could play in recognising the diversity of those aged 50+ by providing tailored support to extend their social and economic participation. In addition, it highlights the potential emotional and practical benefits achieved during the social entrepreneurial process, whilst drawing attention to the challenges experienced by participants.

1.4 Conceptual Framework: Social Constructionism

Entrepreneurship literature has made significant contributions in furthering our knowledge about entrepreneurial traits and the discovery and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities (e.g. Gartner, 1990; McClelland, 1965; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). However, entrepreneurship is often perceived as a process involving the creation of a new business venture to maximise profits and shareholders’ value (e.g. Gartner, 1990; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Nevertheless, researchers
have begun paying more attention to social constructionism as a theoretical foundation to examine the interplay between the ‘context’ that provides entrepreneurial opportunities and the ‘entrepreneur’ who takes direct action to discover, evaluate, and exploit these opportunities (e.g. Chell, 2010; Sarason, et al., 2006).

In focussing on participants’ ‘subjective’ views, I position my research within an interpretive social constructionist lens, taking a micro-level perspective to address the research questions by delving deeper into how the participants interpret their experiences, thereby allowing multiple voices and perspectives to emerge through their accounts (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Cunliffe, 2008). As noted by Andrews (2012, p. 40), although reality is socially defined, it ‘refers to the subjective experience of everyday life, how the world is understood rather than to the objective reality of the natural world’. This is supported by Burrell and Morgan (1979), who argue, the purpose of interpretive social constructionism is to understand and explain the social world from the points of view of those involved.

Social constructionism takes a critical stance towards the construction of social ‘reality’ (e.g. Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1985). This is maintained through social interactions with others, when human identity is socially constructed (e.g. Cunliffe, 2008; Gergen, 1985). Social reality is, therefore, not determined by nature, but the product of social processes constructed during social interactions with others. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue this involves ‘externalisation’, ‘objectivation’, and ‘internalisation’. Individuals and groups participate in the construction of their social world during social interactions, creating in the process, a common language by which to communicate (externalisation). During this process, the authors note, individuals and groups take ‘reality for granted’ (objectivation) and start experiencing it as being objective and external to their existence (internalisation). As Cunliffe (2008, p. 125) notes, reality is ‘experienced as being objective in that it affects our lives on an ongoing basis, and we have to go and learn about it’.

However, Berger and Luckmann view society as existing both in a subjective and objective reality. Objective reality is presented through systems of beliefs and values, language, and religion and that these factors exert an influence on how individuals and people interact with each other (Gergen, 1985; 1973; Nightingale and Cromby, 2002). However, this objective reality cannot be understood without the subjective perceptions of those who experience it (subjective reality). As noted by Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 18, italics in original text), ‘it is precisely the dual character of society in terms of objective facticity and subjective meaning that makes it ‘reality suis generis’’. Therefore, although the authors, recognise that ‘objective reality’ shapes the ways in which individuals and groups make sense of their reality, this reality is not determined by external structures but made ‘by the interpretations
and perceptions’ (Meyer, 2006, p. 726) of those involved. Hence, it cannot be understood without ‘reference’ to the meanings they attach to their actions (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 106). ‘Social constructionism is not about denying the existence of an external world. Rather, it simply argues that our knowledge of the social world is socially constructed and cannot be seen as a representation of this world’ (Korsgaard, 2007, p. 9).

Although I recognise that the ‘everyday’ lived experiences of the LLSEs cannot be divorced from the context in which they are embedded, adopting social constructionism as a theoretical foundation enables me to understand the ways in which they interpret their ‘everyday’ experiences from their standpoints since they are the ones who experience the social entrepreneurial process. Hence, my focus is to delve deeper into how they construct their own understanding of their experiences as social entrepreneurs.

1.5 Thesis Overview: Chapter Content Summaries

The thesis comprises of seven chapters. Chapter One explains the rationale for this study and the research questions that have been developed in response to a gap in our knowledge of the ‘everyday’ life experiences of LLSEs. Although the social entrepreneurship and social enterprise literature has enhanced our understanding of the role social entrepreneurs play in addressing the most pressing social needs, there is limited research examining the ‘everyday’ experiences of LLSEs. Hence, this thesis addresses this gap by adopting the lens of social constructionism that foregrounds the voices of those involved.

Chapter Two reviews the literature regarding the social construction of entrepreneurship, drawing on work which argues that social constructionism allows an understanding of how entrepreneurs discover, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities, from their own perspectives. As such, I highlight that, despite the lack of an agreed definition, social enterprises often take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations that trade for the benefit of their social mission. However, in doing so, they have blurred the boundaries between not-for-profit and private sector organisations and undermined the role of those who create social value without the pursuit of income. Subsequently, this chapter examines the ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’, followed by narrowing the focus to examining the entrepreneurial (social) intentions of those aged 50+.

Chapter Three reviews the literature on ageing and the retirement process, and the policy context in the UK. During this review, I noted that although medical and economic discourses tend to view ageing as a phase of decline and dependency, social gerontology regards ageing as a function of the
environment in which it is interpreted and a subjective construct dependent on the subjective views of those who experience it (e.g. Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Coupland, et al., 2008). Next, I review UK policy reforms such as the removal of the Default Retirement Age (DRA), to extend the participation of those aged 50+. Despite significant improvements made on the policy level, research has found ‘older’ age interacts with a number of factors such as health, pension arrangements, and care responsibilities (e.g. Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Higgs, et al., 2003). In the last section, literature on the retirement process is considered revealing retirement is no longer perceived as a cliff-edge event; instead, an opportunity to give back, and/or bridge into employment, volunteering, and entrepreneurship (e.g. Pengcharoen and Shultz, 2010; Schafer and Shippee, 2009).

Chapter Four considers the methodology adopted. Within this I outline the philosophical stance underpinning this research, the data collection methods adopted including the utility of a qualitative approach to data collection for addressing the research questions and the thematic analysis approach undertaken to arrive at the main themes presented in this study.

The findings of this research are presented in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five answers my first research question using the participants’ interpretations of the factors they consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise. Chapter Six answers both my second and third research questions using participants’ accounts of their ‘everyday’ life experiences, the challenges they faced, and how they might be supported. These two chapters present the findings of my thematic analysis to provide the reader with explanations on how the themes have emerged. Each theme is supported by extracts from the interviewees’ accounts and, where appropriate, discussed in relation to relevant key literature.

Chapter Seven sets out my conclusion and offers the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study. Insights on the practical implications of my findings on government policy and organisations supporting LLSEs are discussed. Although the practical implications of this study are useful to guide policies, they can also be useful for those aged 50+ who may consider social entrepreneurship as an option to continue their social and economic participation. This chapter concludes by considering the limitations of my research and identifying areas for future research.
Chapter Two:
Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise: Concepts and Definitions

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. The chapter begins by examining the social construction of entrepreneurship, drawing on the work of Sarason, et al., (2006) and Chell (2010), who both argue social constructionism is a theoretical foundation that allows for an understanding of how entrepreneurs discover, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities, from their own perspectives.

In Section 2.3, I review academic and practitioner literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. This review highlights, despite the lack of an agreed definition, that social enterprises often take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations which trade for the benefit of their social mission. However, research found social entrepreneurs differ in their social orientations as some may view income generation to be incompatible with their social mission. In Section 2.4, a multidimensional model of social enterprise is presented, displaying the interplay between social mission, multiagency, social ownership, and for-profit trading activity. In Section 2.5, I examine the social entrepreneurial process by drawing on the work of Perrini, et al., (2010), demonstrating that the process involves four stages: opportunity identification, evaluation, formalisation, and scaling.

Section 2.6 examines social entrepreneurial traits which is followed by examining, more broadly, entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. Research has found ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors influence the decision of those aged 50+ to start a business (e.g. Kautonen, 2008; Kautonen and Palmroos, 2010; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003). However, limited research examines the experiences of LLSEs. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the main insights drawn from the literature review on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise.

2.2 The Social Construction of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise

Research on entrepreneurship has enhanced our knowledge about entrepreneurial traits and the process by which the business venture is created (e.g. Gartner, 1990; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). However, entrepreneurship is often perceived from an economic perspective involving the creation of a new business venture to maximise profits and shareholders’ value (Cunningham and Lischeron, 1991;
Gartner, 1990; Low and MacMillan, 1988; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). The economic perspectives of entrepreneurship, such as Schumpeter (1947) for instance, argues, the ‘entrepreneur’ is an ‘innovator’ who introduces new methods of productions, new sources of supply, and new markets to disrupt the economic equilibrium (Hagedoorn, 1996; Rahim and Mohtar, 2015). Entrepreneurs, according to Schumpeter, therefore, exploit entrepreneurial opportunities to turn them into ‘prosperous and profitable businesses’ (Bouchikhi, 1993, p. 551).

The entrepreneurship theory has also been applied in academic research that examines the traits of the ‘entrepreneur’ who has been perceived to have ‘unique’ (Gartner, 1988) characteristics, enabling her or him to discover and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities. Among the many traits attributed to the ‘entrepreneur’ are risk-taking (e.g. Brockhaus, 1980) alertness (e.g. Kirzner, 1979), self-efficacy (e.g. Bandura, 2000; 2006), internal locus of control and tolerance for ambiguity (e.g. Begley and Boyd, 1987), and a high need for achievement (e.g. McClelland, 1965). Thus, both economic and traits theories have made significant contributions to the field of entrepreneurship. Economic theories understand entrepreneurship from an economic perspective, where the outcome of creating a business venture is to maximise profits. By contrast, traits theories argue the ‘entrepreneur’ is born with inherent traits, which are seen as key factors in explaining the differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs (Bouchikhi, 1993; Carland, et al., 1984; Chell, 2010; Gartner, 1988).

However, as argued by Gartner (1990), the ongoing debate on the personality traits of the entrepreneur asks the wrong question. For Gartner, entrepreneurship is a multidimensional process comprising the inherent characteristics of the entrepreneur, the context in which the entrepreneur is embedded, and the process by which the venture is created. Although Gartner focuses on the processes of creating a new business venture, researching entrepreneurship from a social constructionist perspective has also been advocated by academic researchers (e.g. Chell, 2010; Sarason, et al., 2006). These researchers have begun paying attention to the interplay between the ‘context’ that provides the sources of entrepreneurial opportunities and the ‘set of individuals who discover, evaluate, and exploit’ entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000, p. 218, italics in original).

Prominent in this emergent body of literature are Sarason, et al., (2006, p. 287), who argue that studying entrepreneurship from a ‘subjective lens’ can enhance our understanding of the ‘dynamic interaction’ between the ‘entrepreneur’ and the sources of entrepreneurial opportunities presented by the ‘context’. For the authors, the act of entrepreneurship:
‘...occurs as the agent specifies, interprets, and acts upon the sources of opportunity. This is a dynamic process whereby the sources of opportunity are acted on by the agent, and the agent is affected by the sources of opportunity’ (Sarason, et al., 2006, p. 287).

Building upon the entrepreneurship theory of Shane and Venkataraman (2000), in which they argue entrepreneurship incorporates the discovery of opportunities and the process by which these opportunities are exploited, Sarason, et al., (2006, p.286) note that entrepreneurship research tends to focus on the nature of entrepreneurial opportunities, with less consideration being given at understanding the ‘dynamic interaction of the individual and the opportunity’. Although entrepreneurs are embedded within a specific context, they are ‘agents’ who take direct actions to discover, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities. As noted by the authors, ‘the act of entrepreneurship occurs as the agent specifies, interprets, and acts upon the sources of opportunities’ (Sarason, et al., 2006, p. 286). Entrepreneurship, according to Sarason, et al., (2006, p. 287) is, therefore, a ‘dual’ process involving the ‘context’ and the ‘entrepreneur’ who determines entrepreneurial actions, arguing ‘entrepreneurship and opportunity cannot be understood separate and distinct from each other’.

Although Sarason, et al., (2006) pays attention to the interplay between the ‘context’ and the ‘entrepreneur’, they foreground the role of subjectivity, which involves the researcher to examine the way entrepreneurs discover, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities, from their own perspectives. In their article: ‘How can we know the dance from the dancer?’ (2010) the authors note that studying the context in which entrepreneurs are embedded is beneficial, however, entrepreneurial opportunities cannot be ‘created, maintained or changed without the entrepreneur as an agent’ (Sarason, et al., (2010, p. 242). Hence, for the authors, it is useful to understand the sources of entrepreneurial opportunities presented by the ‘context’, however, primacy should be given to understanding the actions of the ‘entrepreneur’ (the dancer) and how she or he acts on entrepreneurial opportunities.

In her paper, ‘Towards researching the “opportunistic entrepreneur”: A social constructionist approach and a research agenda’, Chell (2010) also proposes social constructionism as a theoretical foundation by which entrepreneurship could be studied. She defines the entrepreneurial act:

‘An entrepreneurial act is an attempt to respond to, and thereby change, a set of circumstances (perceived in a positive or a negative light) with a view to creating a desired outcome’ (Chell, 2010, p. 71).
Building upon Bouchikhi’s (1993) entrepreneurship framework, in which he argues that the outcomes of the entrepreneurial process is emergent from a complex interaction between the entrepreneur and the environment, Chell (2010, p.66) argues, the entrepreneur is an ‘active agent who shapes and creates his or her own reality’. Thus, the entrepreneurial process for Chell (2010, p. 73) can only be realised through the actions of the entrepreneur who ‘envisions and realises entrepreneurial opportunities’. Researchers, therefore, are required to be able to assess how they ‘think about opportunities and construct possible futures’.

Hence, there is evidence that academic researchers are responding to the need for furthering entrepreneurship research, adopting social constructionism as a theoretical lens which foregrounds the subjective view of those involved. However, limited attention has been made on examining the ‘everyday’ reality of LLSEs from their perspectives (Stumbitz, et al., 2012; Stumbitz, 2013). This is evidenced when comparing the body of literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, defining the term ‘social enterprise’ and its blurred boundaries, and comparing commercially-driven entrepreneurs to social entrepreneurs (e.g. Austin, et al., 2006; Dees and Elias, 1998; Drayton, 2007), with little consideration given at understanding the subjective views of those who experience the social entrepreneurial process. Hence, the focus of this study and its approach have been developed in response to a lack of research examining the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs from their own standpoints. Since the focus of my study is on LLSEs, the next section presents an overview of the background of social enterprise and the multiple conceptualisations of the term.

2.3 Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise: Background and Definitions

The social enterprise sector has emerged as a result of the development of the European cooperative movement in the early 1990s (Cornforth, 2014; Defourny and Nyssens, 2010; Nicholls, 2010b) in response to social needs that have been inadequately met by government sector agencies. As such, social enterprises have been seen to play a significant role in meeting social needs by tackling ‘the increasing exclusion of some groups’ (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010, p. 34), such as those in long-term unemployment, who are less qualified, and suffer social problems. The evolution of the social enterprise sector in the UK has been driven by responses from the UK government and government agencies that promoted the sector as a vehicle for delivering efficient public services and address pressing social needs through ‘market mechanisms’ (Cornforth, 2014; Defourny and Nyssens, 2010). As such, social enterprise has been defined by the UK government as a ‘business with primarily social
objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners’ (DTI, 2002). In 2005, the UK government also introduced the Community Interest Company (CIC) as a legal framework specifically for social enterprises. The CIC legal framework requires social enterprises to satisfy a ‘community interest test’ to ensure they operate for the benefit of the community. In addition, they are subject to an ‘asset lock’ which restricts the transfer of assets, thereby ensuring they operate primarily for the benefit of the community rather than serving the interests of private shareholders (BIS, 2011, p.2). This highlights that social enterprises undertake trading activity to achieve their social mission and reinvest most of their income to further their social objectives.

However, one of the prominent promoters of the social enterprise sector is Bill Drayton who introduced the term ‘social entrepreneurship’ when launching Ashoka Innovators for the Public, a charity supporting social entrepreneurs on a global scale to solve intractable social problems. Ashoka defines social entrepreneurs as ‘powerful change agents who can make a positive difference in organisations, communities, and countries (Ashoka, 2014). As noted by Drayton (2007, p. 4), ‘social entrepreneurs change social patterns, catalyse, and engineer social transformations’. In addition, Michael Young, who founded a number of organisations such as the Young Foundation (1954) to promote social innovation, set up the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) in 1997, providing practical learning programmes to those who wish to bring about social or environmental changes (SSE, 2014). For young, social entrepreneurs:

‘Organise change and spot gaps in our social fabric...their aim is to enrich society, to bridge the gap between the powerful and powerless, and to create a commonwealth of opportunity’ (Briggs, 2001, p. xv).

Although practitioner literature advocates the significant role played by social entrepreneurs in bringing about social change, earlier academic researchers champion their leadership role in the public sector and the ways in which they provide solutions to failing welfare systems (e.g. Leadbeater, 1997; Prahbu, 1999). Waddock and Post (1991, p. 393), for instance, note social entrepreneurs bring about ‘catalytic social change’ in the public-sector agenda. Providing an example of two organisations based in the United States (Hands Across America and the Partnership for Drug-Free America), the authors note social entrepreneurs within these organisations bring about awareness and change public attitudes about social problems such as hunger, homelessness, and drug abuse, which may ultimately result in policy interventions. Hence, they argue, social entrepreneurs have three leadership
characteristics such as the vision to reshape public attitudes, the credibility to acquire the necessary resources, and the commitment to create social value.

Leadbeater (1997) has also noted social entrepreneurs address social needs that have been unmet by failing welfare systems. In his article, ‘The Rise of the Social Entrepreneur’ (1997), he notes social entrepreneurs:

‘Identify under-utilized resources – people, buildings, equipment – and find ways of putting them to use to satisfy unmet social needs. They innovate new welfare services and new ways of delivering existing services’ (Leadbeater, 1997, p. 7).

For Leadbeater, therefore, social entrepreneurs bring innovative solutions to social problems and create services that are more effective and cheaper than those offered by the welfare state. As such, a significant characteristic of social enterprises, for Leadbeater, is social innovation, demonstrating the ways they tackle intractable social problems in innovative ways, to ‘empower and regenerate deprived communities economically and socially and reform the welfare system’ (Leadbeater, 1997, p. 18).

A further way in which social enterprises address social needs is by supporting ‘economic activity in areas deemed unprofitable by the private sector and neglected by the state’ (Di Domenico, et al., 2010, p. 681). A case study conducted by Di Domenico, et al., (2010) on eight social enterprises in the UK, for instance, highlighted in general that social enterprises tend to operate in resource-poor communities with welfare problems. The authors note social enterprises are a form of business ventures that are characterised by: firstly, the pursuit of revenue generation through trading to increase their autonomy from government funding and philanthropic donations; secondly, they aim to achieve social and environmental aims, extending beyond revenue generation by responding to the needs of their beneficiaries; and thirdly, generate additional benefits such as building the social capital of their local communities. Thompson (2002, pp. 413-415) similarly argues that social enterprises often build their local community’s social capital through ‘the creation of community-based tangible and intangible assets which would otherwise not exist...that both give us a feel-good factor and have an impact on the physical environment’. For Thompson, social enterprises build the social capital of their local community by creating jobs in deprived areas, utilise buildings and services deemed non-profitable by other sectors, help those in need, and provide volunteer support.

Social enterprises, therefore, often take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations, adopting market trading activity to create social value, which explain the existence of ‘S’ in social enterprises, as defined by Felício, et al., (2013):
‘Social value refers to the necessary goods and services provided by organizations with social purposes such as promoting community development, advocating for more inclusive and fairer policies, or dealing with a variety of other social problems’ (Felício, et al., 2013, p. 2140).

Dees (2001) further explains, social enterprises are required to find a financial structure to reinforce their social mission which is achieved by balancing commercial and philanthropic activity, evaluating potential revenues from beneficiaries, and looking at government and private funders who have a vested interest in their social mission. Similarly, Mair and Schoen (2007) provide empirical evidence based on three social enterprises: Grameen Bank (GB, Bangladesh), Sekem (Egypt), and Mondragón Corporacion Cooperativa (MCC, Spain), by examining the ways in which these organisations create social value whilst trading. They argue, each of these organisations creates social value through alleviating poverty (e.g. GB), fostering cultural and social life (e.g. Sekem) and creating jobs and community empowerment (e.g. MCC) by incorporating business strategies. As such, the authors note that incorporating business strategies does not only help their sustainability but also promotes their independence from government grants and subsidies. This is congruent with the view of Boschee (2001), who notes:

‘Social entrepreneurship becomes a convenient label for almost any new approach that has a social outcome. But it’s one thing to design, develop, and implement a new program - and quite another to sustain it without depending on philanthropy and government subsidy’ (Boschee, 2001, p. 16).

Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006) have also suggested that due to the competitive environment and funding pressures, social enterprises seek alternative revenue streams by displaying innovativeness, pro-activeness, risk management, and sustainability. Firstly, social enterprises are required to innovate their services and the way they seek funding. Secondly, they display pro-activeness in the delivery of their service to survive the competitive environment. Thirdly, due to the uncertainty of available funding, social enterprises are required to assess the level of risk involved before committing to any project, and finally, focusing on sustainability to secure their long-term survival. Therefore, social enterprises tend to adopt for-profit trading activity to achieve their social mission and financially sustain their organisation. However, as noted by Dees (1998, p.56), ‘the drive to become more business-like and earn an income may pull the social venture away from its original
social mission’. As such, he suggests the primary structure and strategy of social enterprises should be mission-driven – that is, adopt business strategies to achieve their social objectives.

Fritsch, et al., (2014, p. 3) also argue that by adopting business strategies, social enterprises may ‘drift’ from their social mission, detracting them from achieving their social objectives. However, the authors concurrently note ‘mission drift’ is less likely to occur if their social mission remains their primary resources. Hence, for Fritsch, et al., (2014), social enterprises have an explicit social mission and trading is the means by which they achieve their social objectives. This suggests, despite trading, social enterprises often have a ‘balanced mission’ blending social value creation with income generation (Zahra, et al., 2009).

Research has also indicated, the preoccupation with revenue generation may undermine the role of communities, volunteers, and carers who play a significant role in addressing social needs without the pursuit of income (e.g. Caulier-Grice, et al., 2012; Nicholls, 2010b). Nicholls (2010a, p.p. 624-626), for instance, argues, the discourse on social innovation seems to prioritise the ‘heroic’ figure of the social entrepreneur over the role played by community organisations that address significant local needs. However, they often have limited financial capital and lack ‘legitimacy’ from government and funders, constraining their ability to ‘propagate their own discourses of social entrepreneurship in opposition to hero entrepreneur narratives and business model ideal types’.

This view is supported by Caulier-Grice, et al., (2012, p. 29), who argue, social value creation presented by the ‘informal sector’, such as those who provide home care or volunteer for a local charity, meet social needs. However, the sector is often characterised by ‘informal networks rather than formal organisations or institutions’, leading to social value being evaluated in terms of time, reciprocity, and gifting rather than money (Caulier-Grice, et al., 2012, p. 29). As such, the authors note, although the informal sector represents an important source of social innovation by supporting local communities, families, and friends, it tends to be undermined due to prioritising and legitimising the social enterprise sector.

These researchers have offered significant insights into the role of communities and individuals who address social needs without the pursuit of income. However, social enterprises have an explicit social mission, and hence, their primary objective is to create social value despite income generation (e.g. Cornforth, 2014; Spear, et al., 2009). Mair and Schoen (2007, p. 65), for instance, argue social enterprises focus primarily on social value creation with economic value creation as a ‘necessary condition to ensure financial stability’. However, in doing so, they have blurred the boundaries between for-profit and non-profit sectors, which is examined in Section 2.3.1 below.
2.3.1 Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise: Blurring of Boundaries

Research has found that by incorporating business approaches to social and environmental problems, social enterprises have blurred the boundaries between not-for-profit and private sector organisations (e.g. Austin, et al., 2006; Cornforth, 2014; Dees, 1998; Spear, et al., 2009). Thompson (2002) notes this can partly be explained by the lack of an agreed definition of social enterprise and an understanding of the meaning of social entrepreneurship. He argues, the ‘scope of social entrepreneurship in both business and voluntary sector have not been mapped effectively’, contributing to the disruption of these boundaries (Thompson, 2002, p. 412). For Thompson, social entrepreneurship can be found in for-profit seeking businesses committed to ‘doing good’, in social enterprises which are set up with a largely social purpose, and in the voluntary sector, however, they differ in their social objectives. Conducting an analysis of two case studies in the UK (The Castleford Community Learning Centre and the Get Sorted Academy of Music), Thompson argues, these voluntary organisations make significant contributions to society, such as job creation in deprived areas, community feel-good activities, sports and coaching for young people, and helping those disadvantaged, all of which are achieved through social entrepreneurialism. Therefore, for Thompson, although for-profit seeking businesses create social value, the ‘main world of the social entrepreneur is the voluntary sector’ (Thompson, 2002, p. 413).

Austin, et al., (2006, p. 2), on the other hand, note social entrepreneurship is ‘an innovative activity with a social objective that can occur in either not-for-profit or for-profit organisations, in corporate entrepreneurship or in hybrid social enterprises that combine for-profit and not-for-profit approaches’. However, despite sharing similar concerns in terms of market barriers, customers, competition, and finances, there are four ways in which social entrepreneurs differ. Firstly, whereas commercially driven entrepreneurs tend to focus on ‘breakthroughs’ and identify new needs, social entrepreneurs often focus on serving a social need more effectively through innovative approaches. The authors suggest, social entrepreneurs believe in social change and meet the needs of society in a ‘superior way’ compared to commercially driven entrepreneurs who identify entrepreneurial opportunities to maximise wealth. Secondly, social entrepreneurs tend to be constrained by lack of resources. Thirdly, although both require human and financial capital, social entrepreneurs often rely on social networks to access funding, management, and staff, among other resources. Hence, in comparison to commercially driven entrepreneurs who often have access to financial resources to recruit and retain talents, social entrepreneurs are often unable to pay ‘market rates’ for key
personnel, and therefore, rely on volunteer support (Austin, et al., 2006, p. 11). The fourth way in which social and commercially driven entrepreneurs differ is in the way deals (value) are exchanged. Whilst commercially driven entrepreneurs have a degree of flexibility in the way financial capital is used and in retaining staff due to access to resources, social entrepreneurs often rely on creative strategies to retain staff and seek alternative revenue streams to sustain their organisations, with a high degree of accountability towards how the money is spent.

Nevertheless, the ‘hybridity’ of social enterprises have also blurred the boundaries of the not-for-profit sector (e.g. Cornforth, 2014; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Weerawardena, et al., 2003). Dees (1998, p. 56) explains, traditionally, the not-for-profit sector played a significant role in ameliorating social problems such as health, education, poverty, environmental pollution, drug and domestic abuse, and supplemented government initiatives using innovative approaches that ‘functioned as a vehicle for private citizens to pursue their own vision of the good society independent of government policy’. However, due to government spending cuts, not-for-profit organisations have started to behave like businesses by commercialising their core programmes and charging beneficiaries for their services. Nonetheless, in comparison to social enterprises that trade with an explicit social mission, not-for-profit organisations tend to rely heavily on government grants and philanthropic donations. He further explains, social enterprises can exist in a spectrum comprising not-for-profit and for-profit organisations, however, Schumpeter’s (1947) understanding of the entrepreneur as a change agent is essential in understanding social entrepreneurship. According to Dees, social entrepreneurs are ‘change agents’ like the Schumpeterian entrepreneur, by bringing innovative solutions to social problems and pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities.

A study by Swanson and Di Zhang (2010) comparing for-profit organisations to social enterprises also found, they differ in their social orientations. For-profit social improvement organisations support social change through philanthropic donations and advocacy, however, social value creation is only part of their social mission. By contrast, social transformational organisations are driven by social entrepreneurs who apply business practices and take direct actions to engender social change. As they note, the intention, motivation, and vision of the social entrepreneur is to transform social conditions. This is congruent with Zahra, et al., (2009, p. 522), who argue, ‘social entrepreneurs are moved by different motivations to discover and exploit opportunities. This is by embracing a direct social mission to transform social conditions’. Similarly, Thompson (2002) notes, although socially responsible businesses donate money to help social causes, social enterprise is an activity that emerges from the motivation of the social entrepreneur to make a difference and ‘do good’ in society. As he states:
‘Socially responsible businesses are those with social ethos and donate money for social causes and community activities. In contrast, social entrepreneurship is an activity to make a difference by seeing an opportunity to make good in society’ (Thompson, 2002, p. 415).

Furthermore, Busenitz, et al., (2015, p. 5) state not-for-profit organisations, such as charities, may adopt a social enterprise model as a solution to stabilise their funding sources, however, their main resources are still ‘largely drawn from public grants and donations to meet social needs’. In contrast, social enterprises are ‘spearheaded’ by social entrepreneurs who find solutions to pressing social problems. They state, ‘the social entrepreneur engages in the creation of a social enterprise venture, pursuing a social need through a marketplace opportunity’ (Busenitz, et al., 2015, p. 11).

Therefore, as shown in Table 2.1, despite overlapping boundaries between sectors, social enterprises are characterised by their explicit social mission, indicating their funding level, governance, and the distribution of their profits are different to those of not-for-profit and for-profit sector organisations. Although increasing numbers of not-for-profit organisations adopt business approaches to generate revenues, they draw most of their resources through government subsidies and philanthropy to support their ongoing operation and serve their beneficiaries (Dees and Anderson, 2006). In addition, although for-profit businesses support social causes financially, their primary aim is to maximise shareholders’ value. However, social enterprises often take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations, generating their main revenue from trading, which is reinvested into the business (Ashoka, 2014) for the benefits of beneficiaries.
### Table 2.1 Differences between social enterprise, not-for-profit, and for-profit.

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<th>Social Enterprise</th>
<th>Not-for-Profit</th>
<th>For-Profit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims</strong></td>
<td>Social and economic value creation</td>
<td>Social value creation</td>
<td>Economic value creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of Profit</strong></td>
<td>Profit earnings, limits on profit distribution</td>
<td>Non-profit making</td>
<td>Profit maximising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>Production and trade of social goods and services</td>
<td>Production of social goods and services, campaigning, advocacy, research, grant giving</td>
<td>Production and trade of goods and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>Self-funding (at least partially)</td>
<td>Grants, donations, or memberships dues</td>
<td>Self-trading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
<td>Based on participation and democracy amongst shareholders</td>
<td>Based on participation and democracy amongst shareholders</td>
<td>Based on accountability to providers of capital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Crane and Matten, 2010, p.475)

The discussion thus far has highlighted that social enterprises are often ‘hybrid’ organisations which trade for the benefits of their social mission (Austin, et al., 2006; Busenitz, et al., 2015; Cornforth, 2014). In addition, they are often driven by social entrepreneurs, who exploit entrepreneurial opportunities to ‘address social needs and catalysts social transformations’ (Mair and Schoen, 2007, p. 55). Hence, before I turn my attention to examining the social entrepreneurial process, I offer in Section 2.4 below, the main characteristics of social enterprises.

### 2.4 Understanding Social Enterprise

As mentioned in my Introductory Chapter, although I broadly define social enterprise as a ‘hybrid’ organisation that trades in the pursuit of its social mission, this definition is dependent on the interpretations of the participants in this study. In addition, the definition I adopt is by no means the only definition available, as academics, practitioners, and government agencies have offered alternative definitions. However, my intention in this section is to use some of these definitions to highlight the main characteristics of social enterprise, by drawing on Shaw and Carter’s (2007) study that explored the historical and theoretical antecedents of social enterprises, comparing social enterprises to for-profit businesses.

The authors note, social enterprises can adopt a variety of legal structures and diverse social needs which they are set up to address, however, they have four main characteristics, as illustrated in Figure
2.1. Firstly, social enterprises tend to operate within a complex multiagency environment, meeting the needs of multiple stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, government agencies, funders, and market mechanisms (e.g. Cornforth, 2014). This suggests, as noted by Leadbeater (1997), social enterprises build long-term relationships with beneficiaries and a number of stakeholders such as government agencies to address the social need they identified. Nicholls (2010b) has also identified that although social enterprises differ to for-profit businesses and government agencies, they build collaboration with these sectors in the pursuit of their social mission. However, as noted by Weerawardena, et al., (2003), by meeting the needs of various stakeholders, social enterprises face challenges in balancing their operational and social objectives. Besides, Cornforth (2014, p.3) notes, due to their hybridity, social enterprises may face ‘tensions’ in applying ‘competing institutional logics’ which may lead to a mission drift.

Secondly, social enterprises are enterprising in nature, indicating they trade for the benefit of their social mission rather than for personal gains. This is supported by Martin and Osberg (2007), who note, both commercially driven entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs are motivated by entrepreneurial opportunities, however they differ in their value proposition. Whilst commercially driven entrepreneurs are motivated by maximising personal wealth, social entrepreneurs trade to create social benefits. As noted by Prahbu (1999, p. 142), ‘social enterprises are committed to changing their environment and not just producing a product or a service sufficiently acceptable to ensure their financial viability’.

Thirdly, social enterprises have an explicit social mission to create social, economic, and environmental value. Social enterprises, therefore, combine social mission and revenue generation by focusing on the triple bottom line: money, environment, and social impact to address pressing social problems (e.g. Dees, 2001, Dees and Elias, 1998; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Zahra, et al., 2009). Finally, social enterprises have an autonomous ownership structure, with parts being owned by employees, customers or members of the local community they serve. This suggests social enterprises have different models of ownership to fulfil their social mission. This is supported by Cornforth (2014), who note, social enterprises may take a variety of legal structures, however, their governing body has the responsibility of ensuring that the organisation achieves its social mission and remain financially sustainable.
In Section 2.1, I highlighted that research on entrepreneurship has furthered our understanding of entrepreneurial traits and the process by which the business venture is created (e.g., Gartner, 1990; McClelland, 1965; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). However, entrepreneurship has been conceptualised from an economic perspective, suggesting that entrepreneurs do not start a business venture without the pursuit of personal gains. Social entrepreneurship and social enterprise literature, however, has indicated social enterprises are concerned with social value creation, giving priority to their social mission rather than income. As such, there is a clear need for understanding the social entrepreneurial process and the ways in which social entrepreneurs identify and address social needs. Although different studies examined the social benefits generated by social enterprises, the study conducted by Perrini, et al., (2010) brings significant insights on the processes by which the social venture is created.

Conducting a longitudinal case study analysis on a drug rehabilitation social enterprise based in Italy called San Patrignano Community, the authors argue, the process-based view of social
entrepreneurship involves four stages: opportunity identification, evaluation, formalisation, and scaling up. During opportunity identification, the social entrepreneur identifies an emergent social need for a ‘long-standing inefficiency’ (Austin, et al., 2006) and develop innovative solutions to address this need (Murphy and Coombes, 2009). This suggests, the social entrepreneur identifies an entrepreneurial opportunity to create a systemic social change and bring innovative approaches to social problems (Dees, 2001; Thompson, 2002; Weerawardena, et al., 2003).

During the second stage, the social entrepreneur evaluates the social need they identify based on their social aims, what they want to achieve, and how far the social need resonates with their ‘shared sense of belonging to the social cause’ (Perrini, et al., 2010, p. 521). Social entrepreneurs are, therefore, motivated by their explicit social mission and act on entrepreneurial opportunities because they feel an affiliation with the social need they identified. This is supported by Dacin and Dacin (2011, p. 1204), who argue, the primary mission of the social entrepreneur is to create social value by ‘providing solutions to social problems’.

The formalisation process, on the other hand, involves the social entrepreneur to mobilise the necessary resources to address the social need she or he has identified. As noted by Perrini, et al., (2010, p. 517), ‘formalisation plays a significant role in establishing the legitimacy of the social model and the expected social outcomes to be achieved’. During this stage, the social entrepreneur determines the resources required, the activities to be performed, and how their social mission is to be implemented. Austin et al., (2006), argue, social entrepreneurs are driven by the social need they identified, and therefore, the way in which formalisation takes place is dependent on the mobilisation of resources to address that social need.

The final stage of the social entrepreneurial process is scaling social impact, whereby the social entrepreneur focuses her or his attention on maximising social value as widely as possible. Scaling social impact has been discussed in social enterprise literature (e.g. Clifford, et al., 2013; Lyon, et al., 2010; Lyon and Fernandez, 2012; Meldrum, et al., 2010) highlighting that evidencing and scaling social impact is significant for social enterprises so they can demonstrate the social value they create. However, as noted by Lyon and Fernandez (2012), social enterprises face challenges in scaling beyond successful small projects due to government spending cuts, and therefore, require different strategies and support in how they can adapt their approaches to scale beyond the boundaries of their organisations.

The process-based view of social entrepreneurship presented by Perrini’s, et al., (2010) is a starting point for understanding the way social entrepreneurs discover, evaluate, formalise, and scale social
impact. However, the focus of their study has been on understanding the process by which the social enterprise is created rather than examining the subjective views of those involved. Thompson (2002, p.412) for example, notes, ‘Whilst some associate themselves with entrepreneurship, others would not describe themselves as entrepreneurs or feel uncomfortable with the term’. He further explains, some social entrepreneurs, particularly those experienced and successful, may wish to ‘put something back into society’ before or after retirement, whilst others may pursue social entrepreneurship because they are driven by a cause or a social need they have identified (Thompson, 2002, p. 414).

Similarly, as demonstrated in Figure 2.2, Massetti (2008) argues, social entrepreneurs can exist in any of the four (counter clockwise) quadrants depending on how they define their social mission.

Figure 2.2 The social entrepreneurship matrix

The traditional business quadrant (IV) represents social entrepreneurs who primarily have a market-driven mission and are required to make a profit. These social entrepreneurs produce goods and services that are required by the market and all profits are used to pay investors and taxes, as well as scale their social enterprise. On the other hand, the transient organisation quadrant (III) represents social entrepreneurs who respond to market needs yet they are not driven by making a profit. Massetti (2008) explains that these social entrepreneurs are primarily motivated by alleviating complex social
problems and, as such, profit generation remains irrelevant to their social mission. Since these social entrepreneurs are not driven by making a profit, they tend to depend on government support and donations to support their social mission. The traditional not-for-profit quadrant (I), corresponds to social entrepreneurs who are driven by their social mission but do not require a profit. The main focus of these social entrepreneurs is ‘operational efficiency’ to scale their social enterprise. Despite receiving external financial support, these social entrepreneurs tend to charge a fee for their services or products. Finally, social entrepreneurs who belong to the tipping point quadrant (II) tend to balance social mission with profit generation. As Massetti (2008, p. 12) notes, these social entrepreneurs ‘hold the most promise for economic transformation’ since they trade for the benefits of their social mission. Massetti’s study highlights, therefore, income generation is dependent on the social orientation of the social entrepreneur. This is supported by Busenitz, et al., (2015), who note, some social entrepreneurs wish to remain small and localised since they gain ‘self-satisfaction, wellbeing, and rectitude’ from serving their local community. As such, the next section (2.6), examines the social entrepreneur and her or his role during the social entrepreneurial process.

2.6 The Social Entrepreneur

Social entrepreneurship has benefited from the ‘injection’ of ideas (Di Domenico, et al., 2010) from the entrepreneurship literature, cultivating our understanding of the entrepreneurial process which is driven by the entrepreneur who ‘carries out the entrepreneurial function’ (Ahl, 2006, p. 599) and ‘holds the entrepreneurial process together’ (Perrini, et al., 2010, p. 517). Entrepreneurs, therefore, play a significant role during the social entrepreneurial process. A review of existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise highlights that social entrepreneurs possess inherent traits, differentiating them from commercially driven entrepreneurs (e.g. Abu-Saifan, 2012; Swanson and Di Zhang, 2010; Zahra, et al., 2009).

Social entrepreneurs are described as ‘change agents’ (Dees, 2001) who develop innovative approaches to social problems, and therefore, among the many traits attributed to them are opportunity recognition, tolerance for ambiguity, risk-taking, boldness, accountability, ethical fibre and a virtuous behaviour, independence, aspiration, compassion, and a coherent unity of purpose (e.g. Dees, 2001; Leadbeater, 1997; Thompson, 2002; Weerawardena, et al., 2003). Martin and Osberg (2007), for instance, note the social entrepreneur:
‘Targets an unfortunate but stable equilibrium that causes the neglect, marginalisation, or suffering of a segment of humanity; who brings to bear on this situation his or her inspiration, direct action, creativity, courage, fortitude, and who aims for, and ultimately affects, the establishment of a new stable equilibrium that secures permanent benefits for the targeted group and society at large’ (Martin and Osberg, 2007, p. 73).

Weerawardena, et al., (2003), further assert social entrepreneurs have three inherent traits that differentiate them from other entrepreneurs: Firstly, they are driven by an explicit social mission to create social value, resulting in a virtuous behaviour comprising integrity, honesty, compassion, empathy, and an innate capacity to contribute meaningfully to social and economic development. Secondly, social entrepreneurs show a balanced judgment and the ability to see through situations, and unity of purpose by focusing on addressing the needs of a number of stakeholders. Finally, social entrepreneurs display innovativeness, pro-activeness, and risk-taking ability when making decisions. The authors state, the behaviour of social entrepreneurs towards risk-taking is different to commercially driven entrepreneurs since their ‘risk is constrained by their primary objective of being a sustainable organisation (Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006, p. 31). As such, according to Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, (2006), it is only when these three elements are combined together that social entrepreneurship is created.

Dees (2001), on the other hand, places greater emphasis on innovativeness, boldness, and accountability as the main traits of social entrepreneurs. He argues, social entrepreneurs engage in continuous learning, adaptation, and innovativeness to break new grounds when addressing social needs. Additionally, they are resourceful, bold, have a high tolerance for ambiguity, and are able to manage risk since they are committed to their social objectives and highly accountable to beneficiaries and social outcomes.

Nevertheless, as noted by Aldrich and Zimmer, (1986, p. 5), these ‘idealised’ descriptions tend to focus on successful social entrepreneurs rather than examine other antecedents that may influence entrepreneurial intentions, such as age, gender, health, and prior professional experience. This indicates, the entrepreneurial process does not only depend on the inherent traits of the entrepreneur but also on other factors that influence how entrepreneurship is created. Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006), for instance, argue, social entrepreneurship is complex, and therefore, necessitates a multidimensional understanding of it. They note, the social entrepreneurial process is dependent on the inherent traits of the social entrepreneur, her or his social orientations, and the environment in
which she or he is embedded. For the authors, the environment plays a significant role in influencing the sustainability of social enterprises.

Furthermore, Zahra’s, et al., (2009), argue, social entrepreneurs vary in their social orientations, the way in which they discover, evaluate, and act on entrepreneurial opportunities, and how they assemble resources in the pursuit of their social mission. As such, the authors note, there are three types of social entrepreneurs: firstly, social bricoleurs tend to focus on local issues and, therefore, have limited resources and expertise to scale social value beyond their local community; secondly, social constructionists require larger resources such as human and social capital to achieve their social mission; and finally social engineers, who focus on large-scale social problems, and therefore, require legitimacy and the support of the masses.

Studies on social entrepreneurial traits have, therefore, furthered our knowledge about how social entrepreneurs differ in their social orientations, the social impact they want to create, and the resources they require. However, there is a significant gap in our knowledge about entrepreneurial (social) intentions of those aged 50+. Hence, Section 2.6.1 draws on academic entrepreneurship literature to examine the factors that may influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’.

2.6.1 ‘Later life’ Social Entrepreneurs

As discussed in my Introductory Chapter, extending the economic and social participation of those aged 50+ has become one of the cornerstones of the UK government agenda. Hence, the focus of this study is to examine the ‘everyday’ life experiences of social entrepreneurs aged 50+, who are known as LLSEs. A review of academic entrepreneurship literature has highlighted two main strands examining entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. One focuses on the role of prior experience, skills, and social networks on ‘older’ people’s desirability in starting a business (Akola, 2008; Kautonen, et al., 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012; Singh and De Noble, 2003). The other, however, found uncertainty, fear of failure, lack of finance and support, insufficient business knowledge and skills, and age, negatively influences entrepreneurial intentions (Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Hatak, et al., 2015; Lévesque and Minniti (2006).

Lévesque and Minniti (2006) argue that both inherent and contextual factors influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. However, whilst contextual factors such as education and taxation systems ‘may be altered relatively quickly by exogenous shocks such as policy interventions, inherent factors may not’ (Lévesque and Minniti, 2006, p. 178). For the authors, contextual factors could be addressed by policy interventions since they are influenced by the socio-economic environment, yet inherent
factors are dependent on the individual and her or his willingness to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. They state, starting a business is an ‘intentional act’ made by the individual to achieve desired outcomes (Lévesque and Minniti, 2006, p. 179), and thus, age is a key characteristic influencing whether individuals choose entrepreneurship over working for wages. As such, they explain, if the income to be gained from starting a business is less than in paid wages, entrepreneurial intentions decline with age. Nevertheless, they concurrently state that as individuals age, they become more experienced and better at managing risk, increasing their entrepreneurial intentions. Hence, although Lévesque and Minniti found a negative association between age and entrepreneurial intentions, those with low-risk aversion may have more a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, Curran and Blackburn (2001), argue, entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’ are likely to be influenced by three factors. Firstly, ‘older’ people may be more directed towards ‘non-economic pursuits’ (Curran and Blackburn, 2001, p. 899) such as volunteering and giving back to society rather than business ownership. Secondly, the assumptions made that this age group have more financial capital to start a business, is only relevant to those with wealth rather than those ‘in the lower bands of wealth and income distribution’ (Curran and Blackburn, 2001, p. 899). Thirdly, low levels of energy and ill health may negatively influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. Hence, for the authors, the decision to become an entrepreneur is dependent on health, wealth, and age.

A distinction between ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’ is also commonly found in literature. ‘Pull’ factors such as independence, self-fulfilment, and flexibility positively influence entrepreneurial intentions (Weber and Schaper, 2003). On the other hand, ‘push’ factors such as redundancy, job dissatisfaction, ageism and low income in retirement, may mean those aged 50+ become entrepreneurs out of necessity than a choice (Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003). As noted by Kautonen, (2008, p.6), those aged 50+ ‘given they can face problems such as age discrimination and limited access to training opportunities in the labour market’ may choose entrepreneurship as a career out of necessity.

This supports Singh and DeNoble’s (2003) study on examining risk-taking propensity in ‘older’ people. They argue, there are three groups of ‘older’ entrepreneurs: constrained, rational, and reluctant. Constrained entrepreneurs have entrepreneurial tendencies and a high need for personal accomplishments, however they are unable to act on entrepreneurial opportunities due to perceived constraints. Rational entrepreneurs, on the other hand, pursue entrepreneurial opportunities based on a rational comparison between their current situation and entrepreneurship. However, there are a number of other factors influencing rational entrepreneurs such as prestige, respect and supporting their lifestyle. Although constrained and rational entrepreneurs are ‘pulled’ into entrepreneurship,
reluctant entrepreneurs are ‘pushed’ into entrepreneurship due to a lack of employment opportunities and financial resources, enabling them to retire and maintain a similar lifestyle.

Singh and DeNoble’s (2003) study, therefore, enhances our understanding of the role of ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. However, as argued by Kautonen, et al., (2008), age has a negative influence on constrained rather than rational and reluctant entrepreneurs. Conducting an empirical study on businesses founded in Finland, the authors note, reluctant entrepreneurs are not widely spread and, therefore, there may be further factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. As such, they suggest, to explain why ‘older’ age has an impact on constrained entrepreneurs, the findings presented by Singh and DeNoble should be extended to include serial entrepreneurs who are motivated by the excitement and challenges of business ownership and the ways in which they differ to novice entrepreneurs who have no prior entrepreneurial experience.

In their article, ‘The impact of a necessity-based start-up on subsequent entrepreneurial satisfaction’ (2010), Kautonen and Palmroos further explain that although necessity entrepreneurs are commonly perceived to be ‘pushed’ into entrepreneurship due to lack of employment opportunities and redundancy, they tend to gain more satisfaction from business ownership than paid employment. They explain that gaining satisfaction has, on the one hand, extrinsic elements such as salary, job security, and career opportunities, and on the other, intrinsic elements such as quality of social networks and the nature of the job itself. The authors, therefore, suggest entrepreneurship does not negatively influence the satisfaction of necessity entrepreneurs.

Nevertheless, research has also shown gender influences entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. Weber and Schaper (2003) and Akola (2008), for example, argue, ‘older’ entrepreneurs are predominately males who tend to have more positive perceptions towards entrepreneurship than females. However, as noted by Kautonen (2008), empirical research has shown, the rate of women owning and managing businesses in developed economies is growing, hence, the argument made that women choose entrepreneurship to balance their childcare responsibilities and support their husband’s career may be declining in importance. This is supported by Carter, et al., (2013), who note, entrepreneurial activities tend to be restricted to a narrow range of groups whilst women, for instance, are characterised as having lesser interest and lower level of resources to be entrepreneurial. However, this stems from perceived discrimination and focus on high growth businesses. Nevertheless, McKay (2001) found, women between the age of fifty-seven and seventy-three tend to be constrained by ‘public perceptions’ of what is acceptable for their age.
Weber and Schaper further explain that education influences entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. ‘Older’ entrepreneurs who have ‘lower levels of post-secondary education’ (Weber and Schaper, 2003, p. 7), tend to have a more positive perception towards entrepreneurship. Notwithstanding, individuals with higher levels of post-secondary education may be pulled into entrepreneurship rather than to other career choices. However, Kautonen (2008) found, whilst novice entrepreneurs are educated to a degree level, serial entrepreneurs tend to possess secondary school level qualifications. Hence, education does not seem to influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’.

Research also suggests, prior professional experience and social networks have a positive influence on the intentions of those aged 50+ to start a business. Weber and Schaper (2003, p. 6), note, ‘older’ entrepreneurs have far more advantages than their younger counterparts, which include experience, defined as the ‘cumulative body of knowledge, skill, practice, and learning acquired over an extended period of time’. However, they further argue, prior experience ‘may blind the entrepreneur to other fresh perspectives’ (Weber and Schaper, 2003, p. 6). In addition, failing health and a lack of energy levels may have a negative influence on entrepreneurial intentions. Nevertheless, Kautonen, et al., (2010) note, although prior experience influences entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’, this is dependent on the sector in which individuals worked. Those who worked in ‘blue-collar’ industries and/or public-sector agencies are often used to a highly specialised, somewhat controlled environment, presenting a barrier to their perceived desirability for entrepreneurship. However, those who worked in a small business environment favouring entrepreneurial attitudes, boldness, and proactivity, tend to have a more positive perception towards entrepreneurship.

Research has, therefore, shown there are a number of factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’ such as self-fulfilment, independence, flexibility, prior experience, education, gender, and health. In addition, research has highlighted some individuals become entrepreneurs out of necessity due to ageism, redundancy, and lack of employment opportunities. Nevertheless, exploring the factors that may have influenced individuals’ entrepreneurial (social) intentions remains an under-explored area. As discussed in Chapter Two, the main focus of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise literature has been on defining the term ‘social enterprise’ and its blurred boundaries, examining the differences between commercially-driven entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs, and the traits of the social entrepreneur (Austin, et al., 2006; Dees, 2001; Swanson and Di Zhang, 2010; Thompson, 2002). However, there is a considerable gap in our understanding of how LLSEs perceive their ‘everyday’ lives, motives, the challenges they experience, and how they might be supported.

A study conducted by Stumbitz (2013) on LLSEs, for instance, suggests there are three types of LLSEs: volunteer activists tend to address problems specific to their local community, and therefore, they are
small in scale and less likely to draw a salary from their social enterprise; secondly, rationalising professionals tend to use their prior experience and transferable skills to address a social need they have identified. Although they are mostly local in scale, rationalising professionals tend to generate an income and aspire to scale social impact outside their local community. In addition, they tend to be motivated by the need for downshifting and changing their lifestyle. Thirdly, high aspirers address social issues on a larger scale and hence, they are similar to commercially driven entrepreneurs in the ways they want to achieve the greatest possible outcomes.

The findings presented by Stumbitz bring significant insight into how LLSEs differ in their motivation and scope. However, her study focuses on the influence of their life course on their motivation for becoming social entrepreneurs, with little consideration given as to how they perceive their ‘everyday’ lives, the factors they consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise, and the challenges they face and how they might be supported, from their perspectives. Hence, this study adopts social constructionism as a theoretical foundation to delve deeper into the participants’ perspectives.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter critically reviews relevant academic and practitioner literature on social entrepreneurship and enterprise, highlighting gaps in our knowledge about the subjective views of LLSEs. Drawing on the work of Sarason, et al., (2006) and Chell (2010), this chapter highlights social constructionism as a theoretical lens which can enhance our understanding of how entrepreneurs discover, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities, from their own perspectives. Whilst entrepreneurship literature has furthered our knowledge of entrepreneurial traits and the process by which the business venture is created, little consideration has been given to understanding the entrepreneurial (social) intentions of those aged 50+, from their own perspectives. Hence, there is an explicit need for further research in this under-explored area.

The review of existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise demonstrates, despite multiple conceptualisations, that social enterprises often take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations that trade in the pursuit of their social mission (e.g. Boschee and McClurg, 2003; Di Domenico, et al., 2010). However, research found social entrepreneurs differ in their social orientations and some may perceive income generation to be incompatible with their social mission (e.g. Massetti, 2008; Stumbitz, 2013). In addition, this chapter examined the blurred boundaries of social enterprises, demonstrating that despite overlapping boundaries between social enterprises,
not-for-profit, and private sector organisations, they differ in the way income is acquired and distributed. Not-for-profit organisations may adopt a social enterprise model; however, their income is mostly drawn from government subsidies and philanthropic donations. In addition, although private sector organisations advocate social causes, their primary mission is to maximise shareholders’ value. By contrast, social enterprises trade to avoid dependency on government subsidies and reinvest most of their profits to benefit the community (e.g. Busenitz, et al., 2015; Swanson and Di Zhang, 2010). The study conducted by Shaw and Carter (2007), for instance, has highlighted, social enterprises have four main characteristics: multi-agency, enterprising nature, explicit social mission, and for-profit trading.

The review of literature has further highlighted the social entrepreneurial process comprises four stages: identification, evaluation, formalisation, and scaling (e.g. Perrini, et al., 2010). However, further research has found, scaling is dependent on the social orientation of the social entrepreneur and whether she or he is comfortable with the term ‘entrepreneur’ (e.g. Massetti, 2008; Thompson, 2002). In addition, research demonstrates that by legitimising the social enterprise sector, communities and individuals who create social value by helping friends and families may be undermined (e.g. Caulier-Grice, et al., 2012; Nicholls, 2010a).

This chapter has also examined the traits of the social entrepreneurs who have been perceived to have unique traits, such as ethical fibre and accountability (e.g.). However, these ‘idealised’ (e.g. Dees, 2001; Leadbeater, 1997) descriptions tend to focus on successful social entrepreneurs rather than considering other factors such as age, health, income, and education on entrepreneurial intentions (e.g. Lévesque, and Minniti, 2006; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003). Since the age dimension is key to who my participants are, the last section, therefore, examines entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. Self-fulfilment, independence, and flexibility have been seen as positive factors to entrepreneurship. However, many become entrepreneurs out of necessity rather than choice (push factors) due to ageism, redundancy, and low income in retirement (Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Hatak, et al., 2015; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003).

Despite furthering our knowledge about entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’, researchers have noted there are significant gaps in our understanding of the concept of the ‘older’ entrepreneur (e.g. Kautonen, 2008; Weber and Schaper, 2003). Kautonen (2008), for instance, calls for more research on ‘older’ female entrepreneurs to gain an understanding of how they are publicly perceived and how this influences their entrepreneurial intentions. He adds, Singh and DeNoble (2003) typologies of ‘older’ entrepreneurs should be extended to include serial entrepreneurs and novice entrepreneurs to examine how they differ in their motivation. Weber and Schaper (2003) on the other hand, call for further research on examining the differences in performance and activities between ‘older’ and
'younger' entrepreneurs. They also note further research is needed to explore the motives of 'older' entrepreneurs, which may explain why they choose entrepreneurship as a career.

Besides Zahra, et al., (2009) call for future research on understanding the actions and motives of social entrepreneurs to enhance our understanding of the variety, scope, and scale of social enterprises. Stumbitz (2013), on the other hand, who conducted a study on LLSEs, notes further research is required to explore, in-depth, the experiences of ‘older’ social entrepreneurs against their younger counterparts. In addition, she calls for future research on exploring the support mechanisms required by LLSEs and to what extent these are age specific. Given the UK government’s interest in promoting the social enterprise sector to address pressing social needs, further research could be conducted to explore what personal benefits could be achieved during the social entrepreneurial process.

Hence, there is an explicit need for developing further research in this under-explored area which means the focus of this study and its approach have been developed in response to a lack of empirical evidence on the experiences of LLSEs. As such, as indicated in Section 1.2 (Introduction Chapter), three research questions were iteratively developed from the literature review and the research process. My first research question is aimed at enhancing our understanding of the factors LLSEs consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise. My second and third research questions seek to examine how the participants view their ‘everyday’ lives and the challenges they face and how they might be supported. Nevertheless, since the age dimension of participants is a key part of who they are as individuals and their daily lived experiences, examining the policy context in which they are embedded provides a more nuanced understanding of how they perceive their experiences during the social entrepreneurial process and what their motives are for social entrepreneurship. Hence, Chapter Three examines the policy context in which the participants of this study are located.
Chapter Three:  
The Policy Context on Ageing in the UK

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I reviewed existing academic and practitioner literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, highlighting there is a gap in our knowledge about entrepreneurial (social) intentions of those aged 50+ from their own perspectives. This requires further theoretical research and explanations of how this age group interprets the factors they consider important in their decision in becoming social entrepreneurs, how they perceive their ‘everyday’ lives, the challenges they face, and how they might be supported. In addition, since the age dimension of participants, in this study, is key to who they are, further explanations are required about the policy context in which they are embedded.

In Section 3.2, I examine the social construction of ageing from medical, economic perspectives, and social gerontological perspectives. Medical and economic perspectives tend to view ageing as a phase of decline and dependency, having a negative impact on public resources (Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Provencher, et al., 2014; Yang and Lee, 2010). By contrast, social gerontology found ageing is a subjective construct depending on how people experience it (Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013; Bengtson, et al., 1997; Pierce and Timonen, 2010; Razanova, 2010). Since my interest is on understanding the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs from their own perspectives, the review of this literature will focus on the elements that are pertinent to my research topic rather than providing a detailed account of the different theoretical perspectives that have explored the ageing process. Hence, my intention is to examine to what extent these discourses influence ‘older’ people’s perceptions of their age and career choices.

In Section 3.3, I review the employment and policy reforms introduced by the UK government to extend the participation of those aged 50+. Despite significant improvements on the policy level, ageism and long-term unemployment remain one of the main barriers to employment facing this age group (Barrett and McGoldrick, 2013; Carmel, et al., 2007; Tinsley, 2012). Finally, I briefly discuss existing literature on the retirement process. This literature found a number of factors influencing ‘older’ people’s decisions to retire or remain in labour, such as wealth, health, pension arrangements, and care responsibilities (Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Barrett and McGoldrick, 2013; Luborsky and Sankar, 1993). Although retirement has been constructed as a cliff-edge event, it has also been seen
as an opportunity to ‘bridge’ back into employment and/or engage in activities such as volunteering and entrepreneurship (Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Coupland, et al., 2008). The chapter concludes with a summary of the main insights drawn from the literature review on ageing.

3.2 The Ageing Process and its Social Construction

A critical review of literature reveals three perspectives explaining the ageing process. Medical discourses tend to explain the ageing process, from biological perspectives involving physical and cognitive decline (Algilani, et al., 2014; Pierce and Timonen, 2010; Putney, et al., 2005). As noted by Coupland, et al., (2008):

‘The gerontological view of ageing is predicated on a biological model. […] gerontology describes ageing principally as illness, decline, and a degeneration of ability. Although this is questionable with regard to work and age, as most people do not experience a significant loss of job-relevant physical and psychological ability for the age group defined as an older worker, it represents a stereotypical understanding about age as a decline’ (Coupland, et al., 2008, p. 424).

Balcombe and Sinclair (2001, p. 837) argue, although medical discourses have expanded our understanding of the ageing process and the significance of ‘designing medical interventions’ that prolong the lifespan of ‘older’ people, they tend to present ageing as a phase of physical illness, functional or cognitive impairment, with less consideration made at understanding the influence of genetic and environmental factors. This view has been extended by Annear, et al., (2012), who argue that the external environment has a strong influence on how the ageing process is experienced. They note, the environment could be ‘both a facilitator of, and constraint to’ the wellbeing of ‘older’ people (Annear, et al., 2012, p. 602). This can be explained by positive influences such as access to social networks and social participations. By contrast, social disengagement and small social networks may negatively influence how ‘older’ people experience the ageing process. Their study, therefore, demonstrates the interplay between the environment and the ways in which the ageing process is experienced.

Research has also found ill health, poverty, inadequate support, and ageism, influences how the ageing process is experienced (e.g. Luborsky and Sankar, 1993; Wood, et al., 2008). Barrett and McGoldrick (2013), argue, although demographic changes prompted policy reviews by a number of organisations,
such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), including the UK government to extend the participation of ‘older’ people, ill health, gender, social class, income in retirement, and geographical location influence how the ageing process is experienced. Indeed, they note, women tend to be more engaged socially than males, and those with adequate retirement incomes are more likely to remain in the labour market. This is supported by Razanova (2010, p. 215), who notes, ‘structural inequalities such as race, gender, and class, shape individuals’ choices and lifestyles’. Razanova’s study, which has explored media discourses on ageing, found the roles ‘older’ people are expected to play are shaped by cultural and value norms and political discourses. She explains, government policies tend to be concerned with demands on public resources, presenting ‘older’ people as an economic and social challenge, rather than recognising their invaluable skills and experiences that could be imparted to the workplace. This is congruent with Casey, et al., (2003), who examined the policy reforms introduced across a number of European and non-European countries, including the UK, arguing that, demographic changes are some of the key factors driving pension spending and health and care costs, encouraging reforms at policy levels to reduce these costs. However, in parallel with cost reductions, considerations should be made at providing employment opportunities, flexible working, and lifelong learning to encourage the participation of ‘older’ people. Besides, Mayhew (2005) argues, the challenges presented by the ageing population have been accepted as opportunities to develop strategies to address the increased demand on public resources, however, ‘a common problem is the common practice of using age as a proxy for growing old’ (Mayhew, 2005, p. 457). He notes, it is possible to be ‘old’ at any age if this is measured in terms of mental faculties and health capabilities, however, ‘older’ people are still perceived as dependent, a burden, and more simply ‘waiting for death’ (Mayhew, 2005, p. 457).

Medical and economic discourse, therefore, tend to be concerned with the ‘shifting profile of age demographics’ (Luborsky and Sankar, 1993, p. 443) and its implications on public resources. However, social gerontology argues, ‘ageing’ is a function of the environment in which it is interpreted and subjectively constructed (Burr, 2003; Luborsky and Sankar 1993; Pierce and Timonen, 2010; Powell and Hendricks, 2009; Putney, et al., 2005). As noted by Coupland, et al., (2008), social gerontology questions the predominance of chronological ageing and challenges the stereotypical views of policies and media, making a strong argument that ageing is socially constructed.

Social gerontology emerged in response to the economic and social implications of demographic changes (Powell and Hendricks, 2009), focusing on how policy interventions and the socio-political and economic environment construct the ageing process (Baars, et al., 2003; Bengtson, et al., 1997; Powell and Hendricks, 2009; Putney, et al., 2005). As such, it centres on examining the development of welfare
systems and the ways in which they tend to construct ‘older’ people as a challenge, with little consideration being given to recognising the influence of social and economic structures on the ageing process (Baars, et al., 2003). Powell and Hendricks, (2009), for instance, notes, the interpretation of ageing is not a universal construct since each culture has its own definition. This is supported by Burr (2003, p. 38), who notes, ‘ageing is a function of the environment and the context in which it is interpreted’. In addition, Luborsky and Sankar (1993) argue, definitions of health, illness, ethnicity, and age are not universal, instead, each culture has its own understanding of these constructs.

On the other hand, Bengtson et al., (1997) note, the ‘ageing process’ could be conceptualised from macro and micro perspectives. Whereas macro-perspectives focus on the influence of the external context such as labour workforce, policy intervention, and healthcare and pension systems on ageing. Micro-perspectives focus on understanding how people interpret the ageing process and their experience of it. Barnhart and Peñaloza (2013), for example, argue, medical discourses tend to marginalise ‘older people’ by focusing on the ‘elderly problems’ (Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013, p. 1135). However, more often ‘older’ people are reluctant to identify with their ‘older’ age even after ‘being positioned as an old person by others’ (Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013 p. 1136). Their study has found significant differences between medical discourses that view the ageing process in chronological terms and the subjective view of those who experience it. They note, whilst physiological dimensions may indicate a ‘person’s body and brain are more or less aged’ (Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013, p. 1140), the perception of ageing is dependent on how individuals interpret their experience. Hence, unlike chronological views of ageing, categorising people as working or retired on the basis of their economic contribution, ‘older’ people still express a ‘not old identity’ (Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013, p.1148).

Barnhart and Peñaloza highlight, therefore, ‘older’ people may not perceive themselves as old. This is congruent with Schafer and Shippee’s (2009) study, which found ‘older’ people more often identify with their ‘younger age identity’ and, therefore, feel younger than their chronological age. The authors found, those who have ‘younger age identity’ are more likely to feel optimistic about their cognitive ability regardless of their chronological age. Similarly, Shmerlina (2015), argues, despite the presence of illness, ‘older’ people with younger age identity tend to have a high level of vitality, pursuing work, new knowledge, and abilities.

There is, therefore, a significant body of research suggesting ‘older’ people may not view themselves as ‘old’ since the ageing process is dependent on a number of factors such as health, gender, and income (Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013; Putney, et al., 2005; Schafer and Shippee, 2009). As noted by Birmingham Policy Commission (2014, p.11), ‘ageing is more related to the way individuals make sense of their experience’. The critical review of literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise
has demonstrated a gap in our knowledge about how social entrepreneurs aged 50+ view their ‘everyday’ lives. Therefore, three research questions were identified to examine: firstly, the factors they consider important in their decision to become social entrepreneurs, secondly, how they view their ‘everyday’ lives, and thirdly, the challenges they face and how they might be supported. Hence, since the age dimension of participants is key to who they are as individuals, gaining a deep understanding of how the participants, in this study, view their age identity, from their standpoints, can provide an insider perspective of how age has influenced their entrepreneurial (social) intentions.

Given my study is empirically embedded within a UK context, I need to be clear from the outset what I mean by people aged 50+ and why this particular age benchmark has been chosen. In the UK, the age of fifty is often used by policy makers as a guideline in introducing policy reforms to extend the participation of this age group. As an example, the ‘Fuller Working Lives: Framework for Action’ (DWP 2014b) promoted a number of actions to extend the working lives of ‘those aged 50 to State Pension Age’, such as flexible working, and supporting employers understand the productivity of their ageing workforce. Nonetheless, since the ageing process is subjectively interpreted (e.g. Pierce and Timonen, 2010; Powell and Hendricks, 2009; Putney, et al., 2005), the term ‘older people’ used in my thesis although refers to the ‘objective’ chronological age of fifty and over, it also acknowledges that the way ageing is understood depends on the social entrepreneurs themselves involved in this study, and the way in which they define their age identity from their own perspectives. Notwithstanding, since my participants are embedded within the UK context, it is important to examine the policy context in which they are located to understand their experiences, which is discussed in Section 3.3 below.

### 3.3 The Ageing Population and Workforce Participation

This section examines the extent to which ‘older’ people’s decisions to remain or leave the labour workforce or become involved in entrepreneurship, are influenced by employment policies, anti-discrimination legislation, support programmes, and pension reforms. The unequal number of people in the labour workforce compared to those in retirement have prompted new reforms on the policy level, affecting ‘older’ people’s routes into retirement (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2009).

#### 3.3.1 Employment Reforms

As previously discussed, studies on ‘ageing’ have extended our knowledge of how the ageing process has been constructed from economic and medical perspectives, resulting in presenting ‘older’ people
as an economic and social challenge (Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Provencher, et al., 2014; Razanova, 2010). However, research has found 'older' people many not view themselves as 'old' and, therefore, seek to continue their economic and social participation (e.g. Barhnart and Peñaloza, 2013; Schafer and Shippee, 2009; Shmerlina, 2015). Nevertheless, as argued by Casey, et al., (2003, p. 5), due to a significant fall in fertility rates and increases in life expectancy, governments are experiencing a significant ageing of their populations, raising significantly the proportion of the elderly and age-related expenditure ...in particular for public pension programmes and for healthcare.

In the UK, it has been reported by ONS, (2016) that, life expectancy for males born in 1980 is 84.4 years on average whilst the average for females born in the same year is 88 years. As life expectancy is increasing, the UK population is ageing, indicating that old-age dependency rates which show the number of people aged at least 65 years of age relative to the working age population (defined as being 16 to the retirement age of 65) is expected to increase (ONS, 2016). This demonstrates the number of people of state pension age or older has increased compared to those in the labour market (ONS, 2016). The Pensions Policy Institute (2017, p.1), for instance, reports an increase in the number of people of state pension age, which totalled 12,390 million (30%) in 2017 and is projected to increase from 13,958 million (32%) in 2030 to 16,645 million (37%) in 2040. This has contributed to an increase in old age pensions and other benefit spending which totalled £119 billion in the period 2016-2017 and is projected to increase to £147 billion by 2027-2028 (Pensions Policy Institute, 2017). As such, the UK government has introduced employment reforms such as ‘go back to work’ programmes to extend the working lives of those aged 50+ and ensure fiscal sustainability (Casey, et al., 2003; Centre for Ageing Better, 2017; DWP, 2014b).

The ‘New Deal 50+’ programme was one of most significant ‘back to work’ programmes introduced by the Labour Party in 1998 (GOV.UK, 2016; Centre for Ageing Better, 2017; Van Reenen, 2001). The programme was aimed at those aged 50+ who had been receiving Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and/or were on Incapacity Benefits (IS) for at least six months or more (Centre for Ageing Better, 2017; Millar, 2000). The participants were provided with a wide range of support such as a New Deal Personal Adviser (NDPA), training grants up to £750, and employment credit for up to fifty-two weeks which included £60 per week for full-time workers and £40 per week for part-time workers (Centre for Ageing Better, 2017). However, by 2011, the programme was abolished to be replaced by the ‘Work Programme’ (WP) to support all age groups in unemployment and on welfare benefits (DWP, 2012). As such, tailored support for those aged 50+ was no longer available. As noted by the Centre for Ageing Better (2017):
‘Government should provide a specialised support offer to claimants aged 50 and over recognising the particular difficulties faced by this age group, which are typically very different from those of younger claimants’ (Centre for Ageing Better, 2017, p. 16).

Nevertheless, the Prince’s Initiative for Mature Enterprise (PRIME), a charity set up by the Prince of Wales in 1999, introduced tailored start-up programmes for those aged 50+ who had been unemployed or were facing redundancy (PRIME, 2012). However, in 2014, the charity merged with ‘Business in the Community’ which is a business-led charity focusing on creating sustainable social solutions (Business in the Community, 2014), which means support for this age group is no longer available.

Given the significance of age-related expenditures in state pensions and other benefits and the lack of tailored support, the UK government has introduced employment reforms to increase the employment rates of those aged 50+ (Carmel, et al., 2007; Casey, et al., 2003; Daniel and Heywood, 2007; OECD, 2012). In 2000, the government responded to the European Union (EU) ‘Equal Treatment Directive’, which set out a ‘framework for tackling discrimination on grounds of religion, belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation’ (Sinclair, et al., 2013, p. 27). Consequently, the government introduced the ‘Employment Equality (Age) Regulation Act 2006’, which was later replaced by the Equality Act 2010, to legally protect ‘older’ workers against discrimination in recruitment, pay, training and development, promotion, dismissal and disciplines and grievances (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017; GOV.UK, 2010; Legislation.gov.uk, 2010). Besides, the UK government’s ‘Policy for Older People 2010-2015’, promoted a number of actions and/or programmes, such as the ‘Ageing Well’ programme to support local authorities in providing services that meet the needs of ‘older’ people; a UK ‘Advisory Forum on Ageing’; a ‘Business Champion’ for ‘older’ people; and guidance to ‘employers’ on recruitment and retention, and fostering multi-generational workforce (GOV.UK, 2015).

The Age Positive Campaign (2009), for instance, was initiated by the DWP in collaboration with Job Centre Plus, the Institute of Directors (IoD), and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) to support employers with practical guidance on how to manage their ageing workforce effectively (GOV.UK, 2015; ILC, 2012). Building on this, DWP partnered with the Age Action Alliance (AAA) in 2015 to develop an ‘online toolkit’ promoting the 3R’s principle which are ‘retaining, retraining, and recruiting older workers’ (Age Action Alliance, 2015). The toolkit also included guidance on legal advice and flexible working arrangements (Age UK, 2014; Age Action Alliance, 2015; GOV. UK, 2015).
In 2011, the government introduced WPs to support adults who have been unemployed for more than twelve months, younger people for more than nine months and those disabled or with health conditions (DWP, 2012). The programme supported participants to stay in work longer through a ‘payment for results’ system that rewarded service providers from private, public, and voluntary sectors in getting people into sustained work (DWP, 2012; Mulheirn, 2011). Under WPs, the ‘New Enterprise Allowance’ scheme also promoted financial and business mentoring support for those wishing to become self-employed (DWP, 2014a). Furthermore, professional and career development loans were made available to support those aged 50+ to go back to the workplace (DWP, 2014a).

To further improve the participation of ‘older’ workers into the labour workforce, a Mid-life Career Review Project was announced by the UK government in 2014, which was undertaken by the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) in partnership with the National Careers Services. The project aimed at supporting those aged 45-65 explore different working patterns and transition into retirement ‘in circumstances which make them healthy and independent’ (NIACE, 2014, p. 4). It involved seventeen learning providers and voluntary organisations conducting a career review with 3000 participants (NIACE, 2014). The project’s key findings highlight that although participants found the career review invaluable, they would like to be informed of the benefits involved. In addition, the participants requested embedding the career review in careers and learning services and in the workplace. Further findings included building partnerships with key learning and voluntary service providers and encouraging the use of ‘expert sign-posters’ in the workplace and in communities, including avoiding ‘one size fits all’ approach to policy, instead providing tailored support to meet individuals’ needs (NIACE, 2014, p.3).

Therefore, it is clear that significant improvements have been made on the policy level to extend the labour workforce participation of those aged 50+. However, as noted by Tinsley (2012, p. 5), ‘people aged fifty and over are much less likely than any other group to find work’. He argues, one of the hardest barriers facing ‘older’ people is age discrimination despite the existence of anti-discrimination laws preventing this. To examine employers’ attitudes towards ‘older’ workers, the author, as part of his research, applied for a Personal Assistant position and bar work with two Curriculum Vitae’s (CV’s) including a younger and an older person, and the findings suggest there is a bias against ‘older’ workers in both roles.

As such, Tinsley suggests there should be more focus on the policy level to provide tailored support for those aged 50+, such as flexible working and skills training. He further explains, unemployment can have short and long-term negative effects on the wellbeing of ‘older’ people, which may include lack of opportunities to save for retirement, poor financial resources, and a lack of access to social
networks. He also notes, as the wider economy is depending on the skills and experience of ‘older’ workers, ‘there is a concern that skills gaps will emerge as a larger number of older workers approach retirement’ (Tinsley, 2012, p. 6).

Research has generally found age discrimination and redundancy remain some of the main barriers facing ‘older’ people (e.g. Casey, et al., 2003; Foster, 2012; Mayhew, 2005; Sinclair, et al., 2013). Wood, et al., (2008), for instance, argues a number of underlying factors can cause age discrimination in the workplace. On the one hand, employers may lack an understanding of the productivity characteristics of their ageing workforce and instead rely on ‘erroneous stereotypes to make their decisions’ (Wood, et al., 2008, p. 426). On the other hand, ‘older’ workers on high salaries may be perceived less attractive to employers, particularly if those ‘younger’ are not perceived to be any less productive. In addition, the authors note, due to the competitive environment, employers can no longer afford ‘older’ workers on high pay, who have ‘supposedly’ shorter working lives than those younger, from which they can ‘amortize the cost of training in new technologies, making them a less profitable human capital investment prospect’ (Wood, et al., 2008, p. 426). They further explain that negative stereotypes perceiving ‘older’ workers as less flexible, resistant to change, less productive, less receptive to new technologies, and less reliable for health reasons, contribute to their inability in finding employment.

Similarly, a report published by PRIME in collaboration with Business in the Community and the International Longevity Centre, ‘The Missing Millions: Pathways back into employment’ (2015b) found despite changes in perceptions as to ‘when working life should end’, age-related stereotypes constructing ‘older’ people as a fiscal implication have had an impact on their position in the workplace. The report further explains, although ‘older’ people are willing to remain in the labour market, there are more out of the job market than in employment. In addition, the majority tend to engage in alternative roles to paid employment such as self-employment or unpaid work, however, these opportunities do not fulfil their expectations or their desires. This has been supported by empirical evidence from ONS (2017b) reporting, employment rates for those aged 50+ which includes those in full-time or part-time employment or unemployed but actively looking for work, remain lower than for those aged thirty-five to forty-nine. For instance, employment rates for those aged fifty to sixty-four from February to April 2017 were 70.9% compared to 84% for individuals aged from thirty-five to forty-nine-year olds. However, the employment rates for people aged sixty-five were 10.4%, which was lower than both younger age cohorts (ONS, 2017b).

Research suggests long-term unemployment remains one of the main barriers facing those aged 50+ (Age UK, 2014; Foster, 2012; Saga Employment, 2015). Saga Employment (2015) reports in the last
quarter of 2014, 47.2% of people aged fifty to sixty-four were classified as long-term unemployed compared to 31.6% of people aged sixteen to forty-nine. Yet Foster, (2012) argues, apart from ageism, other factors contribute to long-term unemployment such as outdated qualifications, lack of Information Technology (IT) skills, and a decline in self-confidence. This is congruent with Lee, et al., (2009), who notes, due to technology, which is changing the work environment and the skills required, ‘older’ people may lack relevant IT skills, presenting a barrier to their participation in the labour market.

Academic and practitioner literature therefore, suggests age discrimination, redundancy, and lack of IT skills remain the main barriers to employment. However, a study conducted by Walker (1999, p. 368) found there are good practices amongst employers who tend ‘to reassess their attitudes towards older workers’. The author conducted a case study research on twenty-two private, not-for-profit, and public-sector organisations in Europe, including the UK, found some organisations could be considered as ‘positive business cases’ for employing ‘older’ workers. As such, Walker argues, three factors could contribute to building good practices in the workplace to combat ageism. Firstly, since organisations tend to operate in a specific economic and labour market environment, shortages or surpluses in labour, may determine their focus. He gave the example of qualified nursing staff shortages, which may encourage organisations to ‘tap into the pool of older nurses’ (Walker, 1999, p. 371). Secondly, changes in public policies, such as the ‘closing off’ of early retirement subsidies, may encourage organisations to review their exit policies. Thirdly, the organisation culture, which involves Human Resources policies and management styles, could play a significant role in combatting ageism in the workplace.

Walker, therefore, argues a number of factors contribute to combating ageism in the workplace. Marvell and Cox (2016), on the other hand, note line managers should be properly trained to manage individuals and teams fairly and flexible working policies should be promoted to all staff. As with ‘younger’ workers, ‘older’ workers should have access to all resources including training, progression, mentoring, and leadership. They further explain ‘older’ workers tend to favour employment personally meaningful to themselves, age inclusive, and which offer opportunities for adjustments to their needs.

As discussed in this section, despite significant improvements made on the policy level to extend the participation of ‘older’ people, age discrimination in the workplace remains one of the key barriers faced by this age group (Foster, 2012; Mayhew, 2005; PRIME, 2015a;b; Sinclair, et al., 2013; Wood, et al., 2008). However, research suggests lack of skills and self-confidence may be considered barriers to employment (Foster, 2012). As such, tailored support such as flexible working and access to training and progression could create opportunities for ‘older’ workers to continue their participation in the
labour market (Marvell and Cox, 2016). Nevertheless, the decision to remain in the labour workforce or retire is influenced by a number of other factors as discussed in Section 3.3.2 below.

3.3.2 The Retirement Process

As previously discussed, research found that despite improvements on the policy level, ageism in the workplace remains one of the significant barriers facing ‘older’ people (e.g. PRIME, 2015a;b; Sinclair, et al., 2013; Wood, et al., 2008). Consequently, as part of its policy agenda of extending the working lives of ‘older’ people, the UK government has abolished the Default Retirement Age of sixty-five (DRA) in 2011. Under the current regulation, the State Pension Age (SPA) is sixty-five years old for men and 62.4 for women. However, under the State Pension Act 2011, women’s SPA has increased to sixty-five year olds between 2016 and 2018, and from 2018, the SPA for both men and women will be increased to reach sixty-six by 2020 (DWP, 2011; Pension Act 2011; Pensions Policy Institute, 2015a;b).

In 2014, further reforms were introduced which included the Defined Contribution (DC) pensions providing ‘older’ people with additional income in retirement. The DC pensions are built up from the contributions of both employers and employees, including tax relief and investment returns (Pensions Policy Institute, 2015a;b). Building on this, in April 2015, the government announced that ‘older’ workers can, from the age of fifty-five, withdraw their whole pension as a ‘lump sum’ with 25% tax-free, or withdraw sums as and when they need them (Pensions Policy Institute, 2015a;b). Auto-enrolment pension schemes, known as the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) were also made available to encourage employees to boost their private pension savings (Pensions Policy Institute, 2015). However, as argued by Melissa, et al., (2015), having access to pension savings from the age of fifty-five, there is a risk in accessing unsuitable retirement products. In addition, due to longer life expectancy, ‘older’ people may require their pension savings to support their social and health care costs. This explanation is supported by the Association of British Insurers (2017), who note accessing pension funds from the age of fifty-five, may leave a larger number of people vulnerable to poverty due to ill-informed decisions. A further explanation was provided by O’Connell (2002), who argues, although increasing the SPA encourages greater workforce participation in ‘older’ age, inequality between higher and lower income groups still exists. Higher income groups tend to have a healthier life expectancy, giving them more years to recoup their pension benefits, however, those with lower incomes tend to contribute for more years but survive for fewer. As such, government policies need ‘to ensure to help people take suitable jobs and to support those that cannot’ (O’Connell, 2002, p. 4).
In addition, research has shown the decision to work longer is influenced by a number of factors such as wealth, health, pension, availability of work opportunities, and care responsibilities (e.g. Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Berry, 2010; Higgs, et al., 2003; Hulmes, 2012). Banks and Tetlow (2008) argue, pension arrangements, availability and preference for work, socio-economic position, and family circumstances are some of the factors influencing ‘older’ people’s decisions to remain or exit the labour market. They explain, availability and preference for work are often determined by health and cognitive functioning, influencing the type of work ‘older’ people can do. The role of policy, therefore, is to understand the diversity of these factors and the ways in which they shape ‘older’ people’s decisions to remain or withdraw from the workplace. Foster (2012) also found pension arrangements influence the timing of retirement. He notes, those with higher incomes and with access to a pension for a considerable number of years are more likely to leave the labour workforce freely. By contrast, those who leave work involuntarily due to redundancy or caring responsibilities, and are less likely to have access to private pension savings, remain in the labour workforce out of necessity.

Similarly, Berry (2010) argues, the decision to retire or remain in the labour workforce is influenced by income, health, education, care responsibilities, and family structure. Whilst some individuals choose to exit the labour workforce because they no longer require an income from paid employment, others may be forced to stay due to necessity, which may be detrimental to their wellbeing. As such, Berry suggests, a ‘gradual retirement’ may be the solution. He further explains, although ill-health remains one of the main factors influencing ‘older’ people to exit the labour workforce, low-skilled workers are more likely to retire later for financial reasons. However, due to ill health, they may be forced to retire earlier. By comparison, those with better education, professional or managerial occupations, and who are married tend to exit the labour workforce early. Further factors include dissatisfaction in the workplace, redundancy, care responsibilities, and family structure. Berry explains whilst single people may retire later than married couples, those with care responsibilities retire earlier which makes working longer difficult.

Although there is evidence that retiring or remaining in the labour market are influenced by a number of factors, such as income, care responsibilities, and health, O’Connell (2002) notes:

‘SPA is not ‘retirement age’. There is no official retirement age. Many people retire when state pension becomes available; many people do not. Receiving state pension has not been dependent on giving up work, so that there does not have to be a direct link between receiving pension and retiring’ (O’Connell, 2002, p. 1).
O’Connell, therefore, argues there is a difference between state pension age and retirement. This is supported by a body of literature which has found despite retirement being seen as a cliff-edge event, many view retirement as an opportunity to ‘bridge back’ into employment, ‘give back’ to society or engage in meaningful activities to enhance their wellbeing and social inclusion (Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Ruhm 1990; Zissimopoulos and Karoly, 2003). A study conducted by Higgs, et al., (2003) found ill health, job dissatisfaction, and redundancy remain the main factors influencing civil servants over the age of fifty to retire. However, some would voluntarily continue their labour market participation even if they retire because they enjoy work or find it is part of their identity. These people tend to have a negative view about retirement since, for them, it represents ill health, disability, and misfortune.

Further research has shown ‘bridge employment’ is being seen by ‘older’ people as an appropriate second or mid-career choice (e.g. Bacus and Human, 1994; Kim and Feldman, 2000; Ruhm, 1990; Say and Patrickson, 2012). Bridge employment is defined as ‘either working for pay after retirement or participating in the workforce after leaving a career and before completely retiring’ (Beehr and Bennett, 2015, p.112). Pengcharoen and Shultz (2010, p. 323) argue, ‘older’ people can decide to leave their career for full-time retirement or choose bridge employment within or outside their career to supplement their retirement income, or ‘fill the gap between full-time employment and full-time retirement by gradually adjusting to new lifestyles’. However, in general, bridge employment is often associated with life satisfaction, physical and psychological health, particularly for social and intrinsic motives (Dingemans and Henkens, 2013).

Hulmes (2012) has also found chronological age is no longer used as a basis to exist the labour workforce, arguing many ‘older’ people ‘are changing their perceptions of what it means to grow old and what kind of social roles [they] may occupy’ (Hulmes, 2012, p. 24). To explore how ‘older’ people approach the retirement process, the author conducted four focus group interviews with people aged fifty-five and over who were either two years before retirement or three years after retirement. The findings suggest more people choose to continue their participation by working part-time basis, freelancing, and/or doing contract work after their official retirement date. However, those who worked in manual roles found their transition into retirement more challenging due to difficulties in accessing flexible working. The findings further suggest the ‘new generation of retirees’ (Hulmes, 2012, p. 24) enjoy the flexibility of combining work and leisure time. As he notes, many ‘older’ people are keen to combine work, leisure, and civic engagement, however, caring responsibilities, ill health, and employers’ attitudes remain the main barriers to their participation.

Research to date has, therefore, furthered our understanding of the factors that may influence ‘older’ people to remain or exit the labour market such as health, care responsibility, pension arrangements,
and wealth (e.g. Banks and Tetlow, 2008; Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Berry, 2010; Foster, 2012; Higgs, et al., 2003; Hulmes, 2012). However, retirement is no longer perceived as ‘an abrupt and complete discontinuation of paid employment in later life’ (Dingemans and Henkens, 2013, p. 3), but instead an opportunity to bridge back into employment and other civic engagements, contributing to the wellbeing of ‘older’ people (Dingemans and Henkens, 2013).

The review of literature discussed in this Chapter therefore, brings significant insights on what motivates ‘older’ people to remain in the labour market. However, research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has so far rarely extended our understanding of these factors from the perspectives of social entrepreneurs aged 50+ (one exception, as discussed in Chapter Two, is Stumbitz 2013 who examined the motives of LLSEs). This research, therefore, contributes to literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise by delving deeper into the perspectives of the participants. This addresses a gap in our knowledge through three research questions that were posed to examine, firstly, the factors they consider important in their decision to set up their social enterprise, secondly, the way they view their everyday lived experiences and thirdly, the challenges they face and how they might be supported.

3.3 Summary of Debates in the Literature

The critical review of literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has demonstrated there are competing conceptualisations and definitions of social enterprise, including the degree of its commercialisation. Several studies (e.g. Boschee, 2001; Boschee and McClurg, 2003; Di Domenico, et al., 2010) define social enterprise as ‘hybrid’ organisations that balance for-profit motives with a social mission. Others, however, offer a broader definition, arguing social entrepreneurial activities can occur within the public, private and not-for-profit sectors (e.g. Dees and Elias, 1998; Mair and Marti, 2004; Swanson and Di Zhang, 2010). Further studies offer a multidimensional definition of social enterprises, arguing that social entrepreneurial activities involve the traits of the social entrepreneur, the influence of the macro environment, and the behaviour of the social enterprise. Social entrepreneurs recognise entrepreneurial opportunities; however, they are driven by their social mission rather than making profits. Nonetheless, the macro-environment plays a critical role in the ways in which they balance their for-profit motives and social mission (e.g. Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006; Weerawardena, et al., 2003).

Several studies have also examined the traits of the ‘social entrepreneur’. Social entrepreneurs are described as a ‘special breed’ (Dees and Elias, 1998) who exploit entrepreneurial opportunities to solve

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social problems. They have been described as innovators, reformers, change agents, accountable, ethical and who display virtuous behaviour (e.g. Dees, 2001; Leadbeater, 1997; Thompson, 2002; Weerawardena, et al., 2003). Nonetheless, these idealised definitions fail to recognise the differences between those who adopt market-based approaches such as trading to achieve their social mission, and those who create social value without income generation. Research has highlighted that income generation may dilute the social mission of the social enterprise, as well as undermine the legitimacy of communities, families and individuals who create social value without the need for income (e.g. Dees, 2001; Caulier-Grice, et al., 2012; Nicholls, 2010a).

Market-based approaches adopted by social enterprises have also been seen to have blurred the boundaries between public, private, and not-for-profit sector organisations (e.g. Austin, et al., 2006; Mair and Martí, 2004; Swanson and Di Zhang, 2010). Although not-for-profit sector organisations contribute to social change, they are often dependent on public and philanthropic resources (e.g. Busenitz, et al., 2015; Cornforth, 2014; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Weerawardena, et al., 2003). In addition, despite contributing to social causes through philanthropic donations, for-profit organisations are often concerned with profit maximisation to primarily serve the interests of shareholders (e.g. Swanson and DiZhang, 2010; Zahra, et al., 2009). Conversely, social enterprises have emerged as significant players in the welfare economy, addressing social needs that have been unmet by government agencies and private sector organisations (Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Leadbeater, 1997; Thompson 2002).

Therefore, social enterprises differ in many respects in relation to not-for-profit and private sector organisations. They pursue income generation activities through trading to gain their autonomy from government grants thereby meeting the needs of their beneficiaries in a sustainable way (Di Domenico et al., 2009). In addition, social enterprises achieve social and environmental goals (Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Peredo and McLean, 2006), all of which enhance the social capital of individuals and communities (Leadbeater, 1997; Thompson, 2002). However, as indicated in my literature review on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, the definition of social enterprise is dependent on the construction of those who are experiencing the social entrepreneurial process. As such, the research questions of this study were developed in order to extend our understanding, from a definitional perspective, of how the participants construct their identity as social entrepreneurs and to what extent this has shaped their entrepreneurial (social) intentions and orientations.

Literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise have furthered our understanding of the concept of ‘social enterprise’ and the role social entrepreneurs play in creating social value. However, much research has focused on defining the term rather than examining the factors that may influence
entrepreneurial (social) intentions. Studies suggest entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by various factors, such as age, gender, education, social networks, and prior experience (e.g. Ainsworth and Hardy, 2009; Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Anderson et al., 2005; Kautonen, et al., 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012). The interplay between age and entrepreneurial intentions has been examined in entrepreneurship literature. Research to date suggests many ‘older’ entrepreneurs have advantages that go far beyond experience (Wadhwa et al., 2010; Wadhwa, 2012). These include, among other positive features, the availability of contacts and networks, and management and industry experience (e.g. Kautonen, 2008; Weber and Schaper, 2003; Singh and de Noble, 2003), all which may influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. However, further studies demonstrate the interplay between pull and push factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions (e.g. Singh and DeNoble, 2003, Kautonen, et al., 2011). Pull factors, such as self-fulfilment, independence and flexibility, may increase the likelihood of those aged 50+ in becoming entrepreneurs. Yet push factors, such as age discrimination, redundancy and job dissatisfaction, may make them entrepreneurs out of necessity rather than a choice.

Although ‘older’ age has been seen positively in some of the entrepreneurship literature, (e.g. Singh and DeNoble, 2003), it has also sometimes been portrayed as a barrier to entrepreneurship. Diminished health, lack of energy, and uncertainty over guaranteed income have been seen to decrease the willingness of those aged 50+ in becoming entrepreneurs (e.g. Lévesque and Minniti, 2006; Curran and Blackburn, 2001). Nevertheless, such discourses about ‘older’ age in relation to entrepreneurship may stereotype individuals based on their age without recognising the very real benefits they have accumulated, and which they may wish to make use of at a later stage in their life career (e.g. Deal, 2008; Galbraith and Latham, 1996; Kautonen et al., 2011).

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, the construction of ‘older’ age is often dependent on how ‘older’ people construct their age identity. ‘Older’ people often identify with their ‘younger age identity’ and hence, they no longer perceive their age and the retirement process as a barrier to their economic and social participation (e.g. Barhnart and Peñaloza, 2013; Schafer and Shippee, 2009; Shmerlina, 2015). Contrary to the objective views of ageing, describing ‘older’ age as a phase of decline and dependency (e.g. Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Bengtson, et al., 1997; Putney, et al., 2005), ‘older’ people are more likely to continue their participation in the labour market through employment or entrepreneurship. Yet, perceived age discrimination and limited employment opportunities have been identified as some of the main barriers to employment for those aged 50+ (Barrett and McGoldrick, 2013; Carmel, et al., 2007; Tinsley, 2012). Therefore, a number of policy reforms in pensions and employment were introduced by the UK government to extend the working lives of those aged 50+. However, age has
been found to interact with other key factors such as health, income, gender, fear of failure, care responsibilities, and pension arrangements (e.g. Banks and Tetlow, 2008; Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Berry, 2010; Foster, 2012; Higgs, et al., 2003). As such, this study’s research questions are both highly important and timely. Their investigation extends knowledge on entrepreneurial (social) intentions in ‘later life’ but also contributes to research on the interplay between age and entrepreneurship.

In summary, most of the prior research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has focused on defining the term ‘social enterprise’ and to what extent it differs between not-for-profit and private sector organisations, including defining the traits of the social entrepreneur and the role she or he plays in creating social change. The entrepreneurship literature has also furthered our knowledge about the determinants that may influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. Nevertheless, research, to date, has not addressed in definitional terms how social entrepreneurs construct their daily realities, from their perspectives. The focus of this study is therefore to examine the subjective views of social entrepreneurs aged 50+. In particular, it examines their motives in becoming social entrepreneurs, the challenges they face and how they might be supported. Since the age dimension is critical to who the participants are, this study also examines how they construct their age identity and to what extent this has shaped their entrepreneurial (social) intentions and orientations.

Since the guiding research philosophy of this study is social constructionism, which foregrounds the subjective views of those involved (e.g. Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Schwandt, 1998; 2003), a qualitative approach to data collection and data analysis was adopted in order to gain in-depth and rich descriptions of the experiences of the participants, as well as look critically at the challenges they experience during the social entrepreneurial process. This study advances academic and empirical knowledge in the field of social entrepreneurship by firstly, gaining a better understanding of how social entrepreneurs in ‘later life’ construct their motives and, secondly, their ‘everyday’ lives as social entrepreneurs, including the challenges they face and how they might be supported.

3.4 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter is to explore the policy context in which LLSEs are embedded. In the first section, I explored medical and economic discourses on ‘ageing’ (e.g. Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Bengtson, et al., 1997; Putney, et al., 2005). Medical discourses tend to view ‘ageing’ from a biological perspective, and therefore, a phase of decline and dependency. However, economic perspectives are more concerned with the fiscal implication of the ageing process, resulting in presenting ‘older’ people as an economic and social challenge (Provencher, et al., 2014). Social gerontology, on the other hand,
views the ‘ageing process’ as a function of the environment in which it is experienced and subjectively constructed (e.g. Annear, et al., 2012; Razanova, 2010). Barnhart and Peñaloza (2013), Schafer and Shpipee (2009), and Shmerlina (2015), for instance, found ‘older’ people tend to identify with their ‘younger age identity’ and may not view themselves as ‘old’.

In Section 3.3.1, I reviewed employment reforms introduced by the UK government as part of its agenda on extending the working lives of people aged 50+. These reforms included the Equality Act 2010 to protect older people from age discrimination, including a number of ‘back to work’ programmes such as the Age Positive Campaign and WPs to encourage the inclusion of those aged 50+ in the labour market. The findings of the mid-life career review (2014), demonstrates the benefits of embedding a career review practice in careers and learning, and in the workplace together with fostering collaboration between sectors and the use of expert sign-posters within communities.

Despite significant improvements made on the policy level, ageism and long-term unemployment remain one of the main barriers to employment. Tinsley (2012) and PRIME (2015a;b) explain how ‘older’ people tend to experience ageism in the workplace, presenting a barrier to their continued participation. Wood, et al., (2008) further advise that ageism could be explained by a lack of employers’ understanding of the productivity of their ageing workforce. In addition, the authors note, public attitudes that perceive ‘older’ people as resistant to change, less flexible, less productive, and less reliable due to ill-health, present barriers to their participation. However, Walker (1999) provides positive ‘cases’ of employers who recognise the diversity and skills of their ageing workforce.

Finally, I have reviewed the pension reforms introduced by the UK government to extend the working lives of those aged 50+. These include the removal of the DRA and pension contributions to support their retirement income and extend their continued participation socially and economically. However, research found (e.g. Banks and Tetlow, 2008; Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Berry, 2010; Foster, 2012; Higgs, et al., 2003), a number of factors influence ‘older’ people’s decision to remain or exit the workplace such as gender, income, care responsibility, pension arrangements, and family structure.

Nevertheless, research has found ‘older’ people have shifted their perceptions of retirement and what it means to be old. O’Connell (2002) argues, the state pension age is different to retirement since many continue their social and economic participation even if they retire. Furthermore, Hulmes (2012) notes, retirement is no longer perceived as a cliff-edge event, instead an opportunity to bridge back into employment or volunteering and/or entrepreneurship. As this thesis aims to understand the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs from their own perspectives, this chapter has, therefore, brought invaluable insights into how age is constructed from a micro-perspective, which could be useful in understanding
how the participants in this study identify with their age identity, and how it has influenced their entrepreneurial (social) intentions.

To examine the perspectives of LLSEs, three research questions were iteratively developed from the literature review and the research process, focusing in my first research question on understanding the factors they consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise. My second and third research questions examine the participants’ interpretations of their ‘everyday’ lives and the challenges they face and how they might be supported. To answer these three research questions, the next chapter explains the research design and the methods adopted to collect and analyse the data.
Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and the methods adopted to examine the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs. As discussed in the preceding chapters, this study has been situated within existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, together with adopting social constructionism as a theoretical foundation, foregrounding the subjective views of those involved. This chapter, therefore, provides details of the philosophical beliefs guiding this research, the research design, choice of data collection methods, and the approach undertaken to analyse and interpret the empirical data.

In Section 4.2, I begin by explaining the philosophical assumptions guiding this study. Limited research has examined the ‘everyday’ life experiences of LLSEs from their own perspectives (Stumbitz, et al., 2012), and therefore, the focus of my research is to understand the processes by which the participants make sense of their experiences. This locates my research within an interpretive social constructionist perspective, focusing on the subjective views of those involved (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Schwandt, 1998; 2003).

In Section 4.3, I provide an explanation of the utility of qualitative research in understanding the ‘everyday’ experiences of LLSEs. This is followed by a detailed account of the context of my research, how I gained access to my research participants, and my sampling approach. In Section 4.4, I turn to discuss the choice of methods to collect the data; in-depth interviews were regarded the most relevant methods of gaining access to the participants’ perspectives and their experiences. In the final section, I provide a detailed account of my thematic analysis approach to identify emerging themes and patterns that cut across the data. The chapter concludes with a summary, highlighting the main insights drawn from collecting and analysing data and the themes that emerged through the participants’ accounts.

4.2 Philosophical Assumptions of this Study

As indicated throughout my thesis, there is currently little empirical research examining the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs (Stumbitz, et al., 2012). Therefore, basic questions remain concerning the factors they consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise, the way they view their ‘everyday’ lives, and the challenges they face, and how they might be supported. An interpretive social
constructionist perspective is therefore adopted, giving priority to the subjective views of research participants (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1998).

Contrary to positivism, which is a world view based on the assumptions that social reality can only be discovered through law-like generalisations (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Neuman, 2014; Saunders, et al., 2016), interpretivism focuses on the subjective views of those involved and the meanings they attach to their experiences (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Liebrucks, 2001). As noted by Schwandt (1998, p. 221), interpretivism has an ‘abiding concern for understanding meaning, for grasping the actor’s definition of a situation’.

Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 229) argue, interpretivism seeks an understanding of the ‘inner experiences’ of individuals and the way they construct their own meanings of their situations, behaviours, and actions. Consequently, a defining characteristic of interpretivism is the ‘notion of understanding’ rather than discovering truths about the social world through scientific explanations (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Saunders, et al., 2016). In a similar way, Schwandt (1998, p. 225) notes, the focus of enquiry for interpretive researchers is ‘on meanings and the process by which these meanings are created, negotiated, sustained, and modified within a specific context’. He argues, one of the essential questions for a qualitative researcher is ‘how can we know about the world of human action,’ rather than ‘how do we measure it?’, leading to a new form of knowledge about the reality of people from their own perspectives. Schwandt makes a clear distinction between positivism that understands the social world as a ‘set of social facts’ which can be explained scientifically, and interpretivism concerned with understanding the process by which individuals make sense of their situation (Creswell, 2014).

This distinction is similar to that made by Prasad and Prasad (2002), who argue, interpretive enquiries address key questions that cannot be answered by scientific explanations. Hence, whilst positivist enquiries focus on natural objects, leading to a methodological enquiry based on explanations through scientific methods, interpretivism is concerned with ‘human, social, and cultural phenomena’ (Prasad and Prasad, 2002, p. 5), connected with the broad philosophy of social constructionism that sees social reality constructed through the meaningful interpretations of individuals. This view is supported by Berger and Luckmann (1966), who argue, ‘reality’ has a dual nature -that is, objective and subjective reality. Objective reality is a process that occurs when people interact with each other in a specific social context, and over time create a common language, meanings, and concepts which then become internalised and ‘taken for granted’ as a reality.
The authors argue, that during social interactions, the socially constructed ‘objective’ reality becomes internalised as a ‘subjective’ reality. This process, takes place during ‘primary socialisation’ when children learn words and their meanings and identify ‘things’, such as animals and objects, according to the words they acquired during childhood. Whereas primary socialisation is the first socialisation individuals undergo in childhood, secondary socialisations occurs when they acquire a specific role in society, during which they become institutionalised. Berger and Luckman’s discussion of the internalisation process through which reality becomes ‘taken for granted’ does not, however, reject the existence of natural objects, such as water and/or buildings, instead suggesting meanings are formed through social interactions (Gergen, 1985).

A critical review of this literature has highlighted there are two main strands of social constructionism. The critical perspective, which goes beyond ‘understanding’, critically examines how people are shaped and determined by discourse/language (e.g. Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1985; Liebrucks, 2001; Parker, 1998). The focus of this perspective is on discursive cultural, social, and political discourses presented through language, constructing the actions and identity of human subjects (Liebrucks, 2001). This approach has been applied in examining the social construction of, for example, gender, identity, age, and ethnicity, demonstrating how these constructs are shaped by prevailing cultural and institutional discourses (Andrews, 2012; Burr, 2003; Meyer, 2006). ‘Interpretive’ social constructionism is a further strand, which is concerned with understanding how people construct their ‘everyday’ lives from their own perspectives, paying attention to interpretations at the subjective level (e.g. Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1998). As Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 106) write, ‘reality cannot be understood without references to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities’.

Whilst ‘critical’ and ‘interpretive’ social constructionism share similar assumptions about the social construction of reality, researchers in a number of disciplines utilise different perspectives, which are determined by their epistemological and ontological assumptions (Andrews, 2012). The assumptions guiding this research share similarities with interpretive social constructionism which is located in the traditions of, for example, Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Schwandt (1998) who argue, the social world can only be known ‘in relation to people’s experience of it and not independently of that experience’ (Andrews, 2012, p. 41). As argued by Prasad and Prasad (2002), interpretive social constructionism:

‘Sees social reality as a constructed world built in and through meaningful interpretations. The goal of the researcher, therefore, is not to capture pre-existing or
ready-made world presumed to be available out there but to understand this process of worldmaking’ (Prasad and Prasad, 2002, p. 7).

Interpretive social constructionism researchers, therefore, focus on understanding how people construct their ‘everyday’ lives and their perceptions of their own situations (Burrell and Morgan, 1997; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The interpretive social constructionist perspective adopted in this research takes a different perspective to existing studies on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, related to the focus of enquiry and data collection methods to answer the research questions. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is limited empirical evidence examining the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs from their own perspectives (Stumbitz, et al., 2012). Hence, theoretically, this study aims at providing in-depth meanings about the factors the participants consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise, their interpretations of their daily lives, the challenges they experienced and how they might be supported. Consistent with interpretive social constructionism, a qualitative research enquiry is, therefore, adopted as per section 4.3 below.

4.3 The Utility of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has gained wider acceptance with the emergence of social sciences in the 20th century as an approach to the study of human lives (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Since then, qualitative research has been employed in a number of disciplines such as education, medicine and nursing, history, social work, communication and political sciences, sociology, and educational psychology (Creswell, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). In addition, the application of qualitative research has involved a number of qualitative strategies, such as ethnography, grounded theory, case study, and narrative studies (Saunders, et al., 2016).

Despite diverse strategies and disciplinary traditions, some general qualitative characteristics were identified and have been applied in most qualitative studies. These can include: an interest in the perspectives of participants; an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world; an emphasis on the context and studying participants who have experienced the issue or the problem under study; an inductive approach to data analysis; and the role of the reflexive researcher in collecting and analysing data (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Neuman, 2014). As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2003):

‘Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These
practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalist approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, pp. 4-5).

Qualitative research, therefore, focuses on understanding the meanings participants hold about their ‘everyday’ lives and situations rather than the views of the researcher or what has been written in the literature on the subject (Creswell, 2014; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). The epistemological assumptions guiding this research are based on the belief that the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs can only be understood from their own standpoints since they are the ones who experienced the social entrepreneurial process. Hence, the participants in this study play a key role in bringing their own interpretations of how they make sense of their ‘everyday’ situations.

Nevertheless, qualitative research is often built on the assumptions that the researcher and research participants are inter-subjectively created, as Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. ix) write, ‘in order to understand alternative points of view, it is important researchers are fully aware of the assumptions upon which their perspectives are based’. Hence, researchers are required to recognise and communicate their own assumptions so others can believe their research accounts. Hence, it follows, to some extent, my own assumptions about the world, my values and beliefs, my entrepreneurial experience, my role as a mother, my cultural background, and my age, may have influenced the interpretation of data. As outlined by Creswell (2014):

‘In a qualitative study, the inquirers admit the value-laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field’ (Creswell, 2014, p. 18).

Nevertheless, my reflexivity and my role as an academic researcher meant I was conscious of my own ‘positionality’ during the research process (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003; Prowse, 2010). In addition, to my knowledge, limited qualitative studies have examined the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs, meaning that my study is predominantly exploratory (Creswell, 2014; Neuman, 2014), and therefore, my research participants would most likely influence the direction of the conversation and what they consider
important (Neuman, 2014). Since my study takes its focus on the subjective views of participants to gain an understanding of their experiences as social entrepreneurs, it follows therefore, that the choice of my data collection methods are influenced by the interpretive social constructionist assumptions guiding this research.

4.4 Research Participants

My interest in researching social entrepreneurs in an ageing society has stemmed from my entrepreneurial experience in starting up and running a business overseas with a socially orientated agenda, including my MBA dissertation, which has examined the motivation of female entrepreneurs in the UK. My practical entrepreneurial experience together with my academic focus on entrepreneurship have triggered my interest in studying LLSEs in an ageing society on two levels: firstly, to further my understanding of those who choose to ‘make a difference’ and secondly, build my desired next steps in developing an enhanced research knowledge on entrepreneurship and social enterprise, ageing, gender, and ethnicity, all of which will contribute to, and make an impact on academic research, policy and practice.

As I write up this thesis, I acknowledge I have started this research with a prior understanding of my own entrepreneurial experience and my awareness of the issues pertaining to running an enterprise. In addition, my cultural background, gender, ethnicity, and my age have not only triggered my interest in this research but may also have influenced my interaction with research participants and interpretations of data. Nevertheless, throughout the entire research process, I engaged in reflexive analysis of my own ‘positionality’ (Prowse, 2010) as a qualitative researcher and developed my own reflexive strategies, using my reflective journals, as shown in Section 4.10 (Figure 4.2), documenting my observations, reflections, and my assumptions on what I was observing.

As stated in Chapter One, this research is undertaken in collaboration with UnLtd, which is a charity that was formed in 2000 in collaboration with seven other charities that promote social entrepreneurship across the UK and internationally. These include Ashoka-Innovators for the Public, Changemakers, Community Action Networks, Comic Relief, Scarman Trust, SENSCOT, and the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE). UnLtd supports individuals directly who want to set up a social enterprise to address social problems, through their core award programmes, which, at the time this research was undertaken, included ‘Try It’, ‘Do It’, ‘Build It’, and ‘Scale It’ awards. The levels of award ranged from £500 for those wishing to test their social idea to £15,000 for those wishing to scale to a local or regional level. On the other hand, the ‘Scale It’ awards ranged from £20,000 to £100,000 and
supported social entrepreneurs who wished to scale nationally and/or internationally or raise external investments.

At the time this research was conducted, UnLtd had developed core award programmes tailored to LLSEs. This included the ‘Ignite Programme’, which supported 120 social entrepreneurs in Northern Ireland in 2010. In addition, a pilot programme in Bradford in 2011-2012, supported 18 social entrepreneurs. In 2015, UnLtd has introduced a new programme called ‘Transform Ageing’, in collaboration with The Coutts Foundation. The programme provided cash awards of up to £20,000 to social entrepreneurs aiming at developing innovative solutions that support ‘older’ people (UnLtd, 2015).

Since my research was undertaken in collaboration with UnLtd, I have, since the beginning of my research, immersed myself into their setting by participating in pre-arranged visits and/or meetings with my collaborative supervisors and built rapport with the Research and Evaluation Manager to gain a better understanding of their research activities and support initiatives. Part of my involvement with UnLtd also included developing an annotated bibliography on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. Furthermore, I attended one seminar organised by my collaborative supervisors on LLSEs.

At the time this study was conducted, UnLtd coordinated the AAA group on ‘valuing the contribution of older people’ and hence, brokered my access to this group. I have, therefore, joined the AAA group, communicating to them the nature of my participation, which is to support my current research on LLSEs. I attended several meetings and events such as the ‘Age of No Retirement’, a two-day event in 2014, and participated in a number of debates, for instance, ‘Isn’t it time to be optimistic about ageing?’, in which pieces of evidence were presented, such as the Mid-Career Review undertaken by NIACE. A further example included our discussion about ‘retirement transition’ and building a collaborative proposal for ‘age readiness’, including hosting a regional conference on ‘Fuller Purposeful Lives’ (an example of our agenda for this initiative is illustrated in Appendix 1). Participating in these debates has enabled me on the one hand, to gain a more nuanced understanding of the policy context in the UK, and on the other, build my credibility as a researcher.

My decision to choose research participants from UnLtd is based on the definition of social enterprise adopted in this study, which is a ‘hybrid model’ that blends for-profit motives with social value creation. However, as I explained in Chapter One, consistent with social constructionism as a theoretical foundation adopted in this study, the construction of terms such as ‘social enterprise’ and ‘social entrepreneurship’ is dependent on the subjective views of those involved. Hence, my focus is to select research participants who have an explicit social aim to create social, cultural, and/or
environmental value. Nevertheless, since the age dimension of my participants is key to who they are, I have decided to choose AAA participants, giving me an opportunity to explore their views about the UK policy context on ageing and the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing society so I can contextualise the experiences of my participants (i.e. social entrepreneurs). As noted by Srivastava and Teo (2006, p. 199) ‘in interpretive research, the context of the research setting plays a very important role in attributing meaning to a particular action’.

4.5 Gaining Access

Saunders, et al., (2016) note, gaining access often depends on the sensitivity of the topic, the credibility of the researcher, and the level of interest from participants and/or gatekeepers, which may threaten the feasibility of the research. As explained in Section 4.4, this study is undertaken in collaboration with UnLtd, which has brokered my access to LLSEs who have been funded through their core award programmes, at different stages of maturity and in different geographical locations. Nevertheless, my ability to build a good rapport with my collaborative supervisors, allowed me to gain their trust and demonstrate my credibility as a researcher. This has also meant I was able to identify the relevant gatekeeper at UnLtd, enabling me to gain physical access to my research participants.

Following ethical approval, as explained in Section 4.8, I met with the Research and Evaluation Manager in person at UnLtd to discuss the demographics of their social entrepreneurs and how I could gain access. I felt the meeting was crucial, as on the one hand, I gained an understanding of practicalities in accessing their database and, on the other hand, explained my criteria for inclusion as shown in Section 4.6. However, this was by no means a guarantee I would be given ‘cognitive access’ (Saunders, 2012) from the intended participants. Cognitive access often involves research participants to give their consent to participate (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Saunders, 2012). As such, I emailed the Research and Evaluation Manager at UnLtd, resulting in being granted access to their database via a password-protected online platform. The database included ninety-one social entrepreneurs (forty-eight males and forty-three females) who received different levels of awards in the period 2014-2015, ranging from ‘Try It’ to ‘Scale It’ awards. In addition, the age of the participants was from fifty years old, with seventy-four years old being the oldest in the database.

Before seeking ‘cognitive’ access (Saunders, 2012), I began by familiarising myself with the database, by checking for any duplications and/or missing records, to gain an understanding of the participants’ age range, levels of awards, and geographical locations, the latter to purely plan my field trips effectively. To seek expression of interest from intended participants, I sent a standardised recruitment
email as shown in Appendix 3, followed by a copy of the participants’ information (Appendix 4), outlining the purpose of my research, the nature of their involvement, and assuring them the data would be confidential and any excerpts used in my findings would be anonymised. The participants were also provided with the opportunity to ask any questions via email or over the phone and if they wished to take part, I could contact them to arrange a suitable date and time for the interview. Fortunately, twenty-eight out ninety-one participants confirmed their agreement to participate, as demonstrated in Appendix 2, and all interviews took place between September and December 2015 (Section 4.7).

As explained in Section 4.4, I have joined the AAA group to gain a more nuanced understanding of the policy context in which my research participants (i.e. social entrepreneurs) are located. Hence, I asked the Chair of the group to allow me to ask the group members to participate in my study. As such, I presented an outline of my thesis to the group at one of our meetings at the Gulbenkian Foundation in London, resulting in ten participants expressing their interest in participating in my study. I therefore sent a recruitment email, as per Appendix 3, followed by the participant information sheet (Appendix 4), outlining the overall aim of my study, the nature of their involvement, and how the data would be treated. Fortunately, seven out of ten participants confirmed their participation and interviews took place between August and September 2015, as highlighted in Appendix 5.

4.6 Sampling Approach

Once I had obtained the database from UnLtd and the expressions of interests from participants, the question remained as to whom I should include in my research. Although interpretive social constructionism does not provide precise guidelines on sampling approaches, academic literature on methods and methodology suggest qualitative research often involves purposive sampling to enhance understanding through information-rich cases to meet the aim(s) of the study and answer the research question(s) (Coyne, 1997; Patton, 1990; Sandelowski, 2000; Saunders, 2012).

In my selection of research participants, I employed ‘purposive sampling’ called ‘heterogeneous’ sampling (Guest, et al., 2006; Marshall, et al., 2013; Neuman, 2014; Patton, 1990). This form of sampling involves the researcher making judgment on who to sample to explore the research problem identified and best answer the research question(s). Since the primary aim of my research is to understand the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs, I have decided to choose research participants who have a first-hand experience on running a social enterprise with an explicit social aim. Nevertheless, as the age dimension of research participants is key to who they are as individuals, I have decided to include
a second criterion for inclusion, which is that all participants must be aged 50+ at the time of the interview. In addition, since I have chosen to include AAA participants to explore the policy context in which my research participants (i.e. social entrepreneurs) are embedded, I set a criterion for inclusion, which was that all the AAA participants must have knowledge about either the policy context or the scope of social enterprises in the UK. Hence, my sample is not statistically representative of an entire population and I cannot claim my findings can be generalised to other social entrepreneurs because they are unique to the specific context in which they are collected. However, my findings will be able ‘dig deep’ in order to uncover depths of meanings and, therefore, offer new empirical and conceptual insights that will have wider relevance and can be extrapolated to other samples and the wider population of LLSEs.

Notwithstanding, according to Saunders and Townsend (2016), the justification of sample size in qualitative research is dependent on the philosophical assumptions guiding the research and the research questions. Guidelines on the minimum purposive sampling size have been discussed in methodological texts (e.g. Marshall, et al., 2013; Morse, 2000). Baker and Edwards (2012, p.9), for instance, argue, although the number of research participants can be between twelve to sixty, the median size of thirty, ‘offers the advantage of penetrating beyond a very small number of people without imposing the hardship of endless data gathering’. Furthermore, Guest, et al., (2006) note, twelve participants are consistent with a purposive sampling approach. On the other hand, Morse (2000) states, a minimum of thirty participants is required in qualitative research to obtain rich data. Nevertheless, qualitative studies often focus on a relatively small sample to study in-depth rather than generalise directly from the sample to the wider population (Baker and Edwards, 2012; Bloor and Wood, 2006; Coyne, 1997; Creswell, 2014; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

As discussed in Section 4.6, the data I had received from UnLtd included ninety-one LLSEs (forty-eight males and forty-three females) who have been funded through their core award programmes in the period 2014-2015 and their age ranged from fifty to seventy-four years of age. Since I adopted a ‘heterogeneous purposive sampling’ approach (Marshall, et al., 2013; Neuman, 2014; Patton, 1990), I emailed all potential research participants asking them to participate in my study and fortunately twenty-eight out of ninety-one agreed to participate. As highlighted in Table 4.2, twenty-eight interviews were conducted with LLSEs at different stages of maturity and in different geographical locations in England.
To provide the reader with a better sense of who they are, I have specified in the table below, the participants’ age at the time of the interview, their gender, and their locations – the latter purely to provide transparency of where I conducted the interviews.

Table 4.1: Research participants: social entrepreneurs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Entrepreneurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As discussed in Section 4.5, ten AAA members expressed their interest in participating in my study and as illustrated in Table 4.2, fortunately seven agreed to participate. Six interviews conducted face-to-face at the person’s place of work and/or at Age UK in London and one via Skype, at my request, since the participant was not available to meet face-to-face.

Table 4.2 Research participants: Age Action Alliance (AAA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Identifier</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Enterprise</td>
<td>UK Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA3 *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA4 *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA6 *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These participants had knowledge of both social enterprise and UK policy context.
4.7 In-depth Interview Method

The methods of data collection are often guided by the epistemological assumptions guiding the research (Caelli, et al., 2003; Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Saunders, et al., 2016). The use of interviews in qualitative research has been regarded as common methods in understanding the process by which the participants make sense of their ‘everyday’ situations and experiences from their standpoints (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Hence, interviews are regarded one of the most appropriate and common methods in qualitative studies (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016).

Despite different variants of qualitative interviewees, in-depth interviews provide opportunities for open conversations, enabling participants and/or the researcher to pursue ideas they see significant (Palmer, 2001; Saunders, et al., 2016). In addition, in-depth interviews enable participants to express their views and explore issues they may feel important, which is ideal in gaining an in-depth understanding of their ‘everyday’ lives and perspectives (Lofland, et al., 2006; Palmer, 2001; Spradley, 1979; Tan and Hall, 2007). As noted by Marshall and Rossman (2011), in-depth interviews are:

‘The most typically used type of interview[s] in qualitative studies, which often focus on individual lived experiences and are based on the assumption that the participants’ perspectives on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participants’ views it...not as the researcher views it’ (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 144).

In this study, in-depth interviews were considered the most appropriate method to gain a deep understanding of the participants’ experiences from their perspectives for various reasons. Firstly, their ‘flexible’ nature would allow me to gain rich interpretations the participants hold about their experiences and definitions of their ‘everyday’ lives, as Slevitch, (2011, p. 78) write, ‘qualitative methodology often emphasises described experiences...based on the depth, vividness, and rich descriptions through the participants’ interpretations’. Secondly, they would allow me to interact with my participants and have access to how ‘things work in practice’ (Watson, 2011) and the natural setting in which they are embedded.

Finally, the interpretive social constructionist approach to interviewing meant that I would ‘give voice’ to my participants to make sense of their experiences, express their views, and raise important themes that would prompt the discussions to other directions (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008). As noted by Palmer (2001, p. 304), ‘conversations put people at their ease and so increase the possibility of obtaining information that more readily indicates underlying feelings, assumptions, and beliefs’.
Although in-depth interviews tend to be informal and encourage open conversations, qualitative researchers try to remain close to their subject of enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) and, therefore, require a ‘framework’ (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008, p. 143) by which to structure their interview. Accordingly, before I entered the field, I devised my interview guides as shown in Appendices 6 and 7, specifying broad topics developed from my literature review and my research questions. However, the interpretive social constructionist approach adopted in this study meant the interview guides I devised in preparation for my interviews with my participants were minimally structured. Given the lack of existing research examining the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs, and the exploratory nature of this research, I felt, lacking a structure to my interview questions would allow my participants to pursue ideas they see important and express their own understanding of their daily situations.

I started each interview by asking participants about themselves and their professional background. This question was designed to contextualise their experiences, providing me with information on who they are, what they did prior to becoming social entrepreneurs, their skills, and what they most and least enjoyed in their previous employment. However, as my research participants comprised of LLSEs and AAA committee members, I asked further questions depending on what I saw relevant to answer my research questions. For instance, I asked social entrepreneurs to explain, in their own words, how they perceived themselves and what it meant for them to be a social entrepreneur, whereas I asked the AAA participants about their perspectives on what they saw were the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing society. This has enabled me to delve deeper into how my research participants (i.e. social entrepreneurs) understood their entrepreneurial (social) identity and seek the views of the AAA participants about the context of the ageing society in the UK. In any event, I asked both (i.e. social entrepreneurs and AAA participants) about their views of the opportunities available for those aged 50+ to become social entrepreneurs. This question was designed to gain an understanding, from their perspectives, of how social entrepreneurship could be a potential solution to extend the economic and social participation of those aged 50+.

The open-ended questions I used during the interviews allowed me to give my research participants the opportunity to voice their opinions and the meanings they attach to their experiences (Creswell, 2014). In addition, I used prompts to encourage the participants to tell me in their own words, for example, what ‘experience’ meant for them and any events in their personal lives that had influenced their entrepreneurial (social) intentions. During the interviews, I focused on exploring issues that were perceived to be important by the interviewees. Hence, I asked further questions to respond to their accounts and viewpoints. I ended each interview by asking my research participants if they had any advice to give to potential social entrepreneurs and what can be done to encourage more people aged
50+ to become social entrepreneurs. I also asked if they had any further comments they would like to make, particularly if they felt there was anything relevant, which they did not have time to elaborate during the interview.

I spent a total of five months collecting data between August and December 2015. I conducted thirty-three interviews face-to-face and two via Skype. In the majority of cases, the interviews took place at the participants’ place of work but in few cases, they were held in a public place such as a café, a restaurant or, alternatively, at the participant’s residence. In some instances, my research participants were not available to meet due to other commitments. Hence, I asked if they were able to give alternative dates, resulting in re-scheduling the interview meetings at their own convenience. Two participants were not available to meet face-to-face due to having other commitments during the day, hence I offered a Skype interview as an alternative, which they were happy to undertake.

Each interview lasted for approximately one hour and informed consent was sought from each participant to ensure they understood the voluntary nature of their participation, as shown in Appendix 8. I recorded each interview using a digital recorder and filed these using numerical identifiers as illustrated in Section 4.9. I had no objections from my research participants to record the interviews. However, in few instances, I was asked not to include any sensitive information in the transcripts, and as such, I ensured my participants’ accounts would be anonymised using the numerical identifiers illustrated in Section 4.9. In addition, I explained all data would be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, as illustrated in the ethical considerations of this study in Section 4.9.

On some occasions, my research participants had to be called away to talk to their employees and/or assist their customers and in those instances, I paused the interview until my participants returned. However, this presented me with a unique opportunity to observe my participants in their naturally occurring situations such as talking to customers, answering a phone call, taking or arranging a delivery, and communicating with their staff, giving me a deep understanding of their behaviour in their own settings and what they did in the normal course of their lives. In addition, mindful that participation in participants’ natural setting was of some value (albeit partial) I was, at times, able to roam freely around their settings, providing me with opportunities to engage in ad-hoc conversations with staff members and observe the physical environment (e.g. displayed photos/promotional materials, staff members carrying out their activities). In addition, I was also able to take part in, for example, taking delivery of goods and/or assist with customers, giving me an insider viewpoint of what it is like for them to be social entrepreneurs.
Nevertheless, accessing research participants often involves ethical considerations (Creswell, 2014) to ensure those who gave their cognitive access (i.e. personal entry to the participants (Saunders, et al., 2016) were not subjected to any harm or risk during data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of research accounts and findings. Section 4.8 below presents the ethical considerations applied in this study.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration is an important process throughout the different stages of the research (Creswell, 2014). This is often related to standards of behaviour and conduct in relation to participants (Saunders, et al., 2016). Qualitative researchers tend to negotiate entry into the field where the research is conducted, which often involves human participants and collecting personal data that may reveal personal life stories (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, qualitative researchers are required to take reasonable precautions to protect their participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Creswell, 2014). Ethical considerations often involve informed consent, rights to privacy, and protection from any harm and risk (physical, emotional or any other kind of harm), such as social standing, personal values and beliefs, family relationships, the wider community, and disclosing confidential information (Denzil and Lincoln, 2003; ESRC Framework for Research Ethics, 2012).

In the context of my study, the notion of serious harm or risk was based on my research participants not being adequately informed of the nature of their involvement and that any collected data would not be handled according to Data Protection Act 1998 and the guidelines set out by the University Ethics Committee. As my research comprised human participants, I applied for ethical approval, which was reviewed and approved by the University of Surrey Ethics Committee (Appendix 9).

In this study, the participation of all my research participants was voluntary and informed consent obtained from each participant (Appendix 8), confirming their permission to record the interviews. To ensure participants had as much information about the nature of my study to make an informed decision about their participation, I emailed each participant an information sheet outlining the goal of my study, the nature of their participation, and reassuring them the data would be handled confidentially, as illustrated in Appendix 4. The information sheet also informed participants they could withdraw at any time during the study, and, in the event of this happening, the data would be destroyed. In this study, one participant chose to withdraw and I therefore destroyed the interview recording and did not use any of the data in the analysis and interpretation of data.
The anonymity of participants was protected by giving all interviewees a numerical identifier, as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below, referring to social entrepreneurs as SE followed by their age and gender and the Age Action Alliance as AAA followed by a numerical number and gender.

Figure 4.1. Numerical identifiers applied to protect the anonymity of participants

![Numerical Identifiers Diagram]

To protect the participants’ confidentiality, these numerical identifiers were applied to each of my interview audio files, which were only available to myself. The list was also kept on paper and password protected in electronic formats, which were saved on the University of Surrey’s computer. The paper copies were all locked in my filing cabinet in my research office, which was only accessible to myself. The interview audio recordings were all permanently deleted from my digital recorder and once all data was filed, I used the above numerical identifiers in the analysis and interpretation of my data.

As discussed in Section 4.5, my research participants (i.e. social entrepreneurs) were all funded through UnLtd core Award programmes, hence given UnLtd’s knowledge of their identity, I ensured their comments could not be identified in my analysis and interpretation of empirical data. Any details about the name of the social enterprise and location have been kept deliberately minimal to conceal...
the identity of participants. Given the focus of my research is to understand the ‘everyday’ life experiences of LLSEs, I considered concealing their social enterprise’s name and location would not compromise any of the findings identified in this thesis.

4.9 Data Analysis

As Creswell (2014) argues, approach to data analysis must be consistent with the research questions and the philosophical beliefs guiding the study. Consistent with the interpretive social constructionism lens adopted in this study and my focus on uncovering the meanings participants held about their ‘everyday’ lives, I adopted an inductive approach to data analysis, involving reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to search for key patterns, words, or themes in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An inductive analysis is a process of coding data without trying to fit pre-established codes or categories, which contrasts the top-down deductive approach guided by the researcher’s interest in testing an existing theory with codes designed prior to analysis (Saunders, et al., 2016).

The inductive analysis, therefore, refers to themes being developed and emerging from the data. As Gioia, et al., (2012, p. 16) writes, ‘an inductive approach captures concepts relevant to human experience in terms that are adequate at the level of meanings of the people living that experience...and adequate at the level of theorising about that experience’. Thomas (2003, p. 2) similarly argues, an inductive analysis is an approach allowing ‘research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in data’.

However, as argued by Saunders, et al., (2016, p. 570), ‘researchers who use such an approach do not start to research a subject area without a competent level of knowledge about that area’. Thus, the active role of researchers in identifying themes can be obscured by their a priori knowledge about the subject and subsequent analysis and interpretation of data. In this instance, to acknowledge my proactive role during the stages of the research process, such as coding, interpreting, and analysing the data, I have used the personal pronouns when presenting my research findings, as illustrated in Chapters Five and Six.

Data analysis often begins when the researcher enters the field, however interpreting and making sense of data requires a relevant approach to data analysis guided by the research question(s), aim(s) of the study, and epistemological and ontological assumptions guiding the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Although thematic analysis is an analytical method that is widely used in a variety of disciplines, it is poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged as an analytical method (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 5) note, ‘given the advantages of the flexibility of thematic
analysis...an absence of clear and concise guidelines around thematic analysis means that the ‘anything goes’ critique of qualitative research may well apply in some instances’. Similarly, Attride-Stirling (2001, p. 386) argues, although qualitative methods are gaining popularity, ‘there is relatively little said on how to analyse textual data’, which is important for qualitative researchers to report the techniques they employed, enhance the value of their interpretations, and for other researchers to evaluate and perform similar future research. To clarify ‘how’ I analysed the data and subsequent identifications of themes presented in Chapters Five and Six, I, therefore, offer an account of the step-by-step process of my thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is often acknowledged as a useful approach involving identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2006; Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Given the interpretive social constructionist approach adopted in this study, focusing on uncovering the ways research participants make sense of their ‘everyday’ lives, I have made the decision to apply a thematic analysis approach, as offered by Braun and Clarke (2006), which is consistent with my theoretical lens.

Once I had made the decision to use the data collected from social entrepreneurs and members of the AAA as a combined dataset so I can locate the data collected from social entrepreneurs in the wider social context in which they are embedded, I began my analysis by familiarising myself with the data. Immersion in the data is often regarded as an important first step in qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Bradley, et al., 2007; Lacey and Luff, 2009). I initially did this by making use of my reflective research journals that I used when I entered the field, recording my thoughts, feelings, and opinions about emerging themes and my behaviour as a researcher. As Ortlipp (2008, p. 695) writes, ‘reflective practice aims to make visible to the reader the constructive nature of research outcomes, a construction that originates in the various choices and decisions researchers undertake during the process of researching’. Therefore, in an attempt to enhance my understanding of the data I collected, I read and re-read my reflective research journals, highlighting, in bold, key concepts and meanings I felt were relevant to answer my research questions. For instance, as noted in Figure 4.2, I wrote my reflections following my interview with SE11:
Figure 4.2 Research journal (SE11, September 2015)

‘I have just met with SE11; oh it was a great meeting, really lovely. He is very welcoming, very upbeat, very energetic and very passionate (my emphasis) about what he does for his social enterprise activity. Wonderful, he has a breadth of experience in terms of business experience, his background is in sales and I could see the passion (my emphasis) in running the venture and how satisfying for him...very welcoming...you could see he is in a happy home, happy environment and he is very happy with what he is doing...He was a very successful businessman but I could see that he got to a turning point in his life where he felt he wanted to give back to the community. He has great aspirations for the business. I think I could call him one of those aspirers who want to scale their social impact. I think UnLtd are doing a very good job in supporting him and getting him to network. Funny enough I didn’t expect the business to be a franchise and he has hopes to scale nationwide...that could be something I need to talk about in my findings. One interesting thing he mentioned was that he was told not to get too involved in the business because he got to a stage where he needed to take a strategic view and how to grow his business...it was interesting to hear that...he was given a good advice by a successful social entrepreneur to work on his business rather than in his business. I felt so happy to meet him and actually, he gave me energy and a sense of hopefulness. He inspired me...I think I was great at the interview. I was asking questions. I was not looking at my interview guide. I wanted to explore things from him so I felt things came out quite naturally. Mmm, I was a bit surprised when he said that his model is a social venture not a social enterprise. He doesn’t see his enterprise as a social enterprise but he sees it as a social venture and he kept saying there are some differences so perhaps I need to explore that because I need to understand it. He is actually taking money and selling services so it is a social enterprise because he wants to sustain it. Interesting when he said he has not been paid for the last three years. His wife is supporting him...’ (Research Journal, interview with SE11, September 2015).

To further familiarise myself with the data, I imported all my transcripts into NVivo in preparation for generating initial codes. NVivo is a qualitative analysis software package that assists in the management of data by coding and developing concepts, themes, and interpretations grounded in data (Saldana, 2009; Saunders, et al., 2016). This familiarisation phase involved reading and re-reading all my interview transcripts on NVivo generating initial codes and using coding stripes to illustrate the content of the codes assigned. As described by Saldana (2009, p.3), ‘a code is most often a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data’. However, as noted in this section, researchers do not often enter the field without a priori knowledge (Saunders, et al., 2016), hence, in generating my initial codes, I initially made use made of my a priori themes identified in my literature review as detailed in Table 4.3. A full list of my a priori themes is illustrated in Appendix 10.
Table 4.3 A priori themes drawn from literature review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A priori themes</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Key Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ageing Society</td>
<td>Employment and pension reforms introduced by the UK government to extend the participation of ‘older’ people. However, this depends on individual circumstances.</td>
<td>Examples: Banks and Tettlow, 2008; Berry, 2010; Higgs et al., 2003; Marvell and Cox, 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>Retirement no longer perceived as a cliff-edge event, instead opportunity for economic and social participation.</td>
<td>Examples: Higgs, et al., 2003; Hulmes, 2012; O’Connell, 2002; Pengcharoen and Shultz, 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Identity</td>
<td>‘Older’ age constructed as a social and an economic challenge, however, ‘older’ perceive age as an opportunity for participation.</td>
<td>Examples: Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013; Provencher, et al., 2014; Razanova, 2010; Schaefer and Shippee, 2009; Shmerlina, 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation In ‘Later Life’</td>
<td>Barriers and opportunities related to participation in ‘older age’. Barriers related to ageism and long-term unemployment and opportunities related to skills and experience as well as enhance wellbeing, social inclusion, and retirement income.</td>
<td>Examples: Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Foster, 2012; Hulmes, 2012; Mayhew, 2005; Ruhm, 1990; Tinsley, 2012; Wood, et al., 2008; Zissimopoulos and Karoly, 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for Social Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>‘Push’ and ‘pull’ factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions. These include self-fulfilment, independence and flexibility or/and redundancy, ageism, lack of employment opportunities.</td>
<td>Examples: Akola, 2008; Kautonen, 2008; Kautonen and Palmoors, 2010; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybridity of Social Enterprise</td>
<td>Social enterprise as hybrid organisations that adopt for-profit trading activity in the pursuit of their social mission. However, in doing so, they blurs boundaries between not-for-profit and private sector organisations.</td>
<td>Examples: Boschee, 2001; Boschee and McClurg, 2003; Busenitz, et al., 2015; Cornforth, 2014; Dees, 2001; 2008; De Domenico, et al., 2010; Mair and Martí, 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Experience and Entrepreneurial Intentions</td>
<td>Prior professional experience, skills, and social networks are linked to entrepreneurial intentions in 'later life'.</td>
<td>Examples: Kautonen, et al., 2011; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits and Limitations of Social Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Benefits rendered such as personal development and wellbeing. Limitations may include fear of failure, sustainability, and legitimacy.</td>
<td>Examples: Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Hatak, et al., 2015; Lévesque and Minniti, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Entrepreneurial Process</td>
<td>Social entrepreneurial process: opportunity recognition, evaluation, formalisation, exploration, and scaling. However, still dependent on social orientations of social entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>Examples: Massetti, 2008; Perrini, et al., 2010; Stumbitz, 2013; Zahra, et al., 2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traits of The Social Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Traits of social entrepreneurs linked to their social orientations.</td>
<td>Examples: Ashoka, 2014; Dees, 2001; Leadbeater, 1997; Thompson, et al., 2000; Waddock and Post, 1991; Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Mechanisms</td>
<td>Support mechanisms to help social entrepreneurs achieve their social mission.</td>
<td>Examples: Nicholls, 2010a; Stumbitz, 2013; Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nevertheless, congruent with the focus of my research on gaining an in-depth understanding of the meanings held by participants about their ‘everyday’ lives, I have undertaken an inductive exploratory approach to my analysis, which meant I used my a priori themes to inform my understanding of the emergence of key emerging concepts rather than impose them on collected data.

In practice, this initial stage involved reading through each transcript searching for meanings and patterns, which might convey repeated patterns (themes) across the dataset. I did this by labelling extracts from the interview transcripts and highlighting chosen ‘words, short phrases, sentences, and or paragraphs (Braun and Clarke, 2006), relating to meanings and/or concepts drawn from the data, as illustrated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Example of initial coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Internals\SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS TRANSCRIPTS\SE11 AGE 56 MALE&gt; § 1 reference coded [0.98% coverage]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| It was sort of gradually just going down and also the life of a salesman with a fancy title is...there were times when I travelled 250 days a year, you know, nobody saw me, and you drink a lot and, you know, you have a completely different life style, and you lose touch of what is reality. I never belonged because I moved a lot. So, I never belonged to a community, you know. I have never walked down the street and go, ‘hello butcher, hello baker’ but I do now... | → Downshifting  
→ Lack of Belonging |
| <Internals\SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS TRANSCRIPTS\SE21 AGE 60 MALE> § 1 reference coded [0.42% coverage] |   |
| I sat there, I hit 60 I had one of those days when it was just the end of my life, and I thought ‘no it’s not. I have too much to give’. So, I started looked at social, doing something with children here, improving the outcomes of care for children... | → Age as a Trigger  
→ Improve Outcomes |
| <Internals\SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS TRANSCRIPTS\SE12 AGE 55 FEMALE> § 1 reference coded [0.93% coverage] |   |
| I am more capable now than I have ever been in my life [laughter]. Definitely. It does not work that you tail off. You just keep building. I know more, I understand more because I have been knocking around for long. I have seen it all before. I’ve got a better understanding of situations and other people and myself and that’s come out of experience. That’s just come out of being on the planet long enough to have learnt that. So, I am definitely more capable now than I have ever been in my life. I certainly got more energy. | → Life Experience  
→ Capability  
→ Energy |
The next stage was to unitise the data (Saunders, et al., 2016) and sort the different codes assigned to the text segments, comparing them with other segments and against each other. During this stage, I had to consider which codes to combine together and which ones to un-code, refine, or collapse altogether; as Braun and Clarke (2006, p, 19) writes, ‘codes can be un-coded, coded once, or coded many times’. Table 4.5 below shows an example of codes I refined to gain a better understanding of data. A full list of merging and/or absorbing codes is illustrated in Appendix 11.

Table 4.5 Merging and/or absorbing of initial codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct from Coding Framework</th>
<th>New Position</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes in perceptions about the role of older people</td>
<td>Age identity&gt; change in perception of the role of older people</td>
<td>The change in perception about age is linked to age identity. Result: code absorbed into age identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of employment opportunity</td>
<td>Push factors&gt;lack of employment opportunities</td>
<td>Lack of employment opportunities are considered as possible results that influence the decision for becoming a social entrepreneur. Result: code absorbed into push factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement as a powerful legacy</td>
<td>Cliff-edge event</td>
<td>Some individuals subscribe to the objective view of retirement and may perceive retirement as a cliff-edge event. Result: code merged with cliff edge event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of purpose</td>
<td>Self-fulfilment</td>
<td>Interpretation of sense of purpose can be found in seeking self-fulfilment. Result: code merged into self-fulfilment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do things to value</td>
<td>Self-fulfilment</td>
<td>Interpretation of do things to value can be found in seeking self-fulfilment. Result: code merged into self-fulfilment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual growth</td>
<td>Downshifting</td>
<td>Downshifting is considered a behaviour in which individuals seeks simpler lives and spiritual growth to escape materialism. Result: code merged with downshifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty of the term social enterprise</td>
<td>Lack of definition</td>
<td>The novelty of the term ‘social enterprise’ has a direct link to the lack of agreed definition of social enterprise. Result: code merged into lack of definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>Role model</td>
<td>The interpretation of inspirational is linked to the role of social entrepreneur being a role model and inspiring others. Result: code merged into role model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Merging codes: codes that have similar meaning and therefore merged
*Absorbing codes: sub-codes that were absorbed into parent codes that have higher meanings
I repeatedly revised the codes where more concepts were coded; existing codes were developed and refined, identifying in the meantime, similarities and differences between them. Whilst repeatedly revising and comparing the codes against each other, deviant cases have emerged which contradicted the emerging explanation of data. As described by Mays and Pope (2000), deviant cases in qualitative research are a way of refining the analysis of data until the majority of cases under investigation are explained. This suggests deviant cases do not disprove emerging concepts but help support alternative explanations (Patton, 1999). Repeatedly reviewing the codes, meant that, I continuously went back and forth until all relevant concepts were identified.

Following a number of iterations, I ended up with a set of manageable codes (referred to as nodes in NVivo), which I developed into a codebook as illustrated in Appendix 12. As described by Kodish and Gittelshon, (2011, p. 54), ‘a codebook provides a stable frame for the analysis of textual data and can help to establish more stability and guidance’. However, as discussed in Section 4.5, I have used a priori themes developed from my literature review, and therefore, to differentiate between these and codes emerging from data, I assigned two colour schemes: blue to reflect my a priori themes and green to reflect emergent codes. An example of the codes I assigned to data extracts explaining why my research participants decided to set up a social enterprise, is illustrated in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6 Example of codes assigned to explain the motives of the research participants for setting up a social enterprise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node</th>
<th>Child node</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Push factors</td>
<td>Ageism</td>
<td>Preconception and presumptions about another person based purely on age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>Being made redundant or took a voluntary redundancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissatisfaction in the workplace</td>
<td>Unsatisfied with their job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of employment opportunities</td>
<td>Lack of jobs for the over 50s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull factors</td>
<td>Need for Income</td>
<td>Social enterprise as a means to have an income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use transferable skills</td>
<td>Use skills gained in previous professional career as a way to set up the social enterprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affected by personally</td>
<td>Address a social need that she/he was affected by personally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Downshifting</td>
<td>Live a simpler life and escape materialism and/or work stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Gain flexibility to take care of family commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent node</td>
<td>Child node</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gain control over one’s life and shape social venture to what sees fit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gain independence through running the social enterprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Run social enterprise in line with personal passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a difference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social enterprise is a way to make a difference to people’s lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal values</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social enterprise is a way to follow own values and personal beliefs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006) I started on the next stage, to search for themes that reflected the participants’ perspectives in the whole of the dataset.

### 4.9.1 Searching and Reviewing Themes

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 19) write, searching for themes is a phase that ‘refocuses the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes, involving sorting the different codes into potential themes (or core categories) and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes’. Hence, this phase of data analysis involved refining all the codes together to identify broader overarching themes reflecting the meanings evident in the data. I, therefore, began by re-revising all the codes I assigned and sorting them into initial themes. Table 4.7, for instance, highlights how parent nodes and child nodes, such as: ‘extending working lives’; ‘flexible working’; ‘engagement with staff’; ‘work-life balance’; ‘allocation of resources’; ‘retirement transition’; and ‘multigenerational’ were all consolidated into an initial theme labelled ‘ageing society’. Furthermore, codes such as: ‘social value’; ‘for-profit trading’; ‘community resilience’; ‘social innovation’, and ‘creating a sustainable environment’ were all consolidated into an initial theme labelled ‘hybridity of the social model’.

Table 4.7 Example of parent nodes and child nodes developed into initial themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node</th>
<th>Child node</th>
<th>Initial theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Value</td>
<td>Community resilience</td>
<td>Hybridity of social model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skills bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do good in society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This phase involved developing a range of initial themes, which I then revised by looking for relationships and differences between them. I then repositioned, absorbed, or collapsed altogether some of the themes to identify evident meanings across the data set as a whole. Table 4.8 below explains how some of the initial themes, such as ‘accountability’ were absorbed into ‘personal values’ since it conveyed the participants’ perspectives about their personal values rather than obligations to stakeholders.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial theme</th>
<th>New position</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>personal values&gt;accountability</td>
<td>Interpretation of accountability can be found in the way the participants interpret ‘personal values’ as being accountable and responsible for the welfare of others. <strong>Result:</strong> accountability absorbed into personal values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extending Working Lives</td>
<td>age friendly society&gt; extending working lives</td>
<td>Creating an ‘age friendly society’ is interpreted as a way of encouraging the participation of older people through extending their working lives. <strong>Result:</strong> extending working lives absorbed into age friendly society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Fulfilment</td>
<td>self-fulfilment&gt;downshifting</td>
<td>Self-fulfilment is a complex construct and can be sought in different ways. <strong>Result:</strong> sub-constructs created under self-fulfilment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>self-fulfilment&gt;independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>self-fulfilment&gt;personal values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>self-fulfilment&gt;making a difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>self-fulfilment&gt;control and independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageing Society</td>
<td>ageing society&gt;role of employers</td>
<td>Due to increase in life expectancy, government and employers have a role in providing opportunities for flexible working, support with retirement transition, and driving change. <strong>Result:</strong> sub-constructs created under age friendly society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ageing society&gt;role of government transition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Experience</td>
<td>Age identity&gt;life experience</td>
<td>Age identity is interpreted as a way of gaining life experiences that are of benefit to the social enterprise activity. <strong>Result:</strong> life experience absorbed into age identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Enrichment</td>
<td>Personal enrichment&gt;feel good factor</td>
<td>The subjective experience of social entrepreneurs is directly linked to gaining personal enrichment, which is achieved in multiple ways such as a ‘feel good’ factor and self-confidence. <strong>Result:</strong> sub-constructs created under personal enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personal enrichment&gt;lifelong learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personal enrichment&gt;self-confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personal enrichment&gt;build human capital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybridity of Social Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Self-identification as a social entrepreneur&gt;hybridity of the social model</td>
<td>Participants differed in the way they perceived the hybridity of the social model. Whilst some perceive social value as a primary focus, others spoke to combining for profit with social value. <strong>Result:</strong> hybridity of the social model absorbed into self-identification as a social entrepreneur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Braun and Clarke (2006) argue, themes need to be internally consistent and externally distinct. Hence, researchers are required to firstly scrutinise the data included in each theme to establish an existing coherent pattern and secondly, consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the dataset and to the way they accurately reflect the meanings emerging from the data as a whole. Similarly, Patton (1999) identified two sets of criteria to establish central themes. These include internal homogeneity, which refers to whether the data within each theme is meaningful and coherent, and external homogeneity, which requires identifiable differences across themes.

To review the themes I identified, which as Braun and Clarke (2006) write, is a process comprising consolidating and connecting the themes altogether to identify central themes that cut across the data, I checked for consistency between the interview transcripts and identified themes. I hence, re-read all my interview transcripts, identifying whether they capture the essence of data and answer my research questions that were iteratively developed from my review of literature and the research process. I did this by putting together my preliminary themes, as illustrated in Table 4.9, searching for repeated patterns and concepts that kept occurring and re-occurring in my interview transcripts. This stage also involved understanding how the themes are all tied together, or different from each other, which would enhance my understanding of the experiences of my research participants.

At this stage, I found that some of the themes, such as ‘age identity’ and ‘identity as social entrepreneurs’ could be consolidated together into a central theme labelled ‘self-identity’. This theme describes the participants’ held beliefs about their age but at the same time how it has influenced their entrepreneurial (social) intentions. As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), I used visual thematic maps which are highlighted at the beginning of each of my findings chapters to assist the reader in gaining an understanding of the decisions I had made to identify the central themes of this study.
Table 4.9 Streamlining of themes generated from data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Initial Themes</th>
<th>Preliminary Themes</th>
<th>Central Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1-3</td>
<td>Ageing society</td>
<td>Ageing society</td>
<td>AGEING SOCIETY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1</td>
<td>Fulfilment</td>
<td>Self-fulfilment</td>
<td>SELF-FULFILMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1</td>
<td>Necessity</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>ROLE OF EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL NETWORKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 2</td>
<td>Professional experience</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>PERSONAL ENRICHMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 2</td>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>SELF-IDENTITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 2</td>
<td>Identity as a social entrepreneur</td>
<td>Personal enrichment</td>
<td>PERSONAL ENRICHMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 3</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Lack of Sustainability</td>
<td>SUSTAINIBILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 3</td>
<td>Balance social mission with for-profit motives</td>
<td>Lack of Sustainability</td>
<td>SUSTAINIBILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 3</td>
<td>Balance strategy with operation</td>
<td>Lack of Sustainability</td>
<td>SUSTAINIBILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 3</td>
<td>Recognition by other sectors</td>
<td>Lack of Sustainability</td>
<td>SUSTAINIBILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 3</td>
<td>Lack of skills</td>
<td>Collaboration with other sectors</td>
<td>ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 3</td>
<td>Collaboration with other sectors</td>
<td>Government policy</td>
<td>ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 3</td>
<td>Skills development</td>
<td>Support framework</td>
<td>ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this section was to offer a step-by-step account of my thematic analysis and the decisions I have made to analyse the empirical data. The themes I will be presenting in each of the two findings chapters answer my three research questions that were posed in response to a gap in our knowledge about the everyday lives of LLSEs. For instance, theme one ‘self-fulfilment’ and theme two ‘role of experience and social networks’ presented in Chapter Five, answer my first research question which was posed in response to an identified lack of knowledge about the factors LLSEs consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise. Themes ‘ageing society’, ‘self-identity’, ‘personal enrichment’, ‘sustainability’, and ‘capacity building and ecosystem of support’ presented in Chapter Six, answers my second and third research questions, providing detailed accounts of the
participants’ daily lives, the challenges they face and how they might be supported. In each chapter, I used quotes from the participants’ account to give the reader sufficient details in evaluating my findings.

4.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the philosophical approach guiding this study, the research design, and the methods adopted to collect and interpret the empirical data, to answer the three research questions that were posed in response to a gap in our knowledge about the ‘everyday’ reality of LLSEs. The choice of methods were influenced by the beliefs guiding this research, which is that the ‘everyday’ life of social entrepreneurs can only be understood from their standpoints since they are the ones who experienced the social entrepreneurial process. My review of existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise in Chapter Two has revealed, despite multiple definitions of social enterprise, they often take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations that trade in the pursuit of their social mission. Social entrepreneurs create social value by applying business approaches to social problems (e.g. Cornforth, 2014; Spear, et al., 2009). However, little empirical evidence examines the ‘everyday’ life of LLSEs. Hence, this study contributes to knowledge about social entrepreneurs in this age group by examining, in-depth, the factors they consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise, their ‘everyday’ lives, and the challenges they face and how they might be supported.

Following ethical approval from the University of Surrey Ethics Committee, I spent five months in the field, between August and December 2015 collecting data. To explore my research questions empirically, in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty-eight LLSEs who have been funded through UnLtd core award programmes and seven interviews with AAA committee members. The qualitative in-depth interviews provided an opportunity to delve deeper into the subjective views of participants. Once all interviews were transcribed and uploaded on NVivo, I began familiarising myself with the data, which included reading and re-reading both my research journals and transcripts which I then followed by generating initial codes and identifying key concepts. The next phase of my interpretation of data involved generating initial themes that cut across the dataset, which I then refined and reordered to present the main themes of this study.

In the following Chapters Five and Six, I present my interpretations of the participants’ accounts, which include seven themes that convey an in-depth understanding of their experiences. At the beginning of each chapter, I present my visual thematic map demonstrating the main themes that answer my research questions. Each theme identified is supported by excerpts from the interviewees’ account,
and where relevant, discussed in relation to relevant literature. Each chapter concludes with a brief summary demonstrating how the findings contribute to knowledge about LLSEs.
Chapter Five:

Findings and Discussion (Part One) – Interpretations of Participants’ Accounts of their Motives for Social Enterprise

5.1 Introduction

The review of existing literature in Chapter Two has identified that people aged 50+ may have significant management experience, leadership, industrial and technical knowledge, and social and political networks, all of which increase their entrepreneurial intentions (e.g. Kautonen, et al., 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012; Singh and DeNoble, 2003). Subsequently, in Chapter Three, existing literature on ageing has highlighted that economic and social participation in ‘later life’ enhances wellbeing and social inclusion (e.g. Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Hulmes, 2012; Mayhew, 2005; Ruhm, 1990; Zissimopoulos and Karoly, 2003).

Whilst existing research has shown social enterprises have generally positive societal outcomes, empirical and theoretical insights into the role of LLSEs were under-explored. The purpose of this chapter and the next, is to highlight some of the interpretations held by participants about their ‘everyday’ experiences as social entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to knowledge about how the social entrepreneurial process is understood and experienced by those involved. This chapter, therefore, presents the outcome of my analysis of the participants’ motives for becoming social entrepreneurs. Chapter Six presents the participants’ accounts of their ‘everyday’ life experiences and the challenges they face and how they might be supported. This form of presentation is for the purpose of answering my first research question in Chapter Five, followed by answering the second and third research questions in Chapter Six.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: Firstly, I present the findings of my thematic analysis, highlighting the key perspectives held by participants about the factors they consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise. Two main themes have been identified: ‘self-fulfilment’ and the ‘role of experience and social networks’. These are supported with extracts drawn from the interview transcripts, highlighting the identified themes and where appropriate, discussed in relation to existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, including entrepreneurship literature on entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. At the end of each theme, I provide a summary of the main insights generated from the findings and their relevance to existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. Finally, the chapter concludes by providing a brief summary.
relating my findings to my first research question which was developed in response to a gap in literature about the factors LLSEs consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise.

5.2 Findings of the Thematic Analysis

As explained in Chapter Four, the empirical data comprised of twenty-eight in-depth semi-structured interviews with LLSEs funded through UnLtd core award programmes. This was also supported by seven in-depth interviews with AAA committee members. This is for the purpose of answering my first research question, which was to understand the factors participants consider important in their decision to set up their social enterprise. The themes were identified through a process of reading and re-reading the data and subsequently seeing emerging patterns, which I then organised into key themes to aid the reader, making sense of the factors participants considered important in their decision to set up their social enterprise, therefore, answering my first research question. My rationale for arranging the data into themes was to highlight emerging patterns from the data, capturing the participants’ daily lives.

As indicated in Figure 5.1, the first theme ‘self-fulfilment’ revealed the participants held several different but related beliefs about ‘self-fulfilment’, comprising ‘personal values’, ‘passion’, ‘downshifting’, ‘need for achievement’, and ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives. In addition, this theme encapsulates the participants’ beliefs about their experience of ‘ageism’, ‘redundancy’, and ‘dissatisfaction in the workplace’, indicating although their decision is governed by necessity, ‘self-fulfilment’ remains one of their main motives. The second theme ‘role of experience and social networks’ is defined by the participants’ shared beliefs about how their prior professional and/or entrepreneurial experiences and social networks accumulated over their lifetime careers, played a significant role in their decision to set up their social enterprise.

Figure 5.1 Thematic map demonstrating the participants’ motives for social enterprise
5.3 Theme One: ‘Self-Fulfilment’

This theme ‘self-fulfilment’ provides an understanding of how and why the participants have become social entrepreneurs. As discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two, studies have shown entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’ are influenced by ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors (e.g. Kautonen, 2008; Kautonen and Palmroos, 2010; Weber and Schaper, 2003). ‘Pull’ factors relate to the need for independence, flexibility, and self-fulfilment (Weber and Schaper, 2003). Conversely, ‘push’ factors are often related to redundancy, lack of employment opportunities, job dissatisfaction, and low income in retirement (Akola, 2008; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003). These studies have, therefore, shown interplay between ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’.

This theme comprises several related but different beliefs held by participants about their motives for social enterprise: why social enterprise and how it relates to ‘self-fulfilment’. As noted in Table 5.1, several broader motives emerged from the analysis. Although for some the motive was related to addressing a need they were personally affected by, a common view among participants is that ‘self-fulfilment’ influenced their entrepreneurial (social) intentions. However, varieties of perspectives were expressed in relation to ‘self-fulfilment’, which was sought in different levels: ‘making a difference’, ‘personal passion’, ‘personal values’, ‘downshifting’, ‘need for achievement’, which includes ‘gaining control’, ‘flexibility’, and ‘independence’.

Table 5.1 The participants’ motives for social entrepreneurship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a difference</td>
<td>opportunity to give back opportunity to tackle deprivation opportunity to ‘do good’ in community opportunity to enhance social inclusion opportunity to break barriers and engender social change opportunity to build community resilience</td>
<td>SE1–SE28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Passion</td>
<td>opportunity of pursuing personal passion opportunity of addressing a need personally affected by</td>
<td>SE1, SE2, SE12, SE13, SE21, SE23, SE27, SE28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Values</td>
<td>opportunity to pursue an activity that has a personal meaning opportunity to pursue an activity in line with ethical values</td>
<td>SE3, SE4, SE28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downshifting</td>
<td>opportunity to enhance spiritual growth opportunity to reassess life choices opportunity pursue own dreams</td>
<td>SE1, SE3, SE11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Achievement</td>
<td>opportunity to shape social enterprise according to own preferences opportunity to gain control over one’s life opportunity to gain flexibility</td>
<td>SE5, SE14, SE16, SE17, SE24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As highlighted in Table 5.2, the participants held different perspectives about the factors they considered important in their decision to set up a social enterprise. However, ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives and the community in which they are embedded are common patterns that emerged across the whole of the data. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, despite differences in their social orientations, a recurrent theme emerging from the participants’ accounts was their commitment to improving the socio-economic environment of their local community. This included enhancing employability and interpersonal skills of socially excluded and disabled groups (physical and mental), tackling deprivation and poverty, providing volunteering opportunities, care solutions for young and ‘older’ people, and promoting health and wellbeing. Indeed, all interviewees highlighted their main concern was to address social needs that have not been met by government agencies and private businesses such as health, education, social care, employment, and environment, with a strong emphasis on social inclusion. This is congruent with existing research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise which has found social entrepreneurs have an explicit social mission to create social value by tackling complex pressing social problems that have been unmet by traditional providers (e.g. Dees, 1998; 2001; Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Leadbeater, 1997).
Table 5.2 Social enterprise activity of research participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age at Time of Interview</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Catalyst</th>
<th>Social Orientation</th>
<th>Social Goals/Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>To help individuals in early recovery by running a multiple programme that combines life coaching rehabilitation and wellness.</td>
<td>Voluntary Redundancy: Downshifting/spiritual growth and address a personal need.</td>
<td>Help those affected to regain their lives and enhance their spiritual growth and wellness.</td>
<td>Franchise to create volunteering and employment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>To develop a tailor-made digital solution for people with chronic illnesses to enhance their wellbeing, independence and safety.</td>
<td>Address a personal need.</td>
<td>Enhance wellbeing of people with dementia and reduce dependency on social care.</td>
<td>Scale social innovation to social and healthcare providers. Also enhance academic research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>To help disadvantaged and marginalised young people including ex-offenders to set up a business by providing training, mentoring and start-up funding.</td>
<td>Downshifting: Spiritual growth and do something meaningful in line with ethical ethos.</td>
<td>Increase social mobility and encourage disadvantaged young people take control over their lives.</td>
<td>Scale internationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>To build a community utility infrastructure with the aims of regenerating the local economy and promoting environment sustainability.</td>
<td>Do something meaningful in line with ethical ethos.</td>
<td>Community cohesion, empowerment, and regeneration to foster social inclusion and equality.</td>
<td>Scale to neighbouring areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Run singing classes to help children’s communication and enhance their emotional and interpersonal skills.</td>
<td>Flexibility and Inspired by a similar project running in own town.</td>
<td>Enhance children’s communication and emotional development.</td>
<td>Widen access to neighbouring towns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Promote healthy lifestyles through healthy eating. Raise local awareness about the benefits of a healthy eating and a balanced diet.</td>
<td>Redundancy /Lack of job opportunities.</td>
<td>Increase level of local knowledge about healthy eating and a balanced diet – engender social change.</td>
<td>Increase the level of local knowledge spread message to a wider audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Provide cookery classes to educate people, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds.</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction in the workplace.</td>
<td>Improve family health, upskilling, build confidence and self-reliance.</td>
<td>Premises to widen access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>A community and recycling based social enterprise that was formed in response to the vast amount of reusable furniture being buried in landfill. The enterprise runs workshops and a community café, focusing on skills development and job training to disadvantaged people.</td>
<td>Early retirement/Career change/do something in line with ethical values.</td>
<td>Tackling social exclusion, Recycling, employability, upskilling and provide apprenticeship and volunteering opportunities.</td>
<td>Franchise, build strategic partnerships and develop an incubation start-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Provide support to young people who are at risk or have been victims of negative lifestyles.</td>
<td>Early retirement/dissatisfaction in the workplace.</td>
<td>Tackling vulnerability, increase awareness, and prevention.</td>
<td>Strategic partnerships with education sector. Also, scale to other sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Runs arts and crafts youth club for young people with anti-social behaviour.</td>
<td>Voluntary redundancy.</td>
<td>Tackling anti-social behaviour and enhance social inclusion within community.</td>
<td>Employ people to widen access. Employ volunteers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 5.2 Social enterprise activity of research participants

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<tr>
<td>SE11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Provide in-home care service for 'older' people with dementia or living on their own through employing a network of retired contact providers.</td>
<td>Downshifting.</td>
<td>Enhance wellbeing and compassionate caregiving.</td>
<td>Franchise across the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Teach local people to cook with a tight budget using local produce to obtain a healthy diet. Works with people with learning difficulties, families in need, unemployed, and with mental health conditions.</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction with existing systems/personal passion.</td>
<td>Foster social inclusion, healthy eating, employability, and upskilling.</td>
<td>Widen access/build strategic partnerships with health and social care providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Help local people on a tight budget make healthy and nutritional food made from local produce. Provide training and volunteering opportunities to people in long-term unemployment or in poverty.</td>
<td>Redundancy/personal passion and address a personal need.</td>
<td>Healthy eating, community regeneration and empowering those in need to lead a healthy lifestyle.</td>
<td>Build a brand and educational support across community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE14</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>A community centre and a café providing food bank support to families in need and back to work training and upskilling for those marginalised and on long-term unemployment. In addition, offer supported living for ex-prisoners.</td>
<td>Independence.</td>
<td>Tackle poverty and deprivation/food bank support and back to work training and upskilling.</td>
<td>Widen access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Provides training and work opportunities for women on long-term unemployment to learn skills in sewing</td>
<td>Inspired and identified a need in addressing lack of</td>
<td>Enhance social inclusion/upskilling and employability.</td>
<td>Build a brand.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and upholstery. Deliver also bespoke workshops for the probation service.</td>
<td>enterprising solutions for females.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Provides intervention therapy for families of children with complex health needs.</td>
<td>Redundancy and a need for achievement.</td>
<td>Support families and carers of children with complex health needs.</td>
<td>Scale to corporates and other beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE17</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Upcycle unwanted bikes by providing volunteering, apprenticeship, and bike repair skills for disadvantaged people, unemployed, and with learning difficulties. Provides second-hand bikes to refugees and asylum seekers.</td>
<td>Flexibility.</td>
<td>Upskilling unemployed and disadvantaged people /upcycling.</td>
<td>Widen access to beneficiaries with multiple social needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>A community centre offering a wide range of musical projects for those at risk or in early stage of dementia, people with special needs, unemployed and or with mental health conditions.</td>
<td>Redundancy.</td>
<td>Community cohesion and tackle social exclusion/enhance mental wellness.</td>
<td>Engender social change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Train up young people in audio visual skills and creative arts. Personal development, work experience, and apprenticeships for young people to equip them with marketable job skills.</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction in the workplace.</td>
<td>Promote health, wellbeing, and personal development through creative arts.</td>
<td>Provide more apprenticeship opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>A local newspaper ‘for and about’ local people, volunteers’ engagement, and promote local businesses. Provide</td>
<td>Redundancy.</td>
<td>Enhance community cohesion/work experience and</td>
<td>Provide more volunteering and work experience opportunities.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Recruit and train social care workers to improve the outcome of care for children.</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction in the workplace – address a social need personally affected by.</td>
<td>Improve outcome of care for children.</td>
<td>Create a centre to train social workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Training and employment opportunities in manufacturing and processes for young people.</td>
<td>Inspired by a community group.</td>
<td>Employability and upskilling.</td>
<td>Build more strategic partnerships and provide more upskilling opportunities for young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Help individuals in early recovery by running a multiple programme that combines life coaching, rehabilitation, and wellness.</td>
<td>Address a need personally affected by.</td>
<td>Help those affected to regain their lives and enhance their spiritual growth and wellness.</td>
<td>Franchise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>A horticulture activity centre to help people with dementia and mental health to improve their physical and psychological wellbeing.</td>
<td>Financial independence and doing good.</td>
<td>Tackle social inclusion and build community resilience.</td>
<td>Create a social capital and a community context for people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>To promote engagement in outdoor activities to enable people with dementia interact with nature and help their physical and psychological wellbeing.</td>
<td>Retirement and mental stimulation.</td>
<td>Improve physical and psychological wellbeing of people with dementia.</td>
<td>Set up a training programme for care workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE26</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Support community groups with funding bids.</td>
<td>Redundancy and lack of employment opportunities.</td>
<td>Help local community groups with funding bids.</td>
<td>Currently not in operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE28</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to learn basic recruitment skills, CV writing, and interpersonal skills.</td>
<td>Retirement/address a social need personally affected by.</td>
<td>Employability and upskilling.</td>
<td>Build links with schools and public sector agencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As discussed in Chapter Two, social enterprise is an activity that is ‘spearheaded’ (Busenitz, et al., 2015) by the social entrepreneur who has an explicit social mission to address unmet social needs. As noted by Shaw and Carter (2007), ‘doing good’ and alleviating social problems are the main differences between social and commercially driven entrepreneurs. Commercially driven entrepreneurs tend to maximise shareholders’ value and personal gains however, social entrepreneurs focus on creating social value and ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives. Leadbeater (1997, p. 77) notes, ‘social entrepreneurs are developing solutions to some of our most intractable social problems. They generate social capital out of virtually nothing and create new services from scratch’.

However, a number of perspectives were expressed by participants about ‘making a difference’. Seven out of twenty-eight participants were affected personally by the social need they identified, and as such pursued their social enterprise activity to help those affected. This is particularly evident in SE1’s (M, 53) response to my interview question, ‘What made you want to be a social entrepreneur?’

SE1 (M, 53): ‘I had a long career, which at the end of it was quite futile…my ex, she was a nurse and you have people walking up the street going, ‘how are you? it’s nice to see you again’ [imitating a female voice] because, she actually has done something that made a difference to people’s lives and what I wanted to try to do is combine some of my professional stuff with some of the stuff I have been doing myself, which is addiction coaching’.

SE1’s response to my question, first to convey his motive for social enterprise is borne out from a social need he is personally affected by, but meanwhile ‘make a difference’ to those affected. For SE1, what makes the social enterprise personal is that he ‘picked up a bad addiction’ influencing his entrepreneurial (social) intentions, however gaining ‘self-fulfilment’ remains his primary objective, as he puts it, ‘I thought well that’s worthwhile. I basically wanna do something that I felt really good about and that’s why I did it’.

This view surfaced in SE2’s (M, 53) account, who explains whilst he is personally affected by the social need he identified, setting up a social enterprise would enable him to ‘make a difference’ to those with dementia and their families:

SE2 (M, 53): ‘my friend’s aunt is a woman who had dementia and I would be there, at Christmas time, having a glass of wine, we’re celebrating and I can’t tell you how many times we call up…doesn’t know where she is, doesn’t know what day it is, and doesn’t know what she is supposed to be doing. Totally confused. So, me and my friend decided there’re so many families dealing with this and the stress level on both sides. There must be a solution to this. We wanted to have our business anyway and we thought this is actually something that does two things. Mercenary, you could make a lot of money if you got it right…and there’s a lot of satisfaction thinking you can make a difference. You can
bring something that doesn’t only pay the bills but also makes a difference to other people and change their lives’.

‘Making a difference’ also comprised improving the social inclusion of those disadvantaged such as low-skilled individuals, underprivileged youth, and/or those on long-term unemployment. In SE14’s (F, 55) account below, she describes how she responds to the mounting unemployment and deprivation by opening a café and a training centre at the disposal of her local community. The centre is now the base for upskilling and training those in probation, underprivileged, and offers food bank support for families in need:

SE14 (F, 55): ‘In this area, we work mainly with local families. We get referrals from social workers and things like that. It is the most deprived area…. We tend to work with families and not young people…the mother or the father or somebody who’s been made redundant, the over 50s, especially, we get a lot of over fifties because they’ve been made redundant and they don’t think they can get back into the workplace. There’s a lot of people that won’t employ them but they’ve got a lot of skills they learnt the hard way, not on the computer [laughter]…People need to relearn skills they’ve lost and we do that as well…’.

Thus, for SE14, what makes her social enterprise a way of ‘making a difference’ is by supporting those in need and/or and enhance their wellbeing and social inclusion. This supports the view of Leadbeater (1997), who argues, the role of social entrepreneurs is to develop new forms of social capital, which, in turn, will help empower disadvantaged people and encourage them to take control over their lives.

Besides empowering those disadvantaged and helping those with health conditions, the social enterprise has a further function in relation to tackling social injustice and breaking social barriers. SE18 (M, 56), for instance, who runs a community centre to support those at risk and/or in early stage of dementia and those with mental health conditions, and/or on long-term unemployment, attributes ‘making a difference’ to challenging ‘social injustice’ and the ‘status quo’, stating: ‘…going back to what I said earlier about the meeting with the fellow in charge of education and welfare, and me saying, “we’re making a mistake. We’re doing it wrong. We’re doing it wrong. We shouldn’t be doing it like this”. I’ve always had that in me, if I see an injustice, I like to challenge it’.

‘Making a difference’ to people’s lives is consistent with the work of Thompson (2002), who argues, social enterprises create social capital by providing jobs and volunteering opportunities in deprived areas and help those in need, all of which contribute to more effective and efficient services. As he notes, ‘many social entrepreneurs are people with the qualities and behaviours we associate with the business entrepreneur but who operate in the community and are more concerned with caring and
helping than with making money. In many cases, they help change people’s lives because they embrace important social causes’ (Thompson, 2002, p. 413).

The interplay between entrepreneurial intentions and ‘self-fulfilment’ has been discussed in relation to Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs (e.g. Carland, et al., 1995). Maslow (1943) notes, individuals are motivated by a hierarchy of needs. The first level of motivation is to satisfy basic physiological needs such as hunger, followed by higher levels of needs such as safety, social acceptance, self-esteem, and self-actualisation (Carland, et al., 1995; Goodman, 1968). Central to Maslow’s theory is the concept of ‘self-actualisation’, which is a motivational construct driving individuals to fulfil their potential once they fulfil their other needs, such as safety and social acceptance (Goodman, 1968). Self-actualisation is therefore associated with the need for ‘self-fulfilment’, which is how it is defined in this chapter.

In the context of entrepreneurial intentions, Carland, et al., (1995, p. 61) argue, the differences in the behaviour of entrepreneurs and the process by which they create, manage, and grow their ventures are a function of ‘their vision […] and the purpose it services in their personal pursuit of self-actualisation’. Entrepreneurial intentions are therefore influenced by the need for ‘self-fulfilment’, which involves, according to Carland, et al., (1995, p. 66), ‘taking the venture to be dominant in its market or industry’. However, in this study, the participants were strongly motivated by ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives rather than achieving market dominance.

For other participants, however, the word ‘self-fulfilment’ is considered to have a different meaning, instead referring to pursuing an activity in line with their ‘personal passion’. Thus, the social enterprise simultaneously acts as a means of ‘self-fulfilment’ and a symbol of their ‘personal passion’. In the case of SE19 (M, 62), setting his social enterprise has been an opportunity for him to use his passion for music from an early age, to equip disadvantaged youth with transferable job skills:

SE19 (M, 62): ‘We come into the world, we leave the world as individuals, and so it’s so important to have a passion I would say that was absolutely vital that they should build their social enterprise around something that they’re passionate about themselves, otherwise forget it’.

Moreover, SE7 (F, 50) expressed how her personal passion for ‘healthy eating’ spurred her desire to set up the social enterprise to help those disadvantaged and with complex health needs develop their cooking skills and enhance their wellbeing and social inclusion. Although SE7 understands her entrepreneurial (social) intentions are mainly borne out of her ‘personal passion’ for ‘healthy eating’ and her ‘complex health needs’, her contribution extends to enhancing the resilience of her local
community by promoting the social inclusion of those disadvantaged and providing volunteering opportunities, all of which ‘make a difference’ to her community.

Nonetheless, other participants pursued their ‘personal passion’ by creating the biggest impact, contributing to their ‘self-fulfilment’. These participants tended to be strategic in their orientations by focusing on financial sustainability so they can achieve their social mission. SE15 (F, 58), for example, who had previous experience in the social enterprise sector, and a prior entrepreneurial experience overseas, was ‘personally’ passionate about female entrepreneurship. Frustrated with the lack of female enterprising solutions, she set up her social enterprise to train women in media, arts, and design and develop their entrepreneurial skills. At the time of the interview, she was already strategically developing her social enterprise, providing sewing skills and upholstery workshops for women in probation, with the aspiration to scale and create a national brand.

Furthermore, SE12 (F, 55), who had previously founded a social enterprise for her local school, describes how her ‘cookery school’ underpins her ‘personal passion’ for ‘healthy diet and freshly cooked food using fresh produce’. She indicates, her social enterprise has significance for adults in her community ‘who’re completely clueless about cooking from scratch’. However, ‘it turned out there was more than just the learning to cook habit, people who were coming, lots of them had mental health problems, anxiety and depression, or they have been unemployed for a long while or just being young parents’. Hence, she decided, with her business partner, to ‘create a social enterprise where they could trade’ and use any surplus in income to provide free cookery classes for those disadvantaged and particularly single parents. Although borne out of her ‘personal passion’ for healthy eating, SE12’s decision to trade is to further her social objectives within her community. At the time of the interview, she was in the process of building strategic collaborations with healthcare providers and corporate clients to generate revenue and, therefore, promote ‘free cookery classes’ for those disadvantaged within her community.

However, other participants spoke of the need for ‘self-fulfilment’ when reaching the age of 50 and/or during early retirement and retirement. SE8 (M, 50), for instance, notes, following his early retirement, ‘partly through health reasons’ and partly because he ‘parted off with the organisation he was working for’, decided to ‘try different things as he always promised [himself]’. Early retirement, for SE8 has been beneficial, since it endowed him with the opportunity to ‘train as a teaching assistant, sell books, and set up his own business doing odd jobs’, such as ‘clearing people’s old household items’. He then decided, with his wife, to look for a space to sell old household items, which gradually turned into a social enterprise. Thus, for SE8, early retirement is an opportunity to change his career by ‘making a difference’ to his community. As he notes:
SE8 (M, 50): ‘the whole point of doing it is to provide opportunities for people through apprenticeship, work experience placements and volunteering opportunities. We had 5500 volunteer hours last year mainly advertised to Voluntary Action [...] on their Website. ...We had 14 work experience placements from Necro, Autism UK. We’re looking at getting some people from Interserf and various other people I had approached. I have had in the cafe 15 working placement. We work very closely with Skills Made Easy at the council who support us with finding people and some financial support to support the apprentice wages’.

Previous research has shown there are a number of factors influencing ‘older’ people in early retirement or post-retirement to ‘bridge’ into employment and continue their economic participation. These include the desire for ‘continuity of structure, career identification, social contacts, and participation in an activity they value most highly’ (Kim and Feldman, 2000, p. 1196). Kim and Feldman (2000, p. 1195) define ‘bridge employment’ as an ‘employment that takes place after a person’s retirement from a full-time position but before the person’s permanent withdrawal from the labour workforce’. Their study highlights ‘bridge employment’ contributes to self-satisfaction and psychological wellbeing, suggesting that, as SE8 was able to bridge into social enterprise, he regained ‘self-fulfilment’. This view was supported by the AAA accounts when I asked their views about the factors ‘older’ people consider important to continue their participation. AAA5 (F), for instance, noted, ‘what I have been doing is capturing people’s retirement stories. Those have been fascinating because in every single one, all the decisions they have made in the run-up to retirement and around retirement, and post-retirement, have actually hung off, not just the roles and responsibilities they have in their family but this deepening sense of what is the life I have good reason to value’.

For other interviewees, retirement and/or early retirement were considered to have a different meaning, instead referring to retirement being not ‘separate from their career identity’ (SE12, F, 55). SE12 argues, she has ‘no aspiration towards retirement’ because the social enterprise is ‘her life not work separate from retirement’. As she puts it, ‘this is what I have chosen. I have chosen to live’. Hence, retirement for SE12 may be judged relevant by Kim and Feldman’s study, demonstrating how the social enterprise is part of her career identity.

On the contrary, retirement has been perceived by SE27 (F, 72) as having ‘the time for herself’. Retiring at the age of seventy, she felt she needed to have leisure time for herself but meanwhile find an occupation to avoid boredom. This suggests, as discussed by Kim and Feldman (2000), retirement can present an opportunity for leisure time and building social networks. The participants’ accounts, therefore, highlight retirement and/or early retirement has been an opportunity for them to continue their economic participation. The concept of ‘retirement’ will be discussed further in Section 6.3. As
such, the accounts below demonstrate how reaching the age of fifty is one of the factors influencing the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise.

SE7 (F, 50), for instance, notes, reaching the age of fifty has been a ‘finite moment’ spurring her entrepreneurial (social) intentions. She argues, individuals may have different reasons and orientations. However, more often reaching the age of fifty creates a sense of urgency of the ‘limited number of productive years they have’. For SE7, what makes the age of fifty a ‘finite’ moment is her desire to not only pursue an activity that has a personal meaning to her but also having peace of mind that her children have grown up and, therefore she has less parental responsibility. Therefore, SE7 attributes the age of fifty with ‘role changes’ ‘enabling her to pursue ‘different possibilities’ to contribute to the wellbeing of ‘those with special needs and learning difficulties’:

SE7 (F, 50): ‘I think once you get to kind of 50, I did anyway, you have a sense of time is finite that I didn’t have at 20. I thought old people were a different species but the reality is you’re getting old and you have a limited number of really good productive years left at 50 even if you’re very, very lucky. So, you can’t say, ’oh I’ll do it next year or the year after’ and also the practical stuff, my youngest child is now 17 and she’ll be trotting off to university. Although my son will probably be still at home. He is very independent and he’s kind of plus rather than minus in terms of running the house. I’ve fewer responsibilities now so I can do this. I couldn’t have done it when my kids were little because I wanted to be available…. So, your role changes and you can question things and all sorts of possibilities unfold for you so I can go away, I could work abroad...’

Furthermore, SE21’s (M, 61) comment, ‘I was 60, sat in here and asking am I finished? No, I’m not. I have got enough money. I don’t have to rely on this as a salary’ suggests, by reaching the age of sixty and financially independent, influenced his entrepreneurial (social) intentions. Similar to SE21, SE2 (M, 53) notes, when people reach the age of fifty, they ‘start thinking of legacies and people tend to regret what they didn’t do more than what they do. You don’t want to sit around and say’, ‘I really should’ve done this. Why didn’t I do this?’ This comment was highlighted by other interviewees who felt, they ‘get to a point in their lives, and when [they] are fifty [they] question where did the time go?’ (SE5, F, 50). Indeed, SE5 explains when she reached the age of 50, she started thinking ‘if [she] doesn’t follow her dream now when is [she] gonna? …if she does not ‘start now, it might too late’.

Reaching the age of fifty is, therefore, considered to be one of the factors influencing the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise. This is due to a sense of urgency they felt of the ‘limited number of years they have’ to actualise the “things they always wanted” (SE17, F, 58). This is illustrated by SE14 (F, 57), who argues, social enterprise is beneficial for those aged 50+ because:
SE14 (F, 57): ‘they’ve got experience they can put into something. Some of them have got plans and dreams; maybe they had as youngsters that they’ve never materialised. Now, they can actually try and put it into practice whether it’s making flower baskets and sell them or whatever’.

This belief is consistent with the literature review presented in Chapter Two, highlighting people aged 50+ may perceive their age as an opportunity to ‘give back’ to society and engage in meaningful activity to enhance their emotional wellbeing and social inclusion (Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Mayhew, 2005; Zissimopoulos and Karoly, 2003). Indeed, studies on ‘older’ workers and retirement transition have found new transitions are emerging among people aged 50+ (Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Mayhew, 2005; Ruhm, 1990; Zissimopoulos and Karoly, 2003) such as ‘restructured careers, changing preferences over paid employment’ (Hulmes, 2012, p.8), and the desire to ‘put back’ into society.

The participants’ accounts, therefore, suggest those aged 50+ may hold different beliefs about the types of activities they would like to pursue. Whilst some might find the age of 50+ an opportunity to ‘give back’ to society, others might associate this with financial and personal independence, whereas others might think of the limited number of years they have to actualise their dreams. The role of ‘personal values’ has also emerged in the accounts of many interviewees, as discussed in Section 5.3.1 below.

5.3.1 Subtheme One of ‘Self-Fulfilment’: ‘Personal Values’

This sub-theme highlights the role ‘personal values’ play on the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise. Personal values are perceived as a motivational construct that affects human behaviour (e.g. Bardi, et al., 2014; Rohan, 2000). As noted by Bardi and Schwartz (2003, p. 1209), ‘people act according to their values because they want to achieve consistency between their beliefs and values and actions’. Studies have shown ‘personal values’ are associated with protecting the welfare of others, benevolence, social justice, equal opportunities, and responsibility, which have been seen to guide individuals’ life choices and behaviours (e.g. Bardi and Schwartz, 2003; Bardi, et al., 2014; Rohan, 2000).

In this study, seven out of twenty-eight participants considered ‘personal values’ as one of main factors influencing their decision to set up their social enterprise. However, their definition of the word ‘personal values’ varied considerably. Whilst some associated this with ‘ethical values’, others communicated their values of justice, equal opportunities, accountability for the welfare of others, and personal meaning. SE12’s (F, 55) account below demonstrates her decision to set up her social
enterprise is to ‘do something’ that aligns with her ‘personal values’ against ‘injustice, exploitation, and manipulation’ in a way that is meaningful to her:

SE12 (F, 55): ‘It interests me and it’s got a meaning for me. I want to do something that matters to me. I don’t want to spend any part of my life on anything I don’t really care about but that was a choice. It was more important to me, that’s the primary. We’re only here once as far as we can tell and certainly, when I got to my forties I started to [silence] lose patience with things I didn’t respect. I really don’t like injustice, exploitation, and manipulation. All the things I don’t like for myself. There is so much of it out there but I want to do something that’s creative, that’s constructive and has some meaning’.

SE12 considers her key role as a social entrepreneur is to create ‘something generative’ that has personal meaning. The concept of ‘personal values’ was broadly acknowledged by the interviewees. However, other participants spoke of ‘ethical values’, which was interpreted differently. These include: ‘making money in an ethical way which can then be used to do socially good things’ (SE3, M, 53); ‘doing business the right way’ (SE8, M, 50); ‘selling local quality ethical products’ (SE13, F, 55); and ‘doing business that is ethical and it’s got values at the core of it that impacts on people and the community’ (SE15, F, 58).

SE4’s (M, 50) account, for example, highlights how his decision to set up his social enterprise is related to his personal beliefs of ‘egalitarian sharing, collaboration and ethical environmentalism’.

SE4 (M, 50): ‘All through my life, my mother and my first girlfriend and my sister are very ethical, environmental and we have lots of debates about how do you deliver productive change. I suppose I got to a point where I might as well do something I want to do, whether it makes money or not because you only live once, rather than doing all these other things where you’ve a lot of fun, you’ve got money ...so I kind of began to get quite firm ideas on...not so much what I wanted to do but how I wanted to do it. I have always been interested in collaboration and egalitarian sharing of gain...it’s co-creative...some people have more...sometimes needs guidance but everyone is chipping in. So, I’ve always believed in that kind of collaborative egalitarian...let’s do it together’.

SE4, therefore, associates ‘personal values’ with his felt beliefs in ‘egalitarian sharing’ and ‘collaboration’. However, he concurrently states, he is interested in ‘environmentalism’ and ‘delivering a productive change’, conveying his felt beliefs of ethical values and the ‘sort of environmental and social impact’ he wants to create.

The role of ‘personal values’ is further illustrated by SE15’s (F, 58) account, who attributes this to being ethical:
SE15 (F, 58): ‘just doing the right thing. Doing business that is ethical and it’s got values at the core of it that impacts on the people we work with and the community around us as well. When you asked me about being a social entrepreneur, I don’t really see myself. I think it’s important to run your business in a really honourable and respectful way. So, if you can make sure that you pay your suppliers and everything in a timely way and just be ethical in the way you deal with people’.

SE15, therefore, attributes ‘personal values’ to being ‘honourable and respectful’ and conducting her business in an ethical way. She explains that she gains ‘self-fulfilment’ by knowing she is making an impact not only on her beneficiaries by ‘building their wellbeing, resilience, and resourcefulness’, but also on the environment by ‘upcycling furniture and fabric’, all of which save costs to local authorities.

The ‘ethical fibre’ of social entrepreneurs has been discussed in Chapter Two. Ashoka Innovators for the Public (2014), for instance, states social entrepreneurs have ethical fibre -that is, the intention to ‘do good’ in society. Nevertheless, the manner in which ‘ethical values’ were interpreted differed between participants. SE23 (M, 62), for example, notes, what drives social enterprises is their ‘accountability to stakeholders’. Accountability, for SE23, meant social enterprises trade to put ‘some money in the till and when everybody is being paid a reasonable wage, everybody is paid their expenses and all our taxes paid and everybody is happy, all the suppliers have been paid... leftover, that money could go and fund a social side rather than be put into the pockets of shareholders’. However, he goes on to say, the notion of ‘ethical pursuit’ may be unrealistic since social enterprises are often ‘pulled’ in to raising capital to achieve their social mission:

SE23 (M, 62): ‘I think the social enterprise community would like to think of itself more ethical than the commercially orientated genre but I qualify that with a little bit of doubt because, in the end, all business people are the same, they wanna win. They’re fiercely competitive people...the community of social entrepreneurship is a lot more orientated towards ethical and open attitude towards the business. I quite like it.... We are very principled. If it was all about profit, profit, profit, it never works. It must be about people. The focus is on people, not money. Money is but a tool to help the people’.

This supports Chell, et al., (2016, p. 623), who argue, ‘whilst it is possible to develop an ethical framework around social enterprises, there is no inevitability’ since they face a number of pressures such as the need for financial capital, which may dilute their social mission.

Nevertheless, SE11’s (M, 56) experience was different within the interviewees’ accounts of their perceptions of ‘ethical values’. SE11 argues, being ‘accountable for the welfare of his beneficiaries’ and ‘not letting them down’ matter to him the most. He notes, ‘I have a client but I haven’t the right
provider for them so when that happens, I don’t lose sleep but I’m on the edge because I need to solve that. The quicker I do the better because if I don’t, I’m gonna push everything forward and then the family and will be disappointed and I know there comes a point when they say, ‘this is not good enough’. SE2 (M, 53) similarly feels he has ‘responsibilities to shareholders…I don’t wanna let people down’.

On other hand, SE3 (M, 53) notes, ‘having personal responsibility’ to ‘do good’ represents his interpretation of ethical values. He explains, he is not interested in making money for himself or shareholders but in creating a ‘body of businesses going that have choices about what they do with the money they make and this is personal responsibility after all…’. SE3 associates ‘ethical values’ with ‘doing good’ and being personally responsible to trade for the benefits of others. Thus, for SE3, ‘personal responsibility’ conveys his belief about being ethically responsible for the welfare of others and the way he generates an income.

The interviewees’ accounts, therefore, indicate, in pursuing their entrepreneurial (social) intentions, they were able to follow their ‘personal values’ comprising ‘being ethical’, ‘fighting social injustice’, ‘breaking barriers’, and feeling ‘accountable’ for the welfare of others. However, other patterns emerged from the data highlighting the participants’ need for achievement’, as discussed in Section 5.3.2 below.

5.3.2 Subtheme Two of ‘Self-Fulfilment’: ‘Need for Achievement-Control, Independence and Flexibility’

Having a locus of control and a high need for achievement has been researched as motivational constructs influencing entrepreneurial intentions (Brockhaus and Nord, 1979; Brockhaus, 1975; McClelland, 1965). These motivational constructs are perceived to be intrinsic in nature and refer to an interest in an activity because of its fulfilling nature (Brockhaus 1975; McClelland, 1965). In this study, by setting up their social enterprise, the participants gained a sense of achievement through control over their lives, independence, and flexibility.

The ‘need for achievement’ is illustrated by SE16’s (F, 59) account of when she failed her eleven-plus, which although ‘next week [she] is sixty’, it did ‘stick’. Although SE16 gained a university degree as a mature student, she states, her decision to set up her social enterprise is more related to feeling ‘a kind of revenge against the charity that made [her] redundant and wanting to show them [she] can succeed’. As she puts it, ‘success will be my revenge’. Redundancy, for SE16, meant she could set up her social enterprise and gain control over her life. However, for SE16, control was considered to be
‘knowing exactly what you want to do with it, where you wanted to go and not having it in somebody else’s hands’. As such, recounting her experience of recruiting a volunteer, she felt concerned about not being able to ‘do it’ exactly as she wanted and whether she needed to ‘justify what she is doing to somebody else’. Nevertheless, she explains, she gained a sense of ‘achievement’ due to an understanding she ‘can do it’ and regain control over her life. SE16’s account serves as a reminder that ‘having a locus of control’ (Brockhaus, 1975) is a motivational construct influencing entrepreneurial intentions.

SE17’s (F, 58) experience was similar to SE16. SE17 had a prior professional experience in computing and freelancing and decided to set up her social enterprise in recycling so she shapes it according to her business mindset:

SE17 (F, 58): ‘personally, I’m quite business minded. I have the bug of running a business, sort of making things happen and having control because if you’re working for someone else, you can’t really innovate so that’s the reward I think. I think there isn’t a lot of rewards, an awful lot of hard work [laughter] but there is that feeling of creating something and choosing what direction it goes and having ideas and being able to throw them out’.

Inevitably, SE17’s motives are influenced by her personal beliefs in ‘creating something and choosing what direction it goes’ to regain control. However, she continues to say that, as she is ‘caring for her mother’; setting up her social enterprise had enabled her to ‘set her own hours’ and, therefore, gain ‘flexibility’. By setting her social enterprise, SE17 was therefore able to use her entrepreneurial ‘mindset’ and gain flexibility and control.

Previous studies have found female entrepreneurs (e.g. Brush, 1992; Marlow and Patton, 2005, Marlow, 1997) and those aged 50+ may choose entrepreneurship as a career to gain flexibility and independence (e.g. Kautonen, 2008; Kautonen, et al., 2010; Weber and Schaper, 2003). The findings in this thesis are congruent with the above studies, particularly by demonstrating the interplay between gender and flexibility. The female participants above conveyed they gained flexibility and control over their lives through their social enterprise.

However, the words ‘need for achievement’ were perceived to convey ‘independence’ by other participants. In explaining his need for independence, SE2 (M, 53) states, ‘people who’ve gotten to a certain stage, in their mid-forties, maybe in their early fifties, when they’ve done all this work, ...actually, ‘I don’t wanna do that anymore, now I want to work for myself’. His account indicates that, by reaching the age of fifty, he decided to set up his social enterprise to gain independence, stating, ‘I
thought this through financially and my credit at this stage...can do short contracts and make enough money to make sure that the family is good and I can keep this company going’.

Gaining independence, for SE2, meant he can ‘focus morning through the night. looking at things, looking in the news, looking online, checking these out, talking to people, getting ideas, writing things down...’. SE14’s (M, 57) experience is similar, as by ‘working for [himself]’ he felt he can ‘use [his] initiative and trying to think of new ideas and get something going’. As he puts it, ‘I quite enjoy the thrill of that. I enjoy the thrill of getting something going and watching it take off’. Nonetheless, SE18’s (M, 56) argues, ‘working for yourself’ could be challenging due to lack of infrastructure and a guaranteed income which makes paid employment more appealing. During my interview with him, he recounted a story about a ‘lady’ who came to seek his advice about ‘starting a business’, advising her ‘to stay where [she was]’ by asking the following questions:

SE18 (M, 56): ‘you go to work tomorrow morning and your computer is not working, what are you going to do about it?’
Lady: ‘pick up the phone or get IT to come in and fix it’.
SE18: ‘If you’re run out of pens and papers what are you gonna do?’
Lady: ‘I’ll go and get some’.
SE18: ‘If you are not sure how to answer this particular question, what do you do?’
Lady: ‘I go and ask someone’.
SE18: ‘You see, you can’t do that when you’re working for yourself, none of that, none of that and you think you’re good at it because you’ve got all this infrastructure behind you, the local authority and that’s why you’re getting £22,000 a year instead of £50,000 but it’s guaranteed and it’s guaranteed till you retire, don’t do it’.

The lady’s story conveys that, although SE18 gained independence by setting up his social enterprise, the unpredictability of gaining a regular income and the lack of infrastructure made his experience challenging, as he puts it:

SE18 (M, 56): ‘we worked for 18 months without earning a penny, which was very hard. Luckily, I was able to live off that redundancy payout but that process had taken so long. Up until then, I lived off the credit card... It’s awful going to Tesco’s and paying with the credit card, you know £3.50 worth of shopping...it was ridiculous but anyway it was worth it’. 
The ‘need for independence’ is, therefore, a significant factor influencing the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise, however, other participants spoke of ‘downshifting’ influencing their entrepreneurial (social) intentions, as explored further in Section 5.3.3 below.

5.3.3 Subtheme Three of ‘Self-Fulfilment’: ‘Downshifting’

This sub-theme ‘downshifting’ encapsulates the participants’ beliefs about the factors they consider important in setting up their social enterprise. According to Hamilton (2003, p. 6), ‘there are varied ways the phenomena of downshifting can be characterised’ such as work-life balance and changes in lifestyle that reduces dependency on materialism, instead seeking spiritual growth. He argues, ‘downshifting often refers to the voluntary choice by individuals to change aspects of their lives in order to create a simpler lifestyle’. As such, Hamilton (2003) suggests, there are three forms of downshifting, which include: working fewer hours, career transition, move to a lower paying job, and/or return to education. However, his UK study found ‘downshifting’ for women is more related to leaving paid employment and/or reduce working hours, whereas men are more likely to change career and/or choose a lower paying job. Nevertheless, ‘downshifting’ is often associated with self-fulfilment’ (Hamilton, 2003). Juniu (2000, p. 69) has also suggested ‘downshifting’ is a ‘possibility to regain the essence of leisure lost in this postmodern consumer culture’, by living a simpler lifestyle and breaking away from consumerism.

Three out of twenty-eight participants signalled one of the main factors they consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise is ‘downshifting’. Expressing his displeasure with his prior career, SE1 (M, 50) indicates, he had worked in marketing, advertising, and public relations for a number of years, which although ‘made him and his company a lot of money’, it ‘wasn’t for [him] anymore’. He continues to say, ‘the money was all about buying things’ however, ‘none of it made [him] feel better’. As such, he decided to ‘take a more spiritual line with his life’, trained as a ‘coach’ and volunteered at a charity supporting those with addiction, during which he ‘spotted a gap’ in the addiction market and decided to set up his social enterprise to support those affected. The social enterprise for SE1, therefore, represents an opportunity to address a need he was personally affected by and breaking away from ‘consumerism’, as he notes:

SE1 (M, 50): ‘Basically five years ago, I kind of cleaned up and reassessed and I found a market in what I was doing all my life. It wasn’t for me anymore. The money was nice but the money was all about buying things. That consumerism stuff which it wasn’t working anymore. None of that made me feel better. I basically reassessed and took on a more...’
spiritual line with my life and decided the things I really enjoyed about my work... I never did anything that made a single thing to anyone else, and that was a realisation really’.

Describing his journey from his early parts of his career, SE1 states, it was ‘stratospheric, very exciting rides, there was lots of money, there was lots of power, there was lots of creativity, parties and when you’re sort of thirty, it was great. I mean, to be honest, it was brilliant [laughter]’. However, he explained, the lifestyle he had ‘took its toll’ to the point he was ‘kind of burnt out’ which was one of the main reasons he decided to ‘downshift’. As he puts it, ‘...the last few years have been great because I don’t earn money [laughter]. Pretty skint most of it. Whereas before a big car, a tele, but now I cycle everywhere and I don’t give a monkeys...’. This suggests, ‘downshifting’ for SE1, signals the dissatisfaction with his consumerist lifestyle, spurred his entrepreneurial (social) intentions.

Similar to SE1’s account, SE11 (M, 56) describes how being a ‘salesman’ with a busy lifestyle and not ‘belonging to a community’ influenced his decision to set up his social enterprise:

SE11 (M, 56): ‘the life of a salesman with a fancy title ...there were times when I was travelling 250 days a year, nobody saw me, you drink a lot and, you have a completely different lifestyle, and you lose touch with what is reality. Because when I was travelling, I moved a lot. So, I never belonged to a community. I have never walked down the street and go, ‘hello butcher, hello baker’ but I do now...’

Describing his experience of travelling with his wife and ‘spotting’ an entrepreneurial opportunity for an elderly in-home care service, he initially asked himself, ‘why would a salesman, businessman, why should [he] look after older people? However, being reminded by his wife ‘[he] had talked about doing something good for a long time’, he realised he always wanted to ‘do good’. Hence, he decided to ‘downshift’ by setting his social enterprise, explaining, as a salesperson, he felt ‘a lack of challenge’, ‘less motivated’ and ‘in a sort of rat race where money was driving [him]’, which is why he decided to ‘downshift’, leaving him:

SE11 (M, 56): ‘like something hit my heart, wonderfully warm, lovely so. We had a two-hour conversation, I came down here in the kitchen and I was shaking red and my wife said, ‘what’s the matter?’ and I said, ‘I know what I wanna do now’ [laughter]. It was really fantastic. I said, ‘we don’t have to look anymore what to do with the money, we gonna invest in this business [laughter]’.

‘Downshifting’ for both SE1 and SE11 is an example of what Juniu (2000, p. 72) describes as ‘simplifying a lifestyle’ which can be facilitated by ‘moving from individualism to social solidarity, live-to-work to
work-to-live, materialism to spiritualism, and perfection to creativity and fun’. Thus, ‘downshifting’ for SE1 and SE11 involved both participants to seek ‘social solidarity and spiritualism’. SE1 sought spiritual growth by breaking out of the circle of materialism and SE11 sought to belong to a community by changing his busy lifestyle.

‘Downshifting’ is, therefore, considered to be one of the main factors influencing these participants to set up their social enterprise, contributing to their ‘self-fulfilment’. Nevertheless, ‘push’ factors such as redundancy and job dissatisfaction have been seen to play a significant role in other participants’ entrepreneurial (social) intentions, as explored further in Section 5.3.4 below.

5.3.4 Subtheme Four of ‘Self-Fulfilment’: ‘Redundancy and Dissatisfaction in the Workplace – Push Factors’

Although ‘self-fulfilment’ was broadly interpreted by participants to involve pursuing their ‘personal passion’, ‘personal values’, ‘making a difference’, and ‘downshifting’, twelve out of twenty-eight interviewees highlighted ‘push factors’ such as redundancy, job dissatisfaction, and ageism being some of the factors that had influenced their decision to set up their social enterprise.

The role of redundancy on the participants’ motives for becoming social entrepreneurs is illustrated by SE26 (F, 65), who was made redundant ‘at an age when people don’t employ [her]’:

SE26 (F, 65): ‘I have applied for jobs I know I’m well qualified to do and I’ve not even got an interview. Doing the same sort of advice and information, I have been doing for twenty years and about various funding for various organisations, and you never get an interview. You sometimes get things saying ‘thank you very much. We had so many people who were better qualified than you were’, and you know the people who got the jobs because you’ve worked with them before for twenty years for other organisations, and you know they’ve not got the amount of experiences you have but they’ve got one thing you haven’t got: youth’.

SE26 noted, following her redundancy, she was treated less favourably in the job market due to ‘perceived ‘age discrimination’. As such, despite applying for a number of jobs, and although she is ‘well qualified’ she ‘never got an interview’. She argues, people of her age ‘have got skills’ but ‘they are not seen as useful’, which is a loss of valuable skills and resources to employers. As such, she notes, ‘older’ people need to ‘raise money’ to ‘live’ otherwise ‘bills mount up’ and hence, become ‘social entrepreneurs or set up their own businesses…because quite honestly they’re not getting a chance for doing something else because they’re completely dismissed because they’re older’. Her views are
consistent with Singh and DeNoble (2003), who found ‘reluctant entrepreneurs’ may choose entrepreneurship out of necessity rather than a choice. However, SE26’s repetition of the word ‘youth’ during the interview also conveys her dissatisfaction with the way the ‘younger generation’ are given more opportunities in the labour market compared to people of her age, despite her felt belief that ‘older’ people should be given employment opportunities due to their skills and experience.

Redundancy has also influenced SE20’s (M, 61) decision to become a social entrepreneur. SE20 describes how being made redundant made him a social entrepreneur ‘out of necessity rather than choice’. He argues, despite their skills and experience, those aged 50+ who have been made redundant, more often ‘end on the scrappy’ due to lack of employment opportunities. His comment, ‘in fact at sixty-two, I found it a bit difficult for anyone to actually employ me’ suggests, for SE20, the issue was more about his age rather than his skills and/or qualifications.

Due to perceived ‘age discrimination’, SE20 felt his ‘job prospects’ were restricted, as he knew ‘damn well’ he ‘wouldn’t probably hear anything due to [his] age’. Employers, from his point of view, ‘instead of thinking he’s nearly retirement age’, should understand with ‘government putting the retirement age up’, he is more likely to continue his participation in the labour workforce since he ‘cannot afford to retire’ and needs ‘every penny [he] can get his hands on’. Being a social entrepreneur, for SE20, is, therefore, an opportunity ‘to earn a decent living’ however, he concurrently notes, a further motive he has is to ‘help his community’ through upskilling young people in media and journalism so they could gain transferable skills.

Contrary to SE26, who associated the word ‘young’ with lack of employment opportunities for ‘older’ people, SE20 considered working with the ‘younger generation’ an advantage. He explains, ‘the older generation has more to offer because they’ve got experience’ which the ‘younger generation can benefit from’. He states, he ‘loves working with young people because [he] gets a kick with them learning from [him]. For SE20, imparting his experience is, therefore, seen an advantage to ‘younger generation’ since they can learn practical skills and knowledge. As such, he recounts his experience of receiving a ‘thank you email’ from one of his apprentices, making him ‘feel good’:

SE20 (M, 61): ‘She sent me a really nice email when she’s done here exams thanking me for giving her the opportunity because her tutor said, ‘look, if you wanna to go to Uni and do this, journalism thing and media studies, you gonna need some kind of experience in writing for something like a newspaper ‘. She said, if it wasn’t for me she would not have been able to have done it and it really made me feel good’.
Indeed, SE20 felt the ‘younger and older generation’ can ‘feed off each other’ and therefore, in his opinion, ‘older entrepreneurs are a great idea provided they don’t forget about younger, bringing younger people in as well’. SE20’s account, therefore, conveys the benefits that could be attained when ‘younger and older generation’ collaborate and work together.

As indicated in Chapter Four, a strand of my data collection involved AAA participants who have in-depth knowledge of the policy context in the UK and therefore, I obtained their views about employment and ageing policies in the UK, bringing significant insights about the advantages of bringing together the ‘older and ‘younger’ generation’. AAA6 (F), for instance, argues, although ‘there are still people who believe older people should go to make way for the young…the workforce itself needs a balance of the accumulated skills to pass on to younger people’ which ‘makes for a better and healthier environment’. Her comments demonstrate therefore, the significance of bringing the ‘older and younger generation’ together in the labour market.

However, AAA3 (M) notes, ‘greater age distribution within the workforce has shown up challenges but it’s also thrown up opportunities’. He states, employers need to rethink the contribution ‘older’ workers make in a ‘multigenerational’ workforce, particularly if they have a workforce from the age of ‘eighteen to seventy’ since there is evidence ‘older workers are better in working with younger people and of course older people are less good at other things. In this case, he argues, ‘older people’ can be used as ‘mentors’ to impart their skills and experience.

Giving an example of the retail environment where ‘people like buying from people their own age’, he notes, it is more likely ‘if you go the supermarket you’ll notice, compared to ten years ago, older people’. He attributes this to technology, making ‘physically demanding jobs’ no longer demanding, having a positive impact on employers’ attitudes toward ‘older’ workers. The example given by AAA3 about employers’ positive attitudes reinforces the views of Walker (1999), as discussed in Chapter Three, who argues, there are ‘good business cases’ of employers who have positive attitudes towards employing ‘older’ workers.

However, AAA3 notes, there is a ‘knottier problem getting a business case for investing and training the older workforce’, highlighting the wider issues related to perceived ‘age discrimination’ in the workplace. This has also surfaced in AAA1’s (M) account, who argues, employers may ask themselves ‘why should we bother?’ what’s in our interest as a business and organisation? Yet, AAA1 was quick to add, there is still an economic argument about ‘why actually recruiting and retaining employees for longer and changing employment arrangements’, such as ‘flexible working’, contributing to ‘work-life balance’. He notes, employers ‘are losing, usually women, in their fifties particularly, who are being
trained as teachers, serious investment, quality members of staff were leaving because they could not cope, were not able to go part-time’. Hence, for AAA1, ‘there is a business case for why businesses need to include more flexible ways of embracing an ageing population’.

The participants also expressed, the working environment should be tailored to the needs of ‘older’ workers. AAA2 (M), for example, states, due to demographic changes, ‘employers and organisations are now being faced with dealing with an ageing workforce’, hence, they should respond to a ‘workforce that is dealing with elder care issues increasingly’. To encourage ‘older’ workers remain in the labour workforce, he notes, employers need to ‘say what can we do to help our employees to be aware of these challenges and issues and opportunities that ageing can present and to be aware of what information is available, what support is available, what resources they gonna access, what funding is available …’

For AAA2, employers should be ‘taking proactive’ actions and encourage a dialogue between ‘older’ workers and their line managers, creating an ‘age-friendly workforce’. He states, whilst having ‘ageing policies’ in place is a good practice, line managers should be ‘well-resourced and trained’ to deal with, and understand the issues faced by their ‘older employees’. He argues, ‘to reduce ageism in the workplace’, employers should create a supporting environment enabling ‘older’ workers to ‘access resources’, ‘improve work attitudes’, promote a ‘multigenerational workforce’, and provide ‘flexible working’ opportunities and ‘role crafting’, all of which will support ‘older’ people ‘utilise their skills and find a purpose’.

AAA2, therefore, suggests employers have a responsibility in enabling their ageing workforce ‘be aware of the challenges and opportunities that ageing can present’ and supply ‘information’, ‘resources’, ‘support’ and ‘funding’, allowing them to achieve ‘work-life balance’, concluding ‘it’s all about introducing awareness about these issues and then nudging [employees] to actually take proactive actions and access resources’. Drawing attention to costs being saved if employers proactively support their ‘older workforce’, he argues, ‘there is money to be made or saved, which is why someone like […] have recently come out to say that their working carer policies, programmes, support are saving the organisation between £4.5 and £6.5 million a year’.

However, he concurrently notes, the reasons why ‘sometimes employers fail to proactively support their older workforce’ is because they ‘have no idea who their working carer is and have no way of speaking to their staff and understanding who’s got a working carer responsibility’. This suggests, employers still lack an understanding of the diverse needs of their ‘older’ workforce, which is congruent with the views of Wood, et al., (2008, p. 426), as discussed in Chapter Three, who argues,
the reasons why employers may make ‘erroneous stereotypical decisions’ is because they lack an understanding of the productivity characteristics of their ageing workforce.

Nevertheless, central to AAA2’s account is his felt belief about the role of the UK government in promoting a ‘multigenerational workforce’ by ‘incentivising companies to proactively try to introduce the sort of programmes that can help people to work’, such as ‘flexible working’, ‘reduction in hours’, and ‘volunteering’. AAA2 argues, the UK government should recognise ‘ageing population is gonna be the biggest problem’ and, therefore, should support employers so they can ‘retain their older workforce who have a huge bank of knowledge they don’t wanna lose’. AAA2’s account suggests employers and the UK government play a significant role in recognising the opportunities and challenges presented by the ageing society, and therefore, should promote support mechanisms that recognise the invaluable skills ‘older’ workers have which could be imparted to the workplace.

As discussed in Chapter Three, to extend the participation of ‘older’ people, the UK government has introduced new reforms, such as the Equality Act 2010 to make it unlawful to discriminate against employees, job seekers, and trainees based on their age (Mayhew 2005, Sinclair, et al., 2013). However, research suggests people aged 50+ face ageism in the workplace and are more likely to remain unemployed for longer than their younger counterparts (Age UK, 2012; Foster, et al. 2014; Mayhew, 2005). Tinsley (2012), for example, notes, people aged 50+ are more likely to face barriers in the workplace than their younger counterparts due to ageism.

AAA2’s view has also surfaced in AAA5’s (F) account, who argues, instead of thinking about ‘older age’ as a challenge, policy makers and employers should recognise ‘as we are having an expanding number of older people living’, there must be support mechanisms enabling them to ‘create the life they have good reason to value within what resources they’ve got available’. Hence, she states, the question is not about policymaking and ‘what is the life the state has a good reason for [individuals] to value’. Instead, it is about enabling ‘older’ people the opportunity to ‘build portfolios, to review where [they] are up to in [their] life, and to be supported financially at a certain time of [their] life where [they] might want to explore new opportunities’. Thus, for AAA5, it is about enabling ‘older’ people ‘pursuing those avenues’ rather than making policies. She notes the whole issue in the UK is about enabling ‘older’ people to have a ‘proactive choice’ rather than ‘falling into things’ due to lack of employment opportunities. This resonates with the account described by SE20, who argued, he was made a social entrepreneur ‘out of necessity’ rather than choice.

When asked what role employers could play in supporting ‘older’ workers, AAA5 notes, their support should purposefully be designed so their workforce have the opportunities to ‘think out loud and safely
without there being a threat of feeling [they’re] not a good employee’. Employers, for AAA5, should be promoting ‘work-life balance’ and helping their ageing workforce with the ‘retirement transition’, involving not only ‘their pension scenario and what their economic scenario will be’ but also with ‘lots of options for different ways of relating as employees’. This could include working as a ‘freelance associate’, ‘flexibly’, ‘part-time’, and ‘from home’ since the ‘world of employment’ is more advanced technologically, and hence, there are many ways one ‘can bring the labour workforce to the market place’. Thus, for AAA5, employers should bear a responsibility in creating an age friendly workplace, enabling their ‘older’ workers to choose ‘the things they have good reason to value’ such as ‘the opportunity to train someone and to pass on their knowledge’ or ‘to learn a new skill’ which is ‘life giving’.

Indeed, the role of policy makers in promoting an ‘age-friendly workplace’ was also evident in AAA6’s (F) account, who noted, policies should understand the ‘caring responsibilities’ of their ‘older’ workers as they are often caring for ‘older relatives or friends’ and, therefore, require ‘flexible working’ arrangements to achieve ‘work-life balance’.

As explored above throughout this theme, despite the challenges experienced by participants (social entrepreneurs) such as ageism and redundancy, there is evidence they have skills and experiences they could impart to the labour market. The role of experience will be explored in depth in theme two (Section 5.4), however, another pattern identified is ‘job dissatisfaction’, with four out of twenty-eight participants expressing this has influenced their decision in setting up their social enterprise.

This view has surfaced in SE18’s (M, 56) account, explaining the reasons why he became a social entrepreneur because he was dissatisfied with the ways children’s needs were addressed in his prior employment. Explaining the issue, he argues, he worked with ‘challenging kids’ who were ‘taken out of schools’ and ‘referred to local authorities’ since they were seen ‘disrupting’ without ‘looking at the root cause’ of the problem. He notes, ‘often these children are being force-fed Maths and English’ without exploring the underlying mental health issues affecting their behaviour. Spotting a ‘big gap’ in the mental health industry, he decided, with his business partner, to set up his social enterprise to enhance the social inclusion of those with mental health problems and ‘elderly’ with dementia:
SE18 (M, 56): ‘if somebody is sectioned, there’s loads of stuff thrown at them at that point. They go into hospital, all kind of interventions going on but those people aren’t quite there. I read an interesting statistic that if two people go and see the doctor on the same day, one of them has got a physical illness and the other one has got a mental illness, the chap with the physical illness will probably get treated within a couple of weeks, and the chap with the mental illness, it might be six, seven months, at which time the condition is worsening and worsening. So, we decided we should try and fill that gap’.

Thus, for SE18, ‘job dissatisfaction’ has spurred his decision to set up his social enterprise using music to help those affected by mental health. Recounting a story about an ‘autistic child’ who took piano lessons and how it benefited her integration at school, making him ‘feel good’:

SE18 (M, 56): ‘we started doing some work with children with autism. That was so rewarding...it changes their lives. It really does. We had one girl she didn’t have any friends. She was bullied every day at school... asked her mum if she could learn piano... So, she brought her along and our piano teacher, [...], he’s done some work with people with special needs. It turned out she was quite a natural pianist anyway and that was a year ago. Now, she’s got this massive circle of friends and gets invited to sleepovers. She is up two sets in Maths, one set in English at school. She is really popular just from learning the piano’.

SE7 (F, 50) also signalled, when she was a special needs teacher, she was dissatisfied with the teaching profession and the schooling system, prompting her decision to set up her social enterprise. She explains, special needs children are often overlooked since funding allocations are ‘often not spent on the kids’. Hence, rejecting to be ‘compromised’ by the teaching profession, and going through ‘a period of kind of fighting against it and thinking [she] can sort and solve this’, she decided to leave her teaching job and become a social entrepreneur to help those disadvantaged learn cooking skills, and therefore, enhance their social inclusion.

Inevitably, the participants’ motives for social enterprise are influenced by a number of factors, such as ‘personal values’ of social justice, environmentalism, and ethical values. This was illustrated by SE4 who believes ‘environmentalism’ and ‘egalitarian sharing’ spurred his decision to set up his social enterprise. ‘Personal passion’ is manifested in the way others delivered social change through the social need they identified, such as in the case of both SE19 and SE12 whose personal passion for healthy eating and music helped those disadvantaged improve their skills and livelihood. However, at other times, the participants’ motive for the social enterprise demonstrates the beliefs they held about ‘need for achievement’ by gaining control, independence, and flexibility. This can be seen in SE16’s account, who after she was made redundant, felt she needed to gain control over her life. In this
instance, the social enterprise is presented as an opportunity for SE16 to gain a sense of achievement. In other instances, the motive for social enterprise is manifested through ‘downshifting’, as in the case of SE1, who decided to leave his well-paid job and set up his social enterprise to address a need he was personally affected by.

Nevertheless, in other instances, the motive for social enterprise highlights the external constraints the participants faced, such as ‘redundancy’, ‘ageism’, and ‘job dissatisfaction’, as in the case of SE26 who was unable to find a job due to being aged 50+. This may indicate, as discussed in Chapter Three, despite significant improvements made on the policy level to extend the participation of those aged 50+, ageism in the workplace is still seen as one of the main barriers faced by this age group (Mayhew, 2005; Sinclair, et al., 2013; Tinsley, 2012).

5.3.5 Theme One ‘Self-Fulfilment’: Summary and Discussion

The discussion of this theme ‘self-fulfilment’ has provided significant insights on the beliefs held by participants about the factors they considered important in setting up their social enterprise. Firstly, the participants’ accounts indicate that, their entrepreneurial (social) intentions are made up of multiple factors, each interpreting their own reasons for becoming a social entrepreneur and how this relates to ‘self-fulfilment’. ‘Pull’ factors such as ‘personal values’ and ‘passion’, ‘downshifting’ and ‘need for achievement’ which was sought through ‘independence’, ‘flexibility, and ‘control’ were perceived the main motives spurring the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise. However, ‘push’ factors such as ‘dissatisfaction in the workplace’, ‘ageism’, and ‘redundancy’ influenced their entrepreneurial (social) intentions. This suggests, whilst becoming social entrepreneurs generated benefits in gaining ‘self-fulfilment’, participants became social entrepreneurs out of necessity rather than choice.

This is consistent with the views of Kautonen, et al., (2008) and Singh and DeNoble (2003) who found given those aged 50+ face age discrimination and limited access to employment opportunities, they are ‘pushed’ into entrepreneurship as a career. Further studies have highlighted ageism and long-term unemployment remain the main barriers facing those aged 50+ to employment (e.g. Mayhew, 2005; PRIME, 2015a;b; Sinclair, et al., 2013; Tinsley, 2012). As noted in Chapter Three, significant improvements have been made on the policy level to extend the participation of those aged 50+ (DWP, 2014b) such as the removal of the DRA and pension reforms (Pension Act 2011; Pensions Policy Institute, 2015a;b). However, studies conducted by Tinsley (2012) and Wood, et al., (2008), for instance, suggest ageism and prevailing discourses seeing ‘older’ people as less flexible and less reliable
due to health reasons, including employers’ lack of understanding of the productivity of their ageing workforce, contribute to their inability in finding employment.

However, as discussed in this theme, ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives and the community in which they are embedded is essential to all participants since it contributes to empowering those disadvantaged and/or in need and develop their community resilience. This was reflected in the way participants foregrounded their beneficiaries’ welfare by providing employment and volunteering opportunities, upskilling, and enhancing their social and economic inclusion. Indeed, the work of Leadbeater (1997) and Thompson (2002) has shown social entrepreneurs build the social capital of their communities and those disadvantaged by empowering them to take control over their lives, through volunteering and employment opportunities.

The participants’ accounts, therefore, suggest although their decision for setting up their social enterprise is mostly driven by gaining ‘self-fulfilment’, there is a need for further understanding that external constraints in finding employment due to being aged 50+ have made them social entrepreneurs out of necessity rather than choice. Hence, it was suggested by participants, to extend the working lives of those aged 50+, government and employers should promote an ‘age-friendly society’, supporting this age group in gaining employment or become entrepreneurs. This is consistent with Foster (2012) and Marvell and Cox (2016), who suggest providing tailored support, such as flexible working and access to training and progression, encourage those aged 50+ to remain in the labour market.

5.4 Theme Two: ‘Role of Experience and Social Networks’

This theme relates to the understanding, expressed by the majority of participants that their ‘prior professional experience’ and ‘social networks’ not only influenced their decision in setting up their social enterprise but also facilitated their experience during the social entrepreneurial process. Hence, this theme is divided into two sub-sections: ‘experience’ and ‘social networks’ conveying the participants’ interpretations of the role these played on their entrepreneurial (social) intentions and the ways in which they facilitated their experiences during the social entrepreneurial process.

Previous studies have found ‘older’ people have far more experience and social networks than their younger counterparts, influencing their entrepreneurial intentions (Kautonen, et al; 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003). As noted by Sahut, et al., (2015, p. 253), ‘relative to younger people, older entrepreneurs may enjoy some advantages, including greater business experience and expertise, broader career-related social networks, and potentially,
greater financial resources acquired during the course of their earlier careers’. Section 5.4.1, therefore, examines the ways in which ‘experience’ and ‘social networks’ contributed to the participants’ entrepreneurial (social) intentions.

5.4.1 Subtheme One of ‘Role of Experience and Social Networks’: ‘Experience’

It was identified from the data that ‘experience’ played a significant role in influencing the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise. Indeed, the word ‘experience’ recurred throughout the data, indicating the majority of interviewees drew on their prior professional experience, even if their social enterprise activity was not directly linked to such experience. However, a number of perspectives were expressed in relation to the word ‘experience’. Although all participants identified ‘experience’ with ‘professional experience’, ‘skills’, ‘expertise’, and ‘business and entrepreneurial experience’, some also spoke of their ‘life experiences’, interpreting this as having ‘knowledge’, ‘wisdom’, and ‘maturity’ gained over their lifetime, giving them a sense of ‘emotional resilience’ to manage the challenges and barriers they faced during the social entrepreneurial process. Hence, the participants’ beliefs that ‘experience’ are in themselves a manifestation of their skills, as well their ‘life experiences’, presenting a benefit to their social enterprise. As noted in Table 5.3, twelve participants had prior experience in not-for-profit and public sectors, five in sales and marketing, and eleven with prior entrepreneurial and/or self-employment experience.
Table 5.3 The interviewees’ prior professional experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Previous Career Background</th>
<th>Prior Entrepreneurial/ self-employment Experience</th>
<th>Relation of social enterprise to background:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked in sales, advertising, and marketing in leading roles and management consultancy. After taking voluntary redundancy, he set up the social enterprise to address a need he was personally affected by. Has been volunteering for related projects.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked in Sales and advertising in leading roles. Decided to set up the social enterprise to provide a digital solution for dementia and chronic illnesses.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked in Sales in leading roles as well as management consultancy in the UK and overseas. Also worked for charity organisations in poor countries overseas.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked in Sales and Marketing. Also, prior experience in the charity sector. The social enterprise evolved from leading projects in environmental sustainability.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Has worked in educational sector and volunteered for a number of projects. Decided to set up the social enterprise after children went to school.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked and undertaken research on a PhD level in agriculture and food crops and was involved in a number of related projects both as voluntary and paid work. He saw a need for bringing awareness of healthy eating due to personal passion for growing food.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Worked in educational sector and the social enterprise evolved from dissatisfaction in the workplace and personal passion for growing food. Has previous experience in volunteering.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked in public sector for a number of years. Took early retirement and felt he needed to do something meaningful and unrelated to previous career.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.3 The interviewees’ prior professional experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
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<th>Relation of social enterprise to background:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked in public sector for a number of years. Took early retirement and sought paid employment in the charity sector in related area. Dissatisfied with existing systems so decided to set up the social enterprise to address a social need he identified.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Worked in the public sector for a number of years and then decided to set up the social enterprise in related area following a personal family event.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked in Telecommunication and IT sales in leading roles. Social enterprise evolved from restlessness with own emotions and do something meaningful.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Got interested in this line of social work when she was helping local schools set up their own school meals social enterprise. Decided to set up own social enterprise in response to dissatisfaction with existing systems and personal passion for healthy eating.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Has worked in community development and voluntary sector. Was made redundant and did not want to seek paid employment in related area. Decided to set up social enterprise in line with personal need and passion for healthy eating.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE14</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Prior experience in running own business in retail. Social enterprise evolved from wanting to help the disadvantaged and homeless in own community.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Worked in both private and social enterprise sector. Social enterprise evolved from being inspired by a keynote speaker and wanting to empower females into enterprise and her passion for helping females.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Has 18 years’ experience in voluntary sector. Decided to set up the social enterprise in related area after she was made redundant.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Previous Career Background</td>
<td>Prior Entrepreneurial/self-employment Experience</td>
<td>Relation of social enterprise to background:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE17</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Has 15 years’ experience in computing and printing industry. Set up the social enterprise in response to private family circumstance and need for flexibility. Has also prior voluntary experience.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has over 25 years’ experience in the public sector. Was made redundant and the social enterprise stemmed from wanting to change the way mental health issues are tackled.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Teaching and composing own music. Worked both in the UK and overseas. Decided to set up the social enterprise after he left his job due to dissatisfaction in the workplace. Had a prior experience in the charity sector.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has worked in Sales and advertising for almost 40 years. Decided to set up the social enterprise in related area to gain income after he was made redundant.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has over 20 years’ experience in the social sector. Has also experience in volunteering for NGOs overseas. Decided to set up the social enterprise to address a need he was personally affected by.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has over 40 years manufacturing experience. The social enterprise evolved from being inspired by a community project helping young disadvantaged people.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Social enterprise evolved from wanting to address a social need he was personally affected by.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Has experience in youth work, psychotherapy, and horticulture. Social enterprise evolved from wanting to promote wellbeing of people with mental health difficulties, learning difficulties, and those with progressive dementia. Also volunteering for some local projects.</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Previous Career Background</td>
<td>Prior Entrepreneurial/ self-employment Experience</td>
<td>Relation of social enterprise to background:</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Has worked in horticulture for over 20 years. Following retirement decided to set up social enterprise to tackle issues of dementia in elderly through horticulture and outdoor spaces.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE26</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Has worked in the voluntary sector for over 20 years. The social enterprise activity evolved after she was made redundant and a need for income. Currently volunteering (paid work) providing food bank support for families in need.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE27</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Has over 25 years’ experience in the education sector. Decided to set up the social enterprise after she retired and address a social need personally affected by.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE28</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Has worked in public sector and also had experience in running own retail business. Decided to set up the social enterprise after she retired to help disadvantaged youth as well as keep active.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SE3 (M, 53), for example, who had prior experience in both the charity and NGO sectors (in the UK and internationally) and prior entrepreneurial experience, explains how his ‘business skills’ and ‘commercial acumen’ have been beneficial to his social enterprise activity:

SE3 (M, 53): ‘It’s quite easy on what I brought in skill wise. Obviously, I have got twenty-five years of running companies of all sorts, be it large companies, early stage companies, later state, starting my own things. I definitely bring basic management skills, financial management, very strong commercial skills’.

SE3 believes his prior business and entrepreneurial experience, made it easier for him to ‘see what the deal is’ and build good ‘relationship management with customers and partners’. He notes, ‘I couldn’t have done this when I was thirty, thirty-five or forty’ because ‘I need some experience and not to have to worry about money and housing’. As such, he considered for ‘younger people trying to do this’, it is essential they gain an ‘income’ because ‘they are trying to pay the mortgage or pay for the family’ which, in his belief, is ‘not typically the big driver’ for people of his age anymore. However, he adds, to be a social entrepreneur, ‘one needs the business experience to be able to do this’ since they can ‘go much quicker or much more efficiently with much less stress if [they’d] learnt how to do financial management, financial forecasting, business planning, and having those tools to be able to persuade people to invest in [them], to support [them], to be [their] customer’. Indeed, SE3 conveys his felt belief, having a business experience ‘makes a big difference both in terms of one’s own sense of wellbeing doing it, the comfort of doing it, and also the skills, knowledge, experience of being able to do it’, which from his point of view, is ‘a great time to do something like this at fifty, sixty and seventy’. For SE3, therefore, his prior business and entrepreneurial experiences meant he understood the significance of adopting a ‘hybrid’ model so he can have ‘some sort of sustainability in it rather than continually needing to go and look for funds and supporters’.

Although SE3 spoke of the advantages of his prior professional and entrepreneurial experience from operational and business perspectives, other participants suggested their prior experience in public and/social sectors gave them a different advantage. SE18 (M, 56), who had over twenty-five years work experience in the public sector and a prior entrepreneurial experience, argues, his tacit knowledge of the public sector made it possible to access resources and gain an understanding ‘the way things are done’. He notes:

SE18 (M, 56): ‘when they promoted me into a more strategic role, it gave me a good background for what I’m doing now and I also ran a business in the past and I made enough mistakes to learn. So, I had quite a lot of experience and then years working for
the local authority and a lot of the work I do now is in connection with the local authority. So, I had thirty-five years training for this role. That’s how I look at it really’.

SE18’s account suggests his prior experience in the public sector facilitated his decision to set up a social enterprise ‘in connection with the local authority’ where he could access resources and build strategic collaborations with local authorities and educational establishments to promote his social enterprise and address the need he identified.

This is further illustrated by SE16 (F, 58), who argues, her prior experience in the voluntary sector, meant she ‘knew the job, knew what [she] was going to do’, which ‘made it so much easier because [she] didn’t have to develop an idea or anything’. SE18 believes, having seventeen years’ experience in the voluntary sector, meant she had ‘the structure behind [her]’, suggesting her entrepreneurial (social) intentions was motivated by a felt understanding of the social need she identified and how to address this. Thus, her prior experience both acted as a symbol of her tacit knowledge of the voluntary sector and a way of tackling a social need she felt confident in addressing.

The appreciation given to ‘experience’ is also highlighted in AAA’s interviewees’ accounts. AAA6 (F), for instance, notes ‘older’ people build on their prior professional experience to continue their economic and social participation. Giving an example of the University of the Third Age, she argues, it ‘was very much based on the fact that you have older people imparting skills and experience and everything we would wish for, and also bringing their own entrepreneurship to develop, to be involved in new ways of thinking and so on’. She also spoke of her colleague who joined her organisation following his early retirement who ‘was building on his skills’ as well as ‘developing those skills’, noting:

AAA6 (F): ‘He is using his skills...he was involved with the original computerisation of this organisation but at the same time, he actually developed those skills when he came to us. He’s been doing a lot of work on statistical analysis, around ageing and what it means going forward and he’s been the author of many reports. That’s quite an interesting example. If you asked him why? I’m sure quite a lot of people who half joke and say, ‘oh, well I had to continue working’ [imitating someone else voice] but in fact when you delve deeper, it was more building on his experience but also a new interest, and actually, and having suddenly realising how interested in this line of work he is’.

This is congruent with existing studies on retirement and ageing which has found more often ‘older’ people view their prior experience and skills an opportunity to bridge back into employment and/or entrepreneurship as an appropriate second or mid-career choice (e.g. Baucus and Human, 1994; Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Ruhm, 1990). Indeed, according to AAA1 (M), having the ‘gift of longer life’,
together with ‘skills and experience’, highlight the opportunities ‘older age’ presents. As he notes: ‘If you see knowledge, experience, and history, as it were, as an ‘energy of life force’, I mean God, the sky is the limit of what could be possible if people came together in a particular way to put that together…’.

However, as highlighted at the beginning of this section, the participants held different perspectives about the word ‘experience’. They perceived being aged 50+ to represent their ‘life experiences’. This featured in SE23’s (M, 60) account, who notes, being aged 50+, gave him the ‘learning how to achieve goals the hard way’. Hence, he believes ‘young entrepreneurs’ would not have ‘enough experience to be able to handle this’ because ‘they haven’t been around long enough’. However, his ‘life experience’ and ‘falling out of the community twenty years ago, thirty years ago’ meant he knew ‘how to deal with people who are mentally ill and that it is possible to recover from it’. This suggests, ‘life experience’ gave SE23 an added understanding of his beneficiaries’ needs. As he puts it, ‘I would hate to fly blind, you are talking about people who can be oppositional, difficult, not well people, filled with fear, anger, resentment, pride and they got to find some humility and go and serve somebody else for nothing and the minute they do that, they can do it then but you’ve gotta be able to do it first’.

‘Life experience’ was interpreted differently by SE5 (F, 50), who identified this with ‘maturity and confidence’:

*SE5 (F, 50): ‘you know your own mind. You’re confident in what you’re doing. You’ve got that life experience. Everything I had done previously in my life has led to that moment when I started my own business. I didn’t understand at that time what I was doing then but now I think ‘wow, yeah I did that’.*

SE5, therefore, identifies her age with ‘maturity’ and ‘confidence’ and ‘everything she had done in [her life]’, helping her in the process to set up her social enterprise. Indeed, the significance of ‘life experience’ was also evident in other interviewee’s accounts who found this to be an advantage for their social enterprise. SE8 (M, 50), for instance, argues:

*SE8 (M, 50): ‘The perspective and the experience that you’ve got as an older person certainly helps and any other skills from having done something previously stood me in very good stead and it teaches you determination as well. If younger people possibly something doesn’t work they move to something completely different [laughter] but just be the kind of person I am, I just grit my teeth and say, ‘right I’m gonna make this one work’. I can see it’s a good idea. Believe in it. You constantly appraise and reappraise and thinking about how to tweak this, tweak that...and also the experience allows you to sit back and think, ‘well, ok I just let that run and it will either be all right or it won’t’ and you know what you can take a risk with and how far you can allow it to go before you’ve gotta do something about it...a bit more savvy and certainly made me more prepared to take the risk of doing it because a) I was in a position to do it and b) I was old enough to assess*
the risks and rewards and say that was something that I wanted to take the chance on doing. It gives you different perspectives on things.’

‘Life experience’ has also been identified with ‘resilience’, helping the participants overcome the challenges they experienced during the social entrepreneurial process. For SE22 (M, 61), being ‘older’, meant the ‘bits’ he ‘hadn’t realised [he] brought to the party is resilience’. As he notes:

SE22 (M, 61): ‘I honestly didn’t think I had resilience because life has been easy for me in as much as I’ve always had a good job, made very good money but I assure people now that I’m resilient. People ask how are you going to replicate SE22? I say, ‘oh that’s easy, you just have to ask the right questions ‘and they say, ‘what’s that?’ I said, ‘I don’t know but I’ll find the man who does’ [laughter] but that’s the wrong answer. The right answer is you probably won’t find another SE22. I’m sure you will but all you need is someone who is resilient, who’s creative because don’t give up, be creative and do it this way or that way and that’s all, but as I say, I have got so many success stories of young people that make your hair on your back stand up. We are making a difference. We put young people first. We put people before profit and I know I need to be profitable, I know so’.

‘Resilience’, for SE22, represents his ability to face the challenges he experienced and not ‘beg for money’, as he puts it, ‘I have got bigger balls. I don’t want to beg for money. I’ll make my own money’. Indeed, during the interview, when I probed further about what he meant by ‘resilience’, he recounted a discussion he had with the local authority, demonstrating the significance of his ‘resilience’ in challenging the status quo:

SE22: ‘I went to […] and I said, ‘I’ve taken a risk with my own personal money. The industry has taken the risk giving work to me but together I take these risks. We’ve got thirty-eight of your young people in employment; don’t you think you should take risks?’

Local authority: ‘[…] cannot take risks’.

SE22: ‘So, I’ll be creative. If I’m ever stuck, I’ll be creative. If I was having this meeting with you when I open the door and it was all bricked up, I dig a whole underneath, I’ll go around the side or I get a JCB from somewhere and knock that well. I’m never gonna be beaten’.

Local authority: ‘We can’t be’.

SE22: ‘You must be. You tell me I’m the person of this place can but you can’t’.

In focusing on his achievements and proving ‘95% of his apprentices’ are in jobs, SE22 spoke of the ‘journey board’ he displayed in his factory reminding him how much his ‘resilience’ has been beneficial despite the ‘pain’ he went through. That he felt ‘physically sick’ due to ‘the financial burden’ and
questioning whether the money he invested at such ‘a later period of [his] life’ was worth it, was alleviated by his self-belief he was ‘doing it for the right reasons’. He argues, ‘I know what the problem is when I was in manufacturing and this is what I’m trying to address, helping young people gain those vital skills and attitudes required for the workplace’.

In the interview extract below, SE14 (F, 57) explains, ‘resilience’ enabled her to cope with uncertainty and rejections, particularly when bidding for funds:

SE14 (F, 57): ‘like I say, when we first started applying for grants, I used to find that really difficult but now I think I’m ok. You just go for it anyway and if you’re not gonna get it, you just don’t let it hit you...you’ve actually got to just get on with it. That’s as much of being a social entrepreneur as anything else, is actually being able to pick yourself up and often carry on, perseverance definitely’.

SE14’s perceives ‘resilience’ to bring advantages since she was able to ‘get on with it’ and not be ‘knocked down’ by rejections. This is consistent with SE2’s (M, 54) argument, to be a social entrepreneur, ‘one needs to question whether you have the stamina and resilience for the amount of challenges you’re gonna face, the amount of mistakes you’re gonna make and be able to chuck your ego into the backroom and say actually, ‘we got that wrong, get rid of that idea, do something else’.

The participants’ understanding of ‘resilience’ as an ability to ‘bounce back’ and face adversity (Centre for Policy and Ageing, 2014, p. 1) is consistent with previous studies on ‘resilience in ‘later life’ (e.g. CPA, 2014; Ong, et al., 2006). These studies have shown there is an interplay between health and wellbeing, social, and community interactions, spirituality and greater resilience in ‘later life’. Ong, et al., (2006), for instance, found resilience to daily challenges in ‘later life’ is determined by three factors. Firstly, positive emotions influence people in ‘later life’ to face daily life challenges. Secondly, individuals with resilience traits positively adapt to change. Thirdly, resilience is connected with social networks and relationships in ‘later life’.

Further research by CPA (2014) has reported some of the factors influencing resilience in ‘later life’ include age, gender, perceived health and wellbeing, relationships and social networks, and spirituality, including other factors such as living conditions, income, keeping active, and ethnicity. Together these studies have highlighted the interplay between ‘older age’ and resilience, demonstrating how as individuals age, they develop resilience concerning the extent to which their health, social networks, and keeping active, contribute to their overall wellbeing.

In this study, some participants, therefore, identified their ‘older’ age with resilience, enabling them to face the challenges they experienced. This is particularly relevant given the scarcity of resources
they experienced, which will be discussed in Section 6.6, in response to research question three. As noted by SE7 (F, 50): ‘…I came to the conclusion there isn’t anybody, it’s just you, and if it matters then do it and if it fails, it doesn’t matter because there will be mess-ups along the way and that’s fine, that’s part of the process because you learn. The only failure is actually stopping and if you stop then you have failed but you’ve got to kind of just keep going because it’s what you believe in’.

Thus, besides applied value, such as business, management, and entrepreneurial skills, ‘experience’ has a more ‘life experience’ value, demonstrating how ‘resilience’ has enabled them to manage the challenges they experienced during the social entrepreneurial process. However, the interviewee’s understanding of ‘experience’ also highlights the role of social networks, which is further explored in the 5.4.2 in subtheme ‘social networks’.

5.4.2 Subtheme Two of ‘Role of Experience and Social Networks’: ‘Social Networks’

As discussed in Chapter Two, entrepreneurship studies often focus on the economic benefits of entrepreneurship, describing the entrepreneur as a special person who is ‘prone to behave and succeed as an entrepreneur’ (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986, p.4). However, other researchers have shown an increased interest in understanding entrepreneurship from a social perspective, demonstrating the significant role played by social networks in understanding entrepreneurial behaviour (e.g. Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Birley, 1985; Greve and Salaff, 2003; Sorenson and Stuart, 2005). The socially embedded view of entrepreneurship, therefore, focuses on the significance of the social context in enabling entrepreneurs to access resources and knowledge (Leyden, et al., 2013). Greve and Salaff (2003, p. 2), for instance, found ‘entrepreneurs require information, capital, skills, and labour to start the business activities. While they hold some of these resources themselves, they often complement their resources by accessing their contacts’.

A broader finding identified in this study is the role of ‘social networks’ during the social entrepreneurial process. Yet, varieties of perspectives were expressed concerning their types and usefulness. For SE22 (M, 61), his social networks, such as ‘130 ex-colleagues, 7 vice presidents, 38 directors, and the rest engineers and managers’, meant he got his ‘foot through the door’ when he needed support and resources. He argues, his ‘social networks’ created a ‘reciprocal relationship’ and therefore, if he ‘was to pick up’ the phone now to one of his professional contacts and ask to ‘work with them’ or ‘give them some work’; they would happily accept his request. This conveys his felt understanding that his ‘social networks’ provide access to resources. As he notes, ‘I’ve got networks to die for’. This is consistent with Leyden, et al., (2013, p. 6), who argue, the ‘ability of the entrepreneur
to search within and across sources of knowledge is determined by the size and heterogeneity of his/her effective networks; the greater the heterogeneity of social ties and past knowledge and experiences, the more creative the entrepreneur will be’.

Similarly, SE10 (F, 54) considered her prior professional networks at the council were useful in accessing resources and advice:

\[SE10 (F, 54): \] ‘I got a really good friend who still works for the council and I ring her up and I say, ‘this is what I have done, what do you think? And 99% of the time she goes that’s fine but just consider this as well or what about if that hadn’t worked, what about going down this route. So, I have got back up, somebody I can talk to someone who is still in a big organisation and the good thing about it is they will email me and say: ‘there is this training going on, it’s free. Do you wanna come along? Let us know. So that’s really good. Because of the work I did with the council and the links I’ve got with agencies, there is always somebody I can ring and say ‘right I’ve got these young people; I need a bit of help’.

For SE10 therefore, access to her social networks at the council, meant there is ‘always somebody [she] can ring’ for support. Her expression, ‘I’ve got back up, somebody I can talk to’ suggests she found it beneficial to receive support. Thus, ‘social networks’ for SE10 both acted as a symbol of ‘the effectiveness of her networks’ (Leyden, et al., 2013, p. 7) and the role they played during the social entrepreneurial process. This supports previous research, as discussed in Chapter Two, highlighting people aged 50+ make extensive use of their experience and social networks at a later stage in their lives’ career (e.g. Kautonen, et al., 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003).

The words ‘social networks’ were also interpreted to include ‘community networks’. This is illustrated by SE8’s account (M, 50); describing how his community support was pivotal at the start-up stage:

\[SE8 (M, 50): \] ‘there was no heating in here when we started. It took six weeks to get it open. So we got going, stripped the floor and started working on it. People started coming out of the woodwork and saying, ‘I wanna help. I wanna help. We wanna come in and exhibit our graphs. We wanna just be part of what you’re trying to do’. I think the message started getting through, and that’s gonna be something different and people from the community were just walking through the door and saying, ‘we wanna help’. It was absolutely humbling the effort people were prepared to put into to get something off the ground’.

SE8’s use of the sentence ‘it was humbling the effort people were prepared to put into to get something off the ground ‘reinforces the role ‘community networks’ play in providing access to resources. As discussed in Chapter Two, scholars such as Sarason, et al., (2006) and Chell (2010) argue, the sources
of entrepreneurial opportunities are provided by the external context in which the entrepreneur is embedded, however, the act of entrepreneurship is dependent on the motivation and the intentions of the entrepreneur to discover and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities.

The positive contribution of ‘community networks’ has also been illustrated by SE14 (F, 57), who notes her local suppliers such as FareShare, Tesco, and Warburtons help build a supportive culture, benefiting her social enterprise by receiving donated food. She explains, ‘usually, we get about £5,000 worth of food in each collection, and as you can see [turning her head towards the storage room by the kitchen], you probably can’t see, Warburton, they deliver free bread every week. They give us out a load of free bread to give out with the food parcels’. The donated food from her local suppliers, for SE14, meant she is able to meet the needs of her beneficiaries, which is the main objective of her social enterprise.

The ‘community support’ described by SE14 is different to the one received by other participants, conveying their held beliefs about the role of ‘family networks’. Seven out of twenty-eight participants perceived access to ‘family networks’ influenced their decision in setting up their social enterprise and facilitated access to resources. SE11 (M, 56) describes how his decision to set up his in-home care social enterprise has been facilitated by his wife’s support who provided income ‘to put food on the table’:

\[SE11 (M, 56): \text{`We came to the conclusion we’d do it and the children said, `yes` because I said, `there won’t be any more mummy and daddy we need money for that`. I said, `it would be very hard times for two to three years`. It’s been very hard because my wife has two jobs to put food on the table because this has not made us a penny yet. This has cost us quite a lot of money but it’s just now beginning to turn so I can’}.\]

The support SE11 received from his wife was instrumental in not having to worry about an income to support his family whilst setting up and running his social enterprise. On the other hand, SES’s (F, 50) account conveys her understanding of how her ‘family support’ enabled her to ‘chat with her husband and her children’ and communicating to them ‘she is gonna be busy’ and hence, she ‘needs all of [their] support’. Her comment ‘the support of your family is essential’ indicates the positive emotional role played by her family during the social entrepreneurial process. This is congruent with previous studies on family ties (e.g. Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Anderson, et al., 2005), demonstrating most entrepreneurs make extensive use of family networks when running their business, even if there is no formal involvement of family members with the business.

Access to resources was also seen by the way the participants chose a legal structure for their organisation. As shown in Table 5.4, eleven participants had a partnership legal structure, fifteen had
a variety of legal structures, such as private limited company, community interest company (CIC), and a charity, and finally, two were franchisees. This is consistent with the work of Cornforth (2014) who notes, social enterprises may adopt a variety of legal structures such as charity and CIC, some finding having a charitable structure better for the purposes of attracting funding and tax relief. Nevertheless, it was identified from the data that those who chose a partnership structure did so for the purpose of complementing or enhancing their skills. This highlights some of the skills gaps they experienced, which will be discussed in Section 6.6.5.

Table 5.4 Structure of participants’ social enterprises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Enterprise Structure</th>
<th>Participants (N=28)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various legal structures</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franchise</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trading as a partnership to access resources is illustrated by SE17’s (F, 58) account, who decided to ‘team up with someone who is twenty years younger, who had complementary skills’. SE17’s use of the phrase, ‘I didn’t know enough about bikes... I’ve got quite a lot of life knowledge’ suggests she had ‘life skills’ such as an understanding of Tax and PAYE, however, she needed to extend beyond this, and team up with a business partner who had practical skills. SE12 (F, 55) was similar as she explains, whilst her business partner has practical skills to deliver ‘cookery workshops’ to customers and beneficiaries, she utilises her management, leadership, and business skills to grow her social enterprise:

**SE12 (F, 55):** ‘He was up for it right from the start, to stop being a sole trader and to join me in creating this as a community interest company. He’ll be out there teaching a group of 12 people. So, he does all that. Everything to do with delivery of the courses and he oversees any dining events. So, he does everything practical and hands-on, and I do everything that’s to do with finance, marketing, and planning and getting people here. He does all of that and I do all the business side, kind of structuring, creating a structure so he can do his thing and people could come and learn but you’ve got to have the right setting for it, and everything gotta be structured and in place. So, that’s my role. It’s great. It’s the best partnership I have ever had actually in terms of, you know, a working relationship. It’s very good’.

SE12’s account reinforces the participants’ held beliefs about the significance of complementing their skills during the social entrepreneurial process. SE9 (M, 54) explains, he complemented his skills through this team, suggesting their support made his ‘weaknesses less significant’ and hence, this is
one of the reasons why he was ‘never a social entrepreneur younger because [he] wouldn't have access to these resources’:

SE9 (M, 54): ‘I was rubbish at the admin and the organising and management and to be honest with you. I’m still rubbish at it now. So I make it work but actually, I didn’t make it work well and I failed in that area because I have to do all the admin, I have to do all the support, I limped on but again I’m limited by my own limitations. In this context, [...] whom you met is phenomenally well organised, exceptionally gifted at time management. [...] our finance man is as tight as they come and looks after the money so we’re never broke. He is amazing and we’ve got other people who do their bit within the charity’.

Central to SE9’s account is his felt belief by complementing his skills through his team, he is able to achieve his social mission, leading him to conclude, ‘I’m a great social entrepreneur with the support of my team’. The role of teams in social entrepreneurship described by SE9 is supported by Below and Tripp (2010, p. 39), who suggest entrepreneurs need to ‘assess [their] strengths and weaknesses’ and build their organisation with ‘members who bring skills, networks and experience to the organisation’. Below and Tripp (2010, p. 39), therefore, argue entrepreneurs must build a leadership team with the same ‘thoughtfulness and determination that [they] apply to creating [their] vision’.

The findings demonstrate the positive role played by ‘social networks’, enabling participants to access resources, support, income, and complementing their skills. Social networks are, therefore, perceived positively since they expanded the skills of participants to achieve their social mission.

The analysis of data also highlighted the interviewees built extensive social networks over their life’s careers, facilitating mobilisation of resources which was beneficial to achieving their social mission, such as in the case of SE22, who drew upon his ‘professional networks’ to access resources. Furthermore, the interviewees highlighted how ‘family ties’ and ‘teams’ facilitated their access to support, advice, income, and complemented their skills. ‘Social networks’ presented them, therefore, with the opportunity to address complex social problems, as in the case of SE9, who felt he ‘is a great social entrepreneur with the support of [his] team’.

‘Experience’, which is translated by participants as gaining knowledge and expertise through their prior professional backgrounds, is found to have relevance to the social needs they identified, but also having a positive impact on their social enterprise activity, as in the case of SE10, who accessed advice, training, and resources through her previous professional networks at the Council. In some instances, the participants held a different perception towards the word ‘experience’ since they related this to ‘life experiences’, constructed as having ‘maturity, ‘knowledge’, and ‘resilience’ to manage the challenges they faced during the social entrepreneurial process. This is illustrated in both SE14 and
SE22’s accounts who argue, due to being aged 50+, their ‘life experiences’ gave them the ‘resilience’ to bounce back when faced with challenges.

5.4.3 Theme Two ‘Role of Experience and Social Networks’: Summary and Discussion

The discussion of the second theme ‘experience and social networks’ demonstrates how the participants entrepreneurial (social) intentions are also mediated by their prior professional backgrounds and the social networks they had built over their lifetime careers. Having a prior business, management or entrepreneurial experience, and access to social networks, not only influenced their decision in becoming social entrepreneurs but also facilitated their experience during the social entrepreneurial process through access to resources, support, and tacit knowledge of how things work in practice. The findings discussed in this theme, therefore, extend current studies on entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’ by highlighting the role of experience and social networks in determining the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise. Consistent with Weber and Schaper’s (2003) study, which has found ‘older’ entrepreneurs have far more advantages than their younger counterparts due to their skills and experience, the participants conveyed their understanding of the significant role of their prior professional backgrounds both in private and public sectors, and prior entrepreneurial experience played a part in setting up their social enterprise and also in accessing resources.

Nevertheless, the participants’ understanding of ‘experience’ also conveyed their held beliefs of the value of their ‘life experiences’ associated with being aged 50+. ‘life experiences’ which was interpreted as having ‘wisdom’, ‘maturity’, and ‘resilience’ were seen an outcome of their age, giving them an understanding of how to manage the challenges experienced during the social entrepreneurial process. The concept of ‘resilience’ was, therefore, used in this theme, in order to draw out how the participants associated their age with resilience, which is consistent with existing studies that have found as people age, they develop their resilience to deal with uncertainty and setbacks in their lives (CPA, 2014; Ong, et al., 2006).

However, research has found that fear of failure, age, gender, uncertainty, lack of finance and support, insufficient business knowledge and skills, and ill health may have a negative influence on entrepreneurial intentions (Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Kautonen, 2008). Lévesque and Minniti (2006) suggest ‘older’ people are less likely to invest their time in entrepreneurial activities without immediate gains and hence, as people age, their desire for entrepreneurship declines. In addition, Sahut, et al., (2015) argue, males have higher entrepreneurial intentions than females, and those with
prior entrepreneurial experience tend to choose entrepreneurship as a career rather than paid employment. However, overall, age has a negative influence on entrepreneurial intentions, despite the interplay between entrepreneurial experience and entrepreneurial intent.

In summary, as shown in Figure 5.2, it is apparent; there are multiple factors the participants considered important in their decision to set up a social enterprise. This comprised ‘self-fulfilment’, which included ‘personal values’, ‘passion’, ‘need for achievement’ and ‘downshifting’. However, ‘ageism’, ‘dissatisfaction in the workplace’, and ‘redundancy’ demonstrate the external constraints they faced in gaining employment at the age of 50+, making them social entrepreneurs out of necessity than a choice. Nevertheless, common patterns emerging from the data were the concepts of ‘experience’ and ‘social networks’ which were seen as invaluable during the social entrepreneurial process, since it enabled the participants to draw on their past professional experiences and access resources through their social networks.

Figure 5.2 The participants’ interpretations for their motives for social entrepreneurship

5.5 Chapter Summary

The findings in this chapter answer my first research question, which was posed in response to a lack in our understanding of the factors LLSEs consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise. The first theme identified is ‘self-fulfilment’, conveying the participants’ understanding of why they have become social entrepreneurs. Besides ‘making a difference’ to those disadvantaged and/or in need, which is a characteristic they all had in common, their interpretation of ‘self-fulfilment’ varied. Whilst some spoke of fulfilling their ‘personal passion’ and ‘personal values’, ‘need for
achievement’, and ‘downshifting’, others considered their entrepreneurial (social) intentions were driven by necessity due to ‘redundancy’, ‘job dissatisfaction’, and ‘perceived age discrimination’. This suggests that the factors participants considered important in their decision to set up a social enterprise are mediated by intrinsic elements and external constraints, shaping their entrepreneurial (social) intentions.

A further pattern emerging from the participants’ accounts is the significant role that could be played by policy makers and employers in fostering an ‘age-friendly’ society, taking into accounts variations in ‘older’ people’s needs and personal circumstances. As such, it is conveyed by participants there is a need for providing opportunities such as ‘flexible working’ to extend the participation of those aged 50+ in the labour market. Besides ‘self-fulfilment’, the findings discussed in this chapter suggest reaching the age of fifty is considered a ‘finite moment’, giving the participants a sense of urgency to actualise their felt desire in ‘giving back’ to society and ‘make a difference’ to the lives of others. However, participants also spoke of the significance of their prior ‘experience’ and ‘social networks’ in giving them tacit knowledge on how things work in practice and access to resources, presenting an advantage over their younger counterparts. Yet, ‘social networks’ were not interpreted as just accessing professional networks but also family networks, providing emotional and financial support during the social entrepreneurial process. ‘Experience’ was also interpreted as having ‘life experiences’ associated with ‘wisdom’, ‘maturity’ and ‘resilience’ due to being aged 50+. Thus, the findings suggest the age of fifty is an advantage due to practical business and/or entrepreneurial knowledge but also due to emotional resilience.

The next chapter, Chapter Six, introduces my interpretations of the interviewees’ accounts of their ‘everyday’ experience as social entrepreneurs with the aim of answering my second and third research questions, expanding knowledge of how the participants view their ‘everyday’ lives, the challenges they face and how they might be supported.
Chapter Six:
Findings and Discussion (Part Two) – Interpretations of the Participants’ Accounts of their Everyday Life Experiences

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter, as with the preceding chapter, is to identify the participants’ perceptions of their ‘everyday’ life experiences, the challenges they face and how they might be supported. Where relevant, the empirical insights presented in this chapter are discussed in relation to relevant literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, including literature on ageing and entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’.

I begin this chapter by presenting the five main themes that emerged from the participants’ accounts, which answer my second and third research questions that were developed in response to a gap in our knowledge about the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs, the challenges they face and the support they require, from their own perspectives. The themes identified include: ‘ageing society’, ‘self-identity’, ‘personal enrichment’, ‘sustainability’, and ‘capacity building and ecosystems of support’. As with the previous chapter, extracts from the interview transcripts are provided to highlight the key themes discussed in this chapter. Each theme ends with a summary demonstrating the key insights emerging from each theme. The chapter concludes by discussing the findings and relating them to the research questions identified in this thesis.

6.2 Findings of the Thematic Analysis

As discussed in Chapter Four, I adopted a thematic analysis approach to identify emerging patterns across the data I had collected through twenty-eight in-depth interviews with LLSEs who have been funded through UnLtd’s core award programmes and seven interviews with AAA committee members. This is for the purpose of answering my second research question examining the way the participants viewed their everyday lived experiences and my third question, which is to understand the challenges they face, and how they might be supported. My data analysis involved coding the transcripts and sorting these into broader, overarching themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006) using a thematic map, as illustrated in Figure 6.1.
The thematic map illustrates the five main themes and sub-themes I identified, demonstrating the participants’ perspectives about their ‘everyday’ lives as social entrepreneurs, the challenges they face and the support they require. Since the beliefs guiding this research is social constructionism, giving voice to participants, it was at times, difficult to disentangle the complexity of their views towards their age identity. Although the majority felt ‘age’ is ‘meaningless’, they spoke of health issues such as lack of energy and health. In addition, I felt the participants were ambivalent about their entrepreneurial (social) identity. Despite some identifying with terms, such as ‘social entrepreneur’ and ‘social enterprise’, the majority were inconclusive and therefore, I have tried in my interpretations to preserve what they said and their own perceptions of their identity.

As per the thematic map (Figure 6.1), theme one ‘ageing society’ is defined by the participants’ perceptions of how the ageing process is publicly constructed in the UK compared to the ways they perceived their age identity which is discussed in theme two ‘self-identity’. This theme provides an understanding of the participants’ perceptions of their age identity, identified as meaningless’ due to a shift in perceptions of what it means to be old. This theme also illustrates the way the participants’ age identity is related to their identity as social entrepreneurs, with some contesting terms, such as ‘social entrepreneur’ and ‘social enterprise’ as they felt these were incompatible with their social
orientations, and others identifying themselves as social entrepreneurs and/or using other terms such as corporate social responsibility.

Theme three ‘personal enrichment’ conveys the benefits the participants gained during the social entrepreneurial process, including a wide range of personal and professional skills, enhancing their wellbeing. Theme four ‘sustainability’, gives an in-depth understanding of the challenges they faced. Sustainability, from an economic perspective, is considered one of the major challenges the participants experienced due to lack of funding, having a negative impact on balancing their strategic and operational objectives. In addition, this theme highlights the issues with evidencing social impact due to there being non-tangible social outcomes. A further challenge experienced by participants is ‘legitimacy’, which is interpreted as not being recognised for the ‘work they do on the ground’ and facing barriers in collaborating with public sector agencies. Theme five, ‘capacity building and ecosystem of support’ highlights the type of support the participants require. Collaboration between the UK government, private businesses, and public-sector agencies is perceived to play a key role in developing the social enterprise sector and encouraging those aged 50+ to become social entrepreneurs. ‘Capacity building’ relates on the one hand, to the participants’ understanding the skills they require to develop their social enterprise activity such as management and social media skills and on the other, the significance of these skills in promoting their social enterprise.

6.3 Theme One: ‘Ageing Society’

This theme presents the participants’ held perceptions about the UK ‘ageing context’. The UK has undergone a demographic shift as a result of the decline in fertility and birth rates and the consequent increase in the number of people aged 50+ approaching retirement age (Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Casey, et al., 2003; Mayhew, 2005; Tinsley, 2012). The impact of an ageing population was felt throughout the labour workforce, with a loss of valuable skills and experience, thereby prompting the UK government to introduce reforms to extend the working lives of those aged 50+. At the time this research was conducted, new reforms were introduced, such as the removal of the DRA of sixty-five to encourage those aged 50+ continue their economic and social participation. It is significant, therefore, to recognise that this research takes place within a context of considerable demographic changes and government policies that encourage the participation of those aged 50+. This context inevitably affects the perceptions of individuals about ‘older age’ and the way they experience it.

Noticeable across all of the participants’ accounts is the belief that ‘negative’ cultural stereotypes have affected the way ‘older’ age is perceived. SE18 (M, 56), for example, argues:
SE18 (M, 56): ‘The way society, in general, treats the elderly as they’re all idiots, ‘oh, silly old bugger’. They make fun of them, all condescending, and patronising. Little old lady has a new dress, and people say, ‘oh, aren’t you pretty!’ [Imitating a woman’s voice and speaking loudly]. I think when she suddenly became five years old again. She is more of an adult than you are. You shouldn’t be talking to her like a little girl, and I see that all the time’.

Here, SE18 spoke of the wider issues related to the ‘patronising’ ways of addressing ‘older’ people as if they are ‘idiots’ and ‘silly buggers’ due to shared cultural beliefs that tend to perceive them as ‘little five-year-old children’ despite some being ‘quite bright as buttons’. Although SE18 acknowledges some may suffer from mental health such as dementia, he felt, it is insensitive to promote a distorted discourse presenting ‘older’ people as a ‘barrier’. Instead, he argues, ‘having a fourteen-year-old boy having a relatively adult conversation with a thirty-five-year-old man, who also has got mental health condition, who probably went through the same things that he did when he was fourteen’ is an advantage for both generations. SE18, therefore, believes the ‘younger’ generation should get a ‘grasp’ of what it means to be old so they ‘don’t see old people as old’. As such, he felt, breaking barriers between generations can encourage the ‘younger’ generation to ‘see older people as just further down the line’, creating an ‘empathy’ and understanding that ‘we’re all in it together’. This suggests that, for SE18, building an understanding between ‘younger’ and ‘older’ generations could contribute to a positive discourse about ‘older’ age.

SE18’s account has also surfaced in the AAA accounts. As indicated in my Methodology Chapter (Chapter Four), I have explored the views of the AAA participants who have a deep understanding of the UK ageing policy context, enabling me to contextualise the experiences of my research participants (i.e. social entrepreneurs). Therefore, a strand of my data analysis included conveying the AAA accounts, both in Chapters Five and Six. AAA1 (M), for instance, argues, there seems to be a disconnect between ‘younger’ and ‘older’ generations, resulting in younger people perceiving ‘older people on the way’, which are ‘ageist assumptions’ that may translate into ‘humour’ and ‘titters’ describing ‘older people’ as ‘nagging’ and ‘on the way’. Here, AAA1 gives examples of stereotypical jokes about ‘older people’, such as ‘I don’t buy green bananas anymore’ or ‘if I go to a café, and you ask for a two-minute egg, they ask for the money upfront’, reinforcing the UK prevalent ageist assumptions, noting ‘that kind of humour masks our anxiety of ageing’.

During the interview, AAA1 demonstrated his ‘shamefulness’ of how ‘older people’ are seen ‘as dependents, have needs, which we cannot meet financially, which we regret, which were guilt-ridden about, and we basically really want to move on’. Indeed, his perception is congruent with medical and
economic discourses, as discussed in Chapter Three, portraying the ageing process as a decline in physical and cognitive abilities (e.g. Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Casey, et al., 2003; Mayhew, 2005; Razanova, 2010).

Viewing ‘older people’ as ‘dependent’ (AAA1) is further illustrated by SE12 (F, 55), who argues, the issue is more related to the way they are perceived ‘incapable’, ‘of lesser value’ and, therefore, ‘quickly written off’. She explains, these ageist assumptions are ‘pervasive’ to the point she ‘started noticing it personally’. However, ageist stereotypes are further illustrated through the participants’ account of the phenomenon of ‘valorisation of youth’ in the UK culture. To illustrate the fascination with youth, AAAS (F) spoke of the amount of ‘anti-ageing products’ that are sold, demonstrating how much ‘older age’ is perceived a ‘bad thing’, revealing ‘a huge amount that people don’t want to look their age’. For AAAS, the prevalence of anti-ageing products meant people associate ‘older’ age with a ‘loss’. This is also echoed in AAA1 (M)’s account, who argues, ageing is considered a ‘bad thing...people don’t like it’ since they don’t ‘think there is that introspection for most of us that we are comfortable in our skin or comfortable in our age’.

The accounts of a number of interviewees highlight the issues related with ‘valorisation of youth’ in the UK, generating a sense of ‘resentment’ towards ‘older people’, as seen in SE23’s (M, 60) account below:

SE23 (M, 60): ‘if you’re over 30, you’re passed it, really. 35 you had it. It’s ridiculous. Not a life to be 40, nowhere near right. Business, politics, the whole ethics of society seem to be focused on youth and resenting the old generation. ‘Oh, look at the pensioners. We’re gonna have to pay all these people who are getting older’ but all these people that are now older put a lot in the pot when they were younger. We paid for it. We’re not taking anything out that we didn’t get in. I rather think the focus is in the wrong direction but hasn’t always been that way?’

As previous studies have shown, ‘older’ people are perceived as an economic and social challenge, thereby creating a barrier to their continued participation (e.g. Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Mayhew, 2005; Provencher, et al., 2014; Razanova, 2010). However, further studies have found this age group have advantages that go far beyond experience. This includes the desire to ‘put back’ into society, management and leadership skills, industrial and technical experience, social and political networks, which, if all taken together, increase their entrepreneurial intentions (e.g. Akola, 2008; Kautonen, et al., 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003).

Nevertheless, SE12 (F, 55), notes, as ‘older people’ are ‘quickly written off’ and seen as ‘invisible’, they tend to suffer from ‘loneliness’. She argues, there are a ‘number of lonely isolated older people’, which
has a significant impact on their wellbeing. Therefore, ‘things’ should be ‘reorganised so that people are supported and live in families or in social groups, live a kind of decent human life right to the end’. ‘Loneliness’ has also surfaced in AAA5’s (F) account, who explains when ‘people are lonely or isolated or have nothing purposeful to do or their mental health kicks in’, their ‘health and wellbeing’ decline. Here, AAA5 expresses her held belief that longer retirement has contributed to a ‘massive shift in the models of social and economic participation’. Although, previously people retired at the age of sixty-five, ‘we’re looking now at thirty years’ and, therefore, we ‘really think about how do we enable people within this different landscape to pursue lives they have good reason to value’. Her account supports the literature review in Chapter Three, arguing retirement is no longer perceived as a cliff edge event, instead an opportunity for continued participation (e.g. O’Connell, 2002; Higgs, et al., 2003).

AAA6 (F) also argues, ‘longevity’ and the ‘gift of having an extra twenty to thirty years’ has shifted people’s perceptions about ‘what it means to be old’. She notes, as ‘people are living longer’ they start thinking about how they are ‘going to live their life? How are they are going to support themselves? What are the opportunities that are available to them? Hence, the interest in something like social entrepreneurship’. AAA6 appropriates the ‘interest in something like social entrepreneurship’ with shifts in perceptions about the retirement process, viewed as an opportunity to bridge into employment and/or entrepreneurship. She argues, whereas the ‘perception used to be that not only you finish work but also you have nothing to offer’, longer life expectancy has changed the way ‘older’ people perceive retirement and the ageing process.

However, AAA6 is quick to add, policymaking should consider how ‘older people’s choices and decisions’ in remaining or retiring from the labour market is influenced by their life course. The ageing process, for AAA6, is experienced within social, cultural, and political contexts, shaping how individuals perceive their experience of it. Nevertheless, she expresses her fear of how the UK ageing policies seem to be designed and implemented without an understanding of ‘where people are in their life course’ and the extent of which ‘it is going to vary enormously’. Hence, she suggests, ‘policies’ should be providing longer-term solutions whilst taking into account variations in people’s health and personal needs. As she notes, ‘are we looking at health policy, social policy [laughter], education policy, which policy would you like?’ AAA6’s account is consistent with research on ageing which has found although the ageing process is culturally and socially constructed, it is dependent on the subjective interpretation of those who experience it (Bengtson, et al., 1997; Burr, 2003; Pierce and Timonen, 2010; Putney, et al., 2005; Razanova, 2010).

AAA6’s positive perception about ‘longevity’ and shift in perceptions about the retirement process has also surfaced in SE17’s (F, 58) account, who argues as ‘life expectancy has gone up to sort of eighty or
ninety’ people are ‘not being old in the same way that people used to being old’. SE17 describes how singers such as Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney, are writing a ‘different form of a role for their age’ due to longer life expectancy, changing the way ‘older’ people see themselves as not having to ‘fit into old slippers’ anymore. However, she concurrently notes, there should be a change in the way age is categorised since ‘there’s a big difference between someone who is sixty-two and someone who is eighty-five. So, we’re kind of short of the term...short of words’.

Although SE17 views the retirement process as no longer a cliff-edge event, for AAA1 (M), it is still a ‘powerful legacy’ and considered ‘a stage’ in people’s lives ‘such as motherhood, children, relationships, and education’ because ‘individuals and the UK society have not caught up with what it means to have the gift of an extra ten years’. AAA1’s perception of retirement as a ‘stage’ suggests he still doubts whether the UK society has really ‘caught up’ with the benefits of longevity:

AAA1 (M): ‘We have not woken up to that and what’s more important is seeing the 10 as in the life rather at the end of life, which is quite interesting. It is not like we put it into a box, and we claim it. What do we do with the extra time? So, the idea of the extra 10 in terms of longevity is realising the real gift is in our 60 or 70, enjoying healthier, by and large experience, and living longer, and yes, those final few years and months may be exactly the same as they were before in terms of decline, but actually it’s the middle period, in our 60 and 70 that’s the real gift rather than people living longer, and we only focus on the end. So, that kind of denial, and waking up to opportunities…’

Here, AAA1 demonstrates his felt belief that, the reasons why the UK society has not ‘caught up’ with the ‘gift’ of longevity is due to ‘lack of entrepreneurialism’. He notes, ‘it is a cultural thing...we are quite sensitive to who am I to be doing that? and, therefore, the notion of the ‘social entrepreneur’ still feels a ‘bit uppity’ since some people may find it difficult to say, ‘I could start this up, I could do this, let alone all of the ingredients that you would need to go about that’. ‘Lack of entrepreneurialism’ in the UK has surfaced in the majority of the AAA accounts. Comparing the USA and UK cultures, AAA1, notes, ‘in the UK we have a very deferential culture, about do we need a license, we do need permission, we do look for leadership coming from above, although we groan and grant about it, we like to be told what to do’. Recounting his experience, as a teenager, watching an American film about a ‘lipstick’, he notes, the protagonist was looking at blueprints with the intention of starting a business. However, if the ‘same protagonist goes to an engineering shop’ in the UK and asks ‘to make a lipstick’, she or he would be told ‘we don’t make lipsticks, we make bridges, lipsticks are not our thing’.

The lipstick story told by AAA1 demonstrates his felt belief about how ‘entrepreneurialism’ in the USA tends to be more encouraged than in the UK. He argues, ‘it’s interesting in the States, for example, if I
set up a scout’s group, I would possibly be seen more of a social entrepreneur. In this country, it’s like, “well you are running a scout’s group”. It’s a different status, a different concept. More people in the States consider themselves directors of companies whereas a director in a company here is a bit like “oh, rather I fix things”’. Nonetheless, AAA1 sensed a shift in the UK by raising the profile of ‘working longer with a more positive element to it’ however; he has yet to see ‘any research or evidence within how that’s treated by ordinary folks’. He argues, the decision to remain or exit the labour market is dependent on a number of factors such as health and income and, therefore, in parallel with extending working lives, there should be an understanding of the reasons why people would want to fully retire or continue working.

This view has also surfaced in AAA5 (F)’s account, arguing what people aged 50+ ‘have good reason to value is variable and is not an independent choice’. She notes, people’s decision to remain or exit the labour market is ‘dependent’ on whether you’re a single person or interlinked with a partner. Therefore, for AAA5, it is not ‘about being fifty’ but ‘the moment [people] are in a stable relationship…have children and need to put bread on the table may need to make these decisions with the context of their households’. Her views are consistent with the literature review discussed in Chapter Three, which has found age interacts with other factors, such as education, health, wealth, pension arrangements, availability of employment, and caring responsibilities (e.g. Banks and Tetlow, 2008; Beehr and Bennet, 2015; Berry, 2010; Foster, 2012; Higgs, et al., 2003; Hulmes, 2012).

Nonetheless, a shared belief between the participants was related to the ways in which they recognise there has been a shift in how the ‘ageing society’ is perceived. AAA1’s expression, ‘waking up to opportunities’ demonstrates his understanding of how the ‘rapidly changing context’ has changed ‘older’ people’s perceptions of what it means to be old. He notes, changes in ‘social dynamics’, ‘lifestyles, ‘technological innovations’, ‘economic and cultural contexts’ has shifted the way ageing and the retirement process are perceived. He argues, nowadays people are having ‘portfolio relationships in the way they never did before, work part-time, short-terms contract, and portfolio careers’, including the ‘digital economy’ which has changed the way people communicate, together with ‘people growing up without children’, meant that ‘older’ age is no longer perceived as a basis to exit the labour market.

However, whilst speaking of the UK policy context, a sense of nostalgia of how ‘things were in the past’ compared to nowadays was felt in AAA1’s account. He signalled to policies on ageing in the past when ‘older’ people and local authorities worked together to ‘bring about change’, ‘being part of designing and delivering services’, and ‘looking at the dimension of quality of life for older people’ however, in 2013 all is gone’. He explains, in the past, the UK government led the ‘better government for older people’, the DWP and government agencies took the lead to ‘prepare communities for an ageing
society, holistically, not just health and social care’ but there seems to be change in the ways policies are implemented.

AAA1 argues, the reasons ‘good practices’ in those days are different to the current UK context is partly due to ‘financial and political climates’. He notes, the removal of the ‘nanny state’ contributed to a loss of good practices to be shared between the UK government and other stakeholders. Indeed, his description of the removal of the ‘nanny state’, indicates his understanding that ‘the notion of government leadership has gone’ which meant ‘DWP’ which ‘used to have the cross-government lead for ageing do not have that anymore’. Instead, he argues, they ‘have a secretary act, which set up the Age Action Alliance and supports things like UKAFA (the Chairs of Regions and Forums across the UK)’. This conveys his understanding, there is ‘no central government coordination of strategy [for older people] other than there is a group’. AAA1’s account therefore, conveys his understanding of the shift that has occurred in the UK, with individuals, local authorities, and government agencies encouraged to ‘have more responsibility’ rather than ‘being told what to do’, contributing to a ‘removal’ of the UK government ‘safety net’.

The ‘deconstruction of the role of the state’ (AAA1) has also been echoed in AAA2’s (M) account. He argues, due to demographic changes ‘going from 11 million people over 65 to 16 million people over 65 over the next 10-15 years and 50% increase in the number of people who are the heaviest users of health and social care’, the government is ‘moving responsibility for care from the system onto families’. As he labelled it, ‘it’s called ‘personalisation and choice’. However, he notes, although an ageing society has ‘fiscal implications’ which is why responsibility has been moved onto individuals, the UK government should be supporting employers by providing ‘tax incentives’ so they recognise there is ‘actually a financial return’ in employing and/or maintaining their ageing workforce. As a result, he argues, employers become ‘better prepared for managing their ageing workforce’ and the government can generate ‘tax benefits’ with ‘employees working longer, paying tax longer and there is less burden on social and healthcare systems or delaying that’.

He further explains, by creating an ‘age-friendly’ workplace, we can have ‘a population of people who are better equipped to prepare for managing their own ageing’. AAA2’s felt perceptions about the role that could be played by the UK government and employers is in only enhancing ‘older’ workers’ ‘wellbeing’ but also ‘reduce absence, reduce loss of productivity, reducing workforce stress, reduce replacement costs of employees who are having to leave to deal with these ageing issues’. Thus, for AAA2, employers and the UK central government, play a key role in enhancing ‘older’ workers’ wellbeing and encouraging their economic and social participation.
He argues, shifts in perceptions about ageing and the retirement process should be supported by a new policy landscape, promoting an ‘age-friendly society’ with ‘age friendly services and products’ such as ‘age-friendly milk bottles’, particularly with ‘baby boomers all there’ and with ‘disposable wealth’ selling to them would create economic benefits. Hence, for AAA2, having an ‘age-friendly society’ communicates a policy context that fosters tailor-made services for ‘older’ people, generating economic and personal benefits.

As discussed in Chapter Five, the participants conveyed that their ‘experience’ and ‘social networks’ benefited their social enterprise activity. Notwithstanding, it is apparent from this theme due to negative cultural stereotypes, ‘older people’ are perceived ‘on the way’ which conflicts with the participants’ subjective perspective of their age. As argued by SE18, the fascination with youth in the UK meant that ‘older age’ is perceived as a ‘loss’ rather than a benefit. However, as both AAA5 and AAA6 accounts illustrate, due to increase in life expectancy, people aged 50+ no longer perceive their age as a barrier, instead an opportunity to engage socially and economically.

Nevertheless, employers and policy makers could play a positive role in creating an ‘age-friendly’ environment, promoting the economic and social participation of ‘older’ people. AAA2 notes, a new ‘policy landscape’ should consider both the opportunities and challenges presented by the ageing society. Despite fiscal implications, creating an ‘age-friendly’ society in which ‘older’ people are involved in the design and implementations of services and have access to services and employment opportunities tailored to their needs, could generate economic and social benefits.

6.3.1 Theme One ‘Ageing society’: Summary and Discussion

Since age is a key dimension of who my participants are as individuals, the discussion of this theme ‘ageing society’ has primarily focused on gaining an understanding of their standpoints about the ageing context in the UK to highlight to what extent this has influenced their entrepreneurial (social) intentions and how it has shaped their experiences during the social entrepreneurial process. Many emphasised the issues related with how age and the ageing process are negatively constructed, resulting in ‘older’ people being seen as ‘old buggers’ and ‘on the way’, creating a barrier to their economic and social participation. Public discourses were perceived by participants to generate a number of stereotypical views about ‘older’ people, disseminating an understanding that they are a social and an economic challenge. However, this theme also highlights their understanding of how these negative assumptions stemmed from a UK cultural context that valorises youth, seeing ‘older’ age as a ‘loss’ and ‘something to be avoided’. This is consistent with existing studies that have shown
medical and economic discourses tend to view the ageing process a phase of decline in cognitive abilities and health, presenting a burden on healthcare and social care resources (e.g. Mayhew, 2005; Luborsky and Sankar, 1993). However, such discourses tend to ignore the subjective views of those who experience the ageing process. Balcombe and Sinclair (2001) argue, although medical discourses have enhanced our understanding of the ageing process and developed medical interventions to extend the life spans of ‘older’ people, they tend to represent the ageing process a phase of physical and cognitive decline, rather than demonstrating the invaluable skills ‘older’ people have and how they can be imparted in the labour market.

Nevertheless, the accounts indicate, due to longer life expectancy and spending more years in retirement, ‘older’ people have changed their perceptions of their age and their perceived roles in society, including the retirement process. ‘Older’ age, from the participants’ standpoints, represent their skills and experiences they could impart to the labour market. This supports the view of existing literature on ageing and retirement, which has found retirement is no longer perceived a cliff edge event, instead an opportunity to engage in volunteering, bridge employment, and entrepreneurship (e.g. Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Hulmes, 2012; Mayhew, 2005; O’Connell, 2002; Ruhm 1990; Razanova 2010). Shmerlina (2016) found ‘older’ people tend to identify with their younger age identity, and therefore, pursue new knowledge and work. However, the participants also conveyed their understanding, full-time retirement is not an option for all, since some may need to support their living and hence, remain in the labour market. This is congruent with Foster (2012) and Berry (2010) who found the decision to retire or remain in the labour market is influenced by a number of factors such as income, education, health, pension arrangements, and caring responsibilities. Indeed, their study found that those with ill health and caring responsibilities may be forced to retire early. However, those with better education and good income in retirement can freely exit the labour market.

A broader finding discussed in this theme is the role of policy context both at government and employers’ levels in fostering an ‘age-friendly society’, providing access to resources, flexible working and support with retirement transition to encourage the participation of ‘older’ people in the labour market. Besides, the participants spoke of the role of the UK government in providing support mechanisms to employers through tax incentives to encourage them to retain their ageing workforce. This is consistent with studies conducted, for instance, by Beehr and Bennet (2015) and Pengcharoen and Shultz (2010), which have found ‘older’ people are keen to pursue their economic participation through bridge employment to supplement their retirement income or fill the gap between full-time employment and full-time retirement by gradually adjusting to new lifestyles. However, as will be
discussed in theme two ‘self-identity’, many interpretations could be drawn from the participants’ accounts about their age identity and how this has shaped their entrepreneurial (social) intentions.

6.4 Theme Two: ‘Self-Identity’

This theme is defined by the participants’ understanding of their self-identity, which, on the one hand illustrates their beliefs about their age identity and, on the other hand, provides an understanding of their entrepreneurial (social) identity. This theme is, therefore, divided into two sub-themes: ‘age identity’ and ‘identity as social entrepreneurs’, illustrating the way in which the interviewees interpret their age identity and identity as social entrepreneurs. As highlighted in the preceding theme, ‘ageing society’, there has been a shift in the way ‘older age’ and the retirement process are perceived. It is, therefore, important to understand the participants’ held beliefs about their age and identity as social entrepreneurs.

6.4.1 Subtheme One of ‘Self-Identity’: ‘Age Identity’

An emerging pattern identified across the participants’ accounts is the concept of the ‘meaningless of age’ (SE22, M, 61) as they felt ‘never too old’ (SE8, M, 50) to start a business or have an entrepreneurial idea. In Table 6.1 below, I have extracted the participants’ answers when they were asked if age had any bearing on their experience. This conveys their beliefs about their age and its influence on their entrepreneurial (social) intentions. However, as indicated in Section 6.1, since this study is guided by social constructionism as a belief, it was at times difficult to disentangle the complexity of the participants’ perceptions towards their age identity, and therefore, I provide further explanations in the analysis of the sub-theme: ‘age identity’.
Table 6.1 The interviewees’ interpretations of their age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Do you think age has any bearing about your experience? Why?</th>
<th>What do you think of the term ‘later life’ entrepreneur? How relevant is this to you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE1</td>
<td>To me this is really my life stage.</td>
<td>They call me what they bloody like. I think that’s just a lazy title to be honest. I mean, it’s slightly ageist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE2</td>
<td>It’s given me the opportunity to really talk to potential investors, people I wouldn’t ordinarily have spoken to.</td>
<td>I think entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs, if you have an entrepreneurial spirit you can do that when you’re 18 or 68.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE3</td>
<td>I couldn’t have done this when I was 30 or 35, you need experience.</td>
<td>No reply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE4</td>
<td>I don’t really think about it.</td>
<td>My instinct reaction is no. I like entrepreneurs, the way they think and act. I’m interested in their process so I see no difference between somebody in his 80s or someone who is 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE5</td>
<td>It is a good and bad thing. I wish I was younger so I had more energy but the good side is you’re mature.</td>
<td>I don’t think age matters. If you’ve got the guts to follow your dream, then just do it. It doesn’t matter whether you’re 60 or 50.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE6</td>
<td>I’m wiser now than I was. I’m more forgetful that’s for sure.</td>
<td>No, not really. I know one looks at the wrinkles more but no, I don’t think so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE7</td>
<td>I am 50 and you have a sense of time is finite. The reality is you’re getting older and you have a limited number of good productive years left so you can’t say ‘I’ll do it the next year or the year after’.</td>
<td>Later life makes me feel a nearly dead entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE8</td>
<td>Not really no. I think you’re never too old to have a good idea. It’s whether you’ve got the time to commit to it and the energy and fitness to do it.</td>
<td>Not sure, it’s really helpful splitting people into categories. We’re just entrepreneurs no different from anybody else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE9</td>
<td>I think my age gives me a healthy disregard for trivia. I feel empowered because of age. I feel tired.</td>
<td>Who cares? I’m not interested. I’m not even sure about being regarded as an entrepreneur. I just got a job to do and get on with it. You know titles...meaningless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE10</td>
<td>Not at all.</td>
<td>No because I don’t see myself as an entrepreneur and if they call me a senior entrepreneur, I won’t be happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE11</td>
<td>I’m 57 and I still think I’m 40.</td>
<td>I think it’s rubbish it’s because circumstances put you there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE12</td>
<td>More capable now than I’ve ever been in my life. It doesn’t work that you tail off. You just keep building. I know more. I understand more.</td>
<td>Kind of irritating. I’m not grey. Don’t identify with the term. I wouldn’t feel comfortable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE13</td>
<td>Absolutely. I’d never had this kind of confidence.</td>
<td>Who are they? Nothing grey about me. I cannot bear it. It makes me really cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE14</td>
<td>I think there is a level of trust in someone who’s mature.</td>
<td>It is just a perception. Just sometimes, you forget how old you are. I don’t mind being called grey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE15</td>
<td>I don’t think about it at all.</td>
<td>Do you think it’s relevant to me? No, I don’t see myself as a grey entrepreneur, absolutely not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE16</td>
<td>Yes. The big thing is financially I can do it.</td>
<td>I think it’s hilarious. I think later life is 80. Why do you have to say later life? It’s another label, isn’t?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE17</td>
<td>Yes. I started because of my age. Early fifty time when you have few commitments and probably most well off in your life and it’s a good opportunity.</td>
<td>It’s difficult to find the right terminology. There’s a big difference between someone who is 62 and someone who is 85. We’re kind of short of the term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE18</td>
<td>I think it’s given me the confidence. That’s because I’m a bit older and a bit wiser and I don’t really care. I think I’m still 25 so when you speak about older people, I don’t count myself as one.</td>
<td>I don’t consider it. I don’t get upset about things like that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE19</td>
<td>Most definitely. None of us is getting any younger. I realise I’m not getting any younger and I have to be careful. Never too late to learn something new.</td>
<td>My role as a teacher is to identify the talent in a student and promote that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE20</td>
<td>I never think of myself as being old. I think people of my age are probably better experienced being entrepreneurs than anyone young age.</td>
<td>It makes me feel old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE21</td>
<td>I’m not finished yet. Perhaps you should be asking somebody who is 66 who should be retiring. Everything is moved out.</td>
<td>It’s ageist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE22</td>
<td>Obviously, the advantage you get with age is experience.</td>
<td>Age for me is meaningless. The one thing about it is you have to lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE23</td>
<td>Experience. Experience in life.</td>
<td>I don’t. It’s patronising and foolish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 6.1 The interviewees’ interpretations of their age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE24</td>
<td>Age has relevance in terms of what’s important now. At 40, death was not a reality but now at 64 it’s when and where – age brings experience and a degree of wisdom.</td>
<td>No, is the short answer because I have been doing this all my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE25</td>
<td>No, it hasn’t been a problem.</td>
<td>No reply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE26</td>
<td>I suppose it does because you do slow down and you do have less enthusiasm for thing you had when you were 25.</td>
<td>No reply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE27</td>
<td>No, not at all because I don’t feel 72.</td>
<td>It doesn’t bother me. If you said old pensioners, then I would see that differently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE28</td>
<td>Maybe energy and stamina that a younger person would have but according to my children I’ve got a lot of energy and stamina.</td>
<td>It’s best to call them mature people rather than old. Not everyone is grey.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Age being ‘meaningless’ is illustrated by SE1’s (M, 53) account below in response to my question, ‘to what extent, if any, has age had any bearing on your experience as a social entrepreneur?’

SE1 (M, 53): ‘I’m in my 50s and I don’t consider myself to be...how I thought I would be when I was 20 in my 50, do you know what I mean? When I was in my 20’ Jesus Christ you’re old’ and now I just think I don’t feel any different actually. My attitudes are exactly the same. I still enjoy the same kind of music. The same kind of cultures, you know, to when I did when I was much younger’.

SE1 does not consider himself to be fifty since he ‘doesn’t feel any different’ to when he was younger. For SE1, the age of fifty is a ‘life stage’, giving him the opportunity to ‘go back to his senses’ and invest his time in an activity he is personally affected by. He adds, the reasons why he became a social entrepreneur at this ‘life stage’ was because he ‘did alright’ for himself and ‘don’t need to have to earn money’ and ‘can dedicate a lot of time to it and not having to worry about putting a roof above [his] head’. Notwithstanding, he concurrently notes, it is not only about ‘being fifty’ and financially independent but because he has ‘experience’, giving him ‘some kind of advantage’ to go and talk to ‘chief executives’ since ‘he has been paid all his life to give [them] advice’. Hence, when he was asked about public perceptions about ageing, SE1 states, ‘judging people purely based on their age, it’s just immature. I think judge people on their ability. Judge them on their spirit. Judge them on what they bring’. Indeed, SE1’s expression, ‘I can dedicate a lot of time to it’ may be explained by Kautonen’s (2008) study, which has found income and financial independence may increase the entrepreneurial intentions of people aged 50+. This has also been illustrated in SE16’s (F, 58) account, who notes, ‘the big thing is financially I can do it. If we were having to worry about a mortgage, children at school, university, all of that, then I couldn’t do it, but children have gone, mortgage is paid, husband has a pension, it’s okay’.

The way in which the participants felt their ‘age’ interacts with their identity is further illustrated by SE22 (M, 62), who spoke of his experience of going through his mum’s chest of drawers to find his ‘birth certificate’ because he didn’t ‘think he’s 62’. SE22 feels like a ‘child...on a big adventure’ and just wants ‘to take a lot of young people on board with [him]’. Like SE1’s account, SE22 associates the age of fifty with ‘experience he can share’ and ‘wisdom’ and, therefore, instead of being ‘upset by being called old’, it is important to remember ‘what a fantastic life’ he is living. Asking himself whether a younger person could be a social entrepreneur, he argues, ‘I don’t think they have the resilience ‘and having ‘young families, young wives, and young children’ meant they need an income to survive. However, he feels he ‘passed that stage’ and this is the ‘pleasure age brings’. Age, for SE22, therefore,
conveys his ‘experience’, ‘wisdom’, ‘resilience’, and ‘independence’, influencing his decision to set up his social enterprise to ‘make a difference’ and ‘leave a mark’.

The way age is expressed as ‘meaningless’ is also highlighted by SE2 (M, 53), who argues, ‘businesses started by the over fifties, particularly in digital and technology’ deconstruct the myths about ‘tech entrepreneurs are all young’. For SE2, age gave him the opportunity to talk to ‘potential investors’ who often ‘don’t invest in very young people’. Instead, ‘they’ll get an older person in the front of the company because they want people with experience, who’ve actually done things and know how to do things and they have a track record and aren’t going to flake out in their mid-twenties’. SE2’s felt beliefs about the ‘experience’ and ‘expertise’ he accumulated due to his age is consistent with existing research that found contrary to perceived stereotypes, ‘older’ entrepreneurs in high-growth technology industries are more likely to outnumber younger ones with twice as many over fifties as under twenty-fives (Wadhwa, et al., 2010). When SE2 was asked his views about public perceptions of ageing, he responds, ‘I never feel old’ and ‘never thinks of my age’. As such, he argues:

SE2 (M, 53): ‘older people are considered more in their seventies and eighties because people are living longer so fifty is not really that old anymore…the retirement age will end up changing over the next decade or two because a lot of very fit, energetic, intelligent people who are 65 to 70, we wanna keep working, we’ve got a lot to offer and probably should do because they’re not gonna die when they’re 70’. They probably gonna live more 25 years, minimum. So, I think the perception of older people is shifting along with the actual fact that the age of people is getting longer’.

His account resonates with SE17 (F, 58), who, in the preceding theme ‘ageing society’, argues, there is a difference between ‘someone who is sixty-two and someone who is eighty-five’ and, therefore, ‘we’re kind of short of the term’. This is further illustrated by SE3’s (M, 53), who notes, ‘age over the next ten or twenty years becomes utterly irrelevant…the public view is gonna change…you have to stop thinking’ ‘older’ people as ‘ill, infirm, useless, sitting and watching the snooker all day on the television…. I’m fifty-four, I’m fifty-five years old in few months’ time, and I’m just getting started really. This is how I think it is’.

Although SE3 did not see himself fifty-five, there was nonetheless a sense of anxiety in his account about whether he has time to ‘do loads of things’. His use of the sentence ‘I haven’t got enough time. What’s happening? How long have I got? I’ve got loads of things I’d like to do and hope I don’t run out of time’ signals his anxiety about achieving his goals before time passes. However, when asked about the types of opportunities available to people aged 50+, he states, ‘I don’t see any barriers or blockages’ as ‘those aged seventy-five or eighty years old’ can still continue their participation provided they have
‘enthusiasm’, ‘expertise’, ‘knowledge’, ‘experience’, ‘energy’, and ‘commitment’, noting, ‘you’ve got to have something valuable. You’ve got to have some energy and you’ve got to put some efforts in but really, if you really wanna do it, you’ve got something about you, then any problem is self-imposed or self-invented’.

Although SE3 felt anxious about his age, SE4 (M, 50), on the other hand, argues, he ‘doesn’t think about time or age’ since he feels lucky to be alive. He spoke of his experience of visiting a fortune-teller who told him he ‘was time loose and had no proper relationship with time’. However, reflecting upon the reasons why he felt a disconnect with time, he notes, it ‘went back to when I was ill for long periods of time and I had to put myself in really strange states to survive’. Hence, he concludes, being an ‘entrepreneur is fundamental to who you are than what makes you a social entrepreneur or a conventional entrepreneur’. He explains that, having an ‘entrepreneurial mindset’ could be explained ‘emotionally’ and ‘rationally’. Whereas some people have or discover an entrepreneurial idea and ‘would want to change the world’ so they test ‘their hypothesis’ and go to ‘make a point’, others, probably forty plus’ are on ‘the scrappy, trying to apply for job after job’ and hence, decide to become entrepreneurs. He argues, ‘older’ people face challenges in the labour market because organisations ‘can get a younger person who is cheaper, who’s more scared of you, who would do what you want and not come out with ideas and questions’. SE4’s view is consistent with SE20’s felt belief that he was made a social entrepreneur out of ‘necessity’ than a choice, as illustrated in Section 5.3.4.

The participants, therefore, felt ‘younger’ than their chronological age, which is consistent with existing research on ageing, demonstrating more often ‘older’ people relate with their ‘younger age identity’ (e.g. Schafer and Shippee, 2009; Shmerlina, 2015), contributing to life satisfaction and wellbeing (e.g. Boehmer, 2007; Demakakos, et al., 2007; Uotinen, et al., 2005; Westerhof and Barrett, 2005). As noted by Shmerlina (2015, p. 209), ‘young age identity’ can involve a ‘high level of involvement in all spheres of live-work, professional and personality development, leisure time, and social communication’.

Yang and Lee (2010) also states, ‘older’ people who identify with their ‘younger age identity have stronger tendencies to continue their participation in ways not affected by their chronological age. Besides, previous studies found age is a ‘subjective experience’ dependent on how individuals feel and experience it (Schafer and Shippee, 2009; Shmerlina, 2015). Burr (2003), for instance, found although ageing is a function of the environment in which it is interpreted, it is a subjective construct that depends on how individuals categorise their age. The participants’ association with their ‘younger age identity’ has also been translated in the way they negatively perceived the word ‘later life’ when I asked their views of what it means to be called a ‘later life’ social entrepreneur.
SE12 (F, 55) response to my question ‘what do you think of the term ‘later life’ social entrepreneur?’ left her feeling ‘kind of irritated’. Picking a strand of her hair, she says ‘I don’t dye my hair’, and therefore, ‘I’m not grey’ nor ‘later life’. Her reaction to my question illustrates she is not ‘comfortable’ being called a ‘later life’ social entrepreneur, noting ‘it’s kind of annoying’. SE9’s (M, 54) response to my question was similar, saying this ‘kind of question doesn’t make sense at all’. He jokingly referred to ‘grey nail varnish’ reinforcing his felt belief he is ‘not interested’ in being called a ‘later life social entrepreneur’. However, his negative reaction also signalled his ambivalent feeling towards ‘being regarded as an entrepreneur’, noting, ‘I just got a job, just get on with it and make it happen’. As such, for SE9, ‘the title later life is absolutely meaningless’ since he is ‘not one for titles’. SE9’s ambivalence towards his identity as a social entrepreneur will be discussed in Section 6.4.2.

The participants, therefore, associated with their ‘younger age identity’, demonstrating their lack of identification with the term ‘later life’, which, as argued by SE1 (M, 53), ‘slightly ageist’ and a ‘lazy title’. Pointing to his blonde hair, he notes, they ‘can call me what they bloody like’ however, he questions whether someone in their fifties, ‘have a later life’. As such, he feels the term is ‘ageist’ but to be called a social entrepreneur, ‘is great’ since she or he is ‘someone who wants to earn a living and make a difference’. Having a negative view of the term ‘later life’ was also translated in the way the participant viewed this to reinforce the differences between ‘younger’ and ‘older’ entrepreneurs, which is ‘irrelevant’. Almost all the interviewees perceived an entrepreneur as an entrepreneur regardless of age, as noted by SE8 (M, 50), ‘I’m not sure it’s really helpful splitting people into those kinds of categories. We’re just entrepreneurs no different from anybody else’s. You’ve got a good idea, less time to realise it [laughter] but there would be more incentive to actually go and do it’.

Despite ‘older’ age being perceived positively four participants spoke of health issues associated with being aged 50+. SE5 (F, 50) explains, whilst her age gave her ‘life experiences’, ‘confidence’, and stood her in ‘good stead now’, she wishes she was ‘younger and had more energy’:

SE5 (F, 50): ‘I wish I were younger in a way because I’m tired a lot. The classes are physical, up, down, up, down… I wish I was younger and fitter [laughter] to be able to do that but, the children came later in life and it wasn’t out of choice. Things happened. This is me’.

SE5 decided to become a social entrepreneur because she felt passionate about what ‘she believes in’, making her ‘proud’ to the point she ‘keeps pinching’ herself to ‘see whether it’s real’. However, she often feels tired which made her realise she needed to balance her social enterprise activity with her personal wellbeing. As she notes, ‘I have great difficulty sleeping. I can’t turn off. I just get more and more tired. Hence, the Reiki, which I thought would help. It’s certainly addressing a lot of things I
havent thought about for years’. For SE5, doing ‘Reiki’ is, therefore, a way of looking after her health, which may enhance her intrinsic motivation to continue with her social enterprise activity.

SE27 (F, 72) had a similar experience. Although she does not ‘feel seventy-two’ she ‘can’t kneel on the floor on both sides’ compared to when she was younger, and if ‘she gets down, she can’t get back up easily’. However, she concurrently notes, she ‘doesn’t feel any different’ since she believes if ‘you’ve got something to occupy your mind and you really enjoy doing it then do you know what? It keeps you young’. SE27, therefore, highlights the difference between how a person feels about their age and their physical health. This supports Shmerlina’s (2015) study, which has found despite the presence of illness ‘older’ people have a high level of vitality in their lives and want to pursue new knowledge and abilities.

Indeed, SE12 (F, 55) reinforces this view, noting, she is ‘definitely more capable now than [she has] been in [her] life’. She explains, her experience as a social entrepreneur has been ‘very energising’ and, therefore, she has ‘more stamina than [she has] ever had’. SE12, therefore, conveys her understanding that her ‘age’ is an advantage; however, she also states, ‘it would be kind of nice to have much longer to do it’. Thus, for SE12, although age has been perceived in a positive light, it also served as a reminder ‘the years are not stretching ahead’, giving her an understanding of the limitation of her chronological age. Nevertheless, she concurrently notes, she has ‘no plans to stop’ as she has ‘plenty of time’. This is congruent with previous studies on entrepreneurship in ‘later life’, suggesting people aged 50+ may view their age as an opportunity to pursue fulfilling roles, such as volunteering, self-employment, and entrepreneurship (Hébert and Luong, 2008; Kautonen, et al., 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012; Singh and DeNoble, 2003).

Nevertheless, other interviewees highlight the interplay between gender and entrepreneurship. SE7 (F, 50), for instance, notes, there are assumptions held about ‘being [a] middle-aged woman’ social entrepreneur ‘not confident enough’. She recounts her experience of attending a meeting where she felt ‘if a middle-aged woman turns up and she’s got a laptop that’s because she is a crazy menopausal woman who’s probably in the wrong room anyway’. However, ‘if a man turns up and he has his laptop or whatever it’s because he is busy’. SE7, therefore, highlights the assumptions held about ‘middle-aged’ female social entrepreneurs who are seen as they ‘don’t necessarily have the information required and that you do get that man explaining things’.

For SE7, however, being a female social entrepreneur has been beneficial to ‘young men’ from the criminal justice system who ‘respond brilliantly to middle aged women’. She explains, ‘teaching young men to cook’ with no ‘prejudice’ meant ‘new possibilities of relationships’ could open up which they
‘absolutely love’. In outlining what the issue is with ‘middle-aged’ women, it is supposed to be about ‘credibility issues’, expressing her belief ‘they kind of look at you and say really? You do get interrupted and you do get spoken over’. However, she states, it is ‘incumbent’ for her to say ‘can I just finish what I’m saying and can we agree that we’re not gonna interrupt each other for the rest of the meeting’. This suggests, although SE7 is aware of the perceptions held towards ‘middle aged’ women, which in her opinion, is due to ‘credibility issues’, she felt her experience with ‘young men’ is an advantage since she built good rapport with them, and therefore, they responded well to her ‘cookery’ classes.

For SE17 (F, 58), however, the challenges she experienced as a female social entrepreneur are more sector-related, suggesting when ‘you are in mechanics, bikes, bike shops’, there is this perception ‘oh goodness, I have never seen a lady working in a bike shop’. However, she explains, although the ‘number of women working in bike shops is very small’, working in a male-dominated environment is beneficial since she can gain an income to further her social objectives by providing upskilling workshops to those disadvantaged and/or disabled. Here, she states, she had spent twelve years in a male IT environment, and as such, she is less concerned about how she is perceived, which is ‘actually much less than it used to be’. Despite SE7 and SE17 conveying their beliefs about the challenges they experienced as female social entrepreneurs, they constructed their experience as positive, suggesting that gender had not been a barrier to their participation.

This sub-theme highlights the beliefs held by participants about their ‘age identity’, influencing their interpretations of the term ‘later life’. The majority of participants felt ‘younger’ than their chronological age, as in the case of both SE1 and SE22 who did not ‘feel their age’, instead signalling to their prior professional experience and financial independence as an outcome of ‘older’ age. Indeed, age was perceived to be ‘meaningless’ by all participants despite some highlighting the health issues they experienced such as lack of energy and mobility. However, ill health has not been seen as a barrier, but instead an opportunity to engage in social enterprise, as in the case of SE12 who found her experience uplifting.

Besides, it was evident from the data, the participants held negative views about the term ‘later life’ since it contradicted their perceptions about their ‘younger age identity’, as in the case of SE9, who notes, the term ‘doesn’t make sense at all’ because he does not feel his age. Furthermore, they felt the term reinforces a discourse differentiating ‘older’ and ‘younger’ entrepreneurs. This is illustrated in SE8’s account that arguing and categorising entrepreneurs based on their age is irrelevant. In addition, the participants spoke of the interplay between gender and entrepreneurship, as in the case of SE7, who argues, ‘middle aged’ female social entrepreneurs may be perceived to need explanation by their male counterparts. In addition, it was highlighted the sector in which females are embedded
may influence how they are publicly perceived. However, overall, the participants viewed their experience positively, presenting an advantage to their social enterprise activity, as was seen in SE17’s account who generated an income through selling bikes to females, furthering her social objectives.

It is apparent, therefore, the interviewees identified with their ‘younger age identities’, conveying ‘chronological ageing’ is no longer a basis for an exit from the workplace. Indeed, as was seen, almost all had a negative view of the term ‘later life’ since they did not see their age as a barrier to their engagement with the social enterprise. The next section, therefore, highlights the participants’ perception of their entrepreneurial (social) identity.

6.4.2 Subtheme Two of ‘Self-Identity’: ‘Self-Identity as Social Entrepreneurs’

This subtheme ‘self-identity as social entrepreneurs’ centres on the understanding held by participants about their entrepreneurial (social) identity. As highlighted in the sub-theme, ‘age identity’, the participants signalled that their age brings advantages due to prior ‘professional experience’ and ‘financial and personal independence’. However, participants also conveyed their perceptions of their ‘younger age identity’, influencing their entrepreneurial (social) intentions.

As shown in Table 6.2, the participants’ belief about their entrepreneurial (social) identity varied, with each conceptualising term, such as ‘social entrepreneur’, ‘social enterprise’, and ‘social entrepreneurship’ according to their own viewpoint. It was revealed from the data that, only six participants were comfortable to be ‘called’ social entrepreneurs, whilst others were ambivalent about their identity, with six participants resisting these terms completely.
### Table 6.2 Self-identity as social entrepreneurs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>How do you describe yourself?</th>
<th>Do you perceive yourself as a social entrepreneur?</th>
<th>What do you think the main characteristics of a social entrepreneur?</th>
<th>What is your definition of social enterprise?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE1</td>
<td>Somebody who identified a gap in the market and fulfilled it.</td>
<td>I didn’t think I was.</td>
<td>Has a good idea and flexible to change.</td>
<td>A non-profit within a social aim to better society-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE2</td>
<td>A business person and a marketer and a salesman really because that’s what I do best.</td>
<td>I don’t consider myself a social entrepreneur.</td>
<td>A people person.</td>
<td>Combines business and commercial acumen-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE3</td>
<td>Somebody trying to create a business.</td>
<td>Not sure about this terminology. I’m just more concerned about making money in ethical ways.</td>
<td>Somebody trying to create a business and the fruit of that is to do good.</td>
<td>Taking responsibility for generating its own income-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE4</td>
<td>I have many roles as I go through life. I’m an amoresque for business. I’m a director, I do freelance, and I’m also a community activist.</td>
<td>No, I didn’t think I will be a social entrepreneur but one of my roles is a social entrepreneur.</td>
<td>Community of social entrepreneurs is a community of hope and consider social, environmental as much as economic impact.</td>
<td>Accountable and transparent and greater focus on legally and environmental and social impact- self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE5</td>
<td>A man.</td>
<td>No, I’m just a man.</td>
<td>Passionate about what they do.</td>
<td>Give something back to the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE6</td>
<td>An agitator and innovator.</td>
<td>I just observe things and see they can be done differently.</td>
<td>Realise that something can be done differently but it has also a benefit to local community – inspiring and informing people.</td>
<td>Raising awareness and making a difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE7</td>
<td>A social entrepreneur.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial mindset with the ability to do good and make money.</td>
<td>Create social impact-self-sustaining but I’m not necessarily a good example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE8</td>
<td>Somebody who spotted an idea and through hard work and help managed to exploit it.</td>
<td>Not really.</td>
<td>Visionary and show people into having more corporate social responsibility.</td>
<td>Create social value-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.2 Self-identity as social entrepreneurs

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE9</td>
<td>An old fellow who tries to do the right thing.</td>
<td>I am unwillingly a social entrepreneur but I suppose I’m a social entrepreneur waiting to come out.</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial mindset – make a difference and generate income to stay relevant. Experienced based entrepreneur</td>
<td>Has to make a difference and stay relevant-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE12</td>
<td>I’m comfortable now with saying I’m a social entrepreneur.</td>
<td>Yes, I kind of do now. I didn’t know the term when I started.</td>
<td>Clear about the best way of becoming viable.</td>
<td>Achieve its social mission and has clear objectives-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE13</td>
<td>A bit entrepreneur.</td>
<td>Just somebody who loves the potential of people.</td>
<td>Visionary, doesn’t see barriers and multitask.</td>
<td>A compassionate organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE14</td>
<td>Just a community worker.</td>
<td>No, not really.</td>
<td>Somebody who has got vision and be able to see it through.</td>
<td>Meets the needs of the community-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE15</td>
<td>I’m just a business woman.</td>
<td>I’m just doing the right thing.</td>
<td>Doing business that is ethical, has values and impacts on the people we work with and the community.</td>
<td>Clear vision and knows who its beneficiaries and self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE16</td>
<td>I’m just doing something I believe in.</td>
<td>I hadn’t but I suppose yes.</td>
<td>People person, has a need for independence and control.</td>
<td>A business that offers a double edge support: employment and personal needs-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE17</td>
<td>Wear two hats – Social and business.</td>
<td>Yes, but depends on the context.</td>
<td>Has ambitions beyond the social.</td>
<td>Not to need any funding at all – self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.2 Self-identity as social entrepreneurs

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE18</td>
<td>Third Sector.</td>
<td>I never put the two words together until I met UnLtd. I use the term but not when describing myself as it means as if I’m trying to build a business.</td>
<td>Turnover at least a living wage.</td>
<td>Community working together to break barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE19</td>
<td>A creative Human Being.</td>
<td>It’s just a label.</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship is in your blood.</td>
<td>Improve society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE20</td>
<td>A local business man.</td>
<td>I have never thought about myself being any kind of entrepreneur.</td>
<td>Give back.</td>
<td>Run for the benefit of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE21</td>
<td>A change agent and a duty to rock the boat.</td>
<td>No, it’s a term. I just use corporate social responsibility.</td>
<td>Who are they social entrepreneurs? They don’t know themselves. You can’t make an entrepreneur; they are whom they are. So you can make your own definition.</td>
<td>To improve things for people-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE22</td>
<td>A guy who was working in industry. I’m the same person but with more enjoyment in life.</td>
<td>I’m making a difference.</td>
<td>Runs the show and creative.</td>
<td>Make a difference-self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE23</td>
<td>I’m just running a project.</td>
<td>I never thought of it like that.</td>
<td>A business person.</td>
<td>Business first but then the purpose is not to make a profit but improve people’s lives- self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE24</td>
<td>Creating social capital and a community context for people.</td>
<td>Yes, I am a social entrepreneur.</td>
<td>Vision for better society.</td>
<td>Create a social capital – self-sustaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE25</td>
<td>A job.</td>
<td>I never thought about that.</td>
<td>Someone who wants to change things.</td>
<td>To make change and make people aware of situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SE: Social Entrepreneur
Table 6.2 Self-identity as social entrepreneurs

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE26</td>
<td>Adjunct to what I do.</td>
<td>I’m not a social entrepreneur.</td>
<td>Wants to make a difference and make money.</td>
<td>Depends on the individual – some to make money and some help others and make money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE27</td>
<td>I see myself on the fence really.</td>
<td>I do but with a difference not wanting to get wages out of it.</td>
<td>No idea. It seems funny to get a title after all these years.</td>
<td>Improve the social aspects of other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE28</td>
<td>Someone trying to do good for the community.</td>
<td>I just like to help people.</td>
<td>Care about people.</td>
<td>Do good for the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the interview extract below, SE4 (M, 50) discusses the usefulness of the term ‘social entrepreneur’ when dealing with local authorities:

SE4 (M, 50): ‘...I didn’t think I will be a social entrepreneur. I just thought once the model emerged, most of the organisations I have been with since have been community interest companies, and it does, from a practical point of view, make it easier to have productive discussions with local authorities. If you go and meet them with a commercial hat, they’re a bit suspicious...whereas if you go with a social enterprise hat on, they feel you are much more aligned with their values. It’s one of my roles when I’m working, and sometimes I have to take the social entrepreneur’s hat off and get the really commercial and analytical assessment. So, sometimes I may be a business risk analyst’.

For SE4, therefore, presenting himself as a ‘social entrepreneur’ when collaborating with local authorities is easier than going to ‘meet them with a commercial hat’ which may not align with their social values. However, he notes, in a business context, he uses his business and commercial acumen, leading him to conclude being a social entrepreneur is one of the many roles he plays. Thus, for SE4, tailoring his role to the context in which he is embedded signifies his association with the term ‘social entrepreneur’. Nevertheless, he also indicates, he ‘didn’t think he will be a social entrepreneur’ but because he likes the ‘agility and fluidity’ of social enterprises, making it easier for him to set up as a social enterprise than a charity. Indeed, his comment about the ‘agility’ of social enterprises represents his understanding they do not ‘do business for business sake’, but ‘with much greater drive on the bottom line...considering both legally and actually the sort of environmental and social impact of what you are doing’. Although being a social entrepreneur is one of his many roles, SE4 identifies with the ‘hybridity’ of social enterprise, which is to trade for environmental and social benefits.

SE17’s (F, 58) belief about her entrepreneurial (social) identity is similar to SE4. This is illustrated in response to my question, ‘do you perceive yourself as a social entrepreneur?’

SE17 (F, 58): ‘I wouldn’t say that too often because entrepreneur sounds a bit posh, doesn’t it? [laughter]. I suppose, yes, yes. It depends on the context, do you see? The thing about being a social entrepreneur is that you’ve always got these two different hats on. The business side and the social side. Later on today, I’m going to the AGM meeting, which is a third sector organisation and just generally deals with the voluntary sector so that’s very much the social side of what we do and there’s [sic] people who are doing good in the world [laughter], and then at the beginning of this week, I went into a business lunch thing...you’re mixing with other businesses and that’s what you’re doing the whole time, you’re doing business, you’re doing social and there’s not a lot of arenas where you are with specifically social entrepreneurs’.
SE17 constructs her role as ‘wearing two hats’ to balance her social and business identities, conveying her beliefs she identifies with her commercial identity when ‘mixing with businesses’ and social identity when collaborating with the ‘the voluntary sector’. Nevertheless, she responds to my question as to whether she considers herself as a social entrepreneur, by saying ‘yes’, demonstrating, her beliefs that social enterprises often take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations that do not ‘need any funding at all and to use trading income to do things with’.

In explaining the ‘duality’ of their identity (i.e. social and business), SE4 and SE17 identify with the ‘hybrid’ model of social enterprise, which is congruent with Boschee and McClurg (2003, p. 1), who note, ‘unless a non-profit organisation is generating earned revenue from its activities, it is not acting in an entrepreneurial manner. It may be doing good and wonderful things, creating new and vibrant programmes: but it is innovative and not entrepreneurial’. Indeed, it was identified from the data that fifteen out of twenty-eight participants are strategic in their orientations, and therefore, employ business practices to achieve their social mission. However, the participants differed in the way they perceived their ‘self-identity’, suggesting the term itself evoked varied interpretations.

The need for ‘trading for the benefit of their social mission’ is illustrated by SE23’s (M, 60) account below, who decided to set up social enterprise ‘business first then social’:

SE23 (M, 60): ‘You can’t do anything without money. Although it’s but a tool, there has to be money and that means you’ve gotta do some trade…For me, that is what drives social enterprise. You can’t ask people to give up their lives to do something for, and within the community, when they’re living on bread and water. It’s no good. You’ve gotta have a decent life yourself. So, if we can make the enterprise pay and everybody has taken home a decent wage. The charitable side of it, if we want to use that phrase looks after itself. If you concentrate being charitable and then do a bit of trading is not gonna work. That’s the way I see it’.

SE23’s identification with ‘hybridity’, can be seen in the way he describes ‘there has to be money’ and ‘you have gotta do some trade’ to achieve the ‘charitable side’. Here, SE23 demonstrates his felt responsibility in generating an income so he can achieve his social mission, such as ‘give some employment, create some jobs, some work, and some wellbeing’. However, central to SE23’s account is his lack of identification with the term ‘social entrepreneur’, he notes, ‘I never thought of it like that. I’m perceiving myself as a […] with a project, which happens to be the project that fits in nicely with social enterprise. So, it’s a genre…’ Here, SE23 identifies his identity with ‘running a project’, and therefore, the term ‘social entrepreneur’ is ‘just a genre’ depending on the interpretations and perceptions of those involved.
This is congruent with Thompson (2002, p. 412), who argues, although the concept of social enterprise is widely researched, many social entrepreneurs ‘would not describe themselves as entrepreneurs or feel comfortable with the terminology’. As such, he considers the role of the ‘social entrepreneur’ is to listen to the voice of their community and respond in meaningful ways through envisioning, engaging, enabling, and enacting. For Thompson, the social entrepreneur identifies an opportunity to address a social need (envisioning), exploit such opportunity (engaging), acquire the necessary resources (enabling), and championing and leading the project (enacting).

SE3’s (M, 53) account is similar to SE23, noting, ‘that’s when you need a social enterprise...a business to generate at least some of the charitable funds, to make it sustainable and then leverage other funds and allow you to stay in the game’. SE3, therefore, considers social enterprises as a ‘business first’ and, therefore, should not ‘expect the government or other organisations to go and do this for [them]’. His view about ‘hybridity’ is consistent with existing literature on social enterprise, arguing income generation helps the sustainability of social enterprises (e.g. Boschee, 2001; Di Domenico, et al., 2010). However, when SE3 was asked whether he perceives himself a social entrepreneur? He responds:

SE3 (M, 53): ‘I’m not sure about this terminology actually. I see myself as somebody that’s trying to create businesses and I’m not too bothered particularly about whether those businesses have got a social purpose in the business intrinsically but what I am bothered about is that the businesses make money in a fair ethical way, which can then be used to do socially good things. If that’s a social enterprise, then I’m happy to call it that but I hate the phrase not-for-profit. The Americans use not-for-profit a lot and I say to them [raising his voice], ‘we are for profit, we’re trying to make a profit otherwise we’re unsustainable. If we don’t make a profit, we won’t be here’.

Inevitably, SE3 subscribes to the ‘hybridity’ model of social enterprise, however, he is reluctant to identify himself as a social entrepreneur since he is more ‘concerned about creating a business that trades’ and ‘the fruit of that is to create something really good’. Income generation has also been perceived by SE21 (M, 60) to play a significant role in sustaining his organisation. He states, he ‘ran a charity for ten years’ and was ‘always trying to fund it’, hence, he decided this time, to have ‘the funds’ and ‘then meet the needs’. However, when asked about his entrepreneurial (social) identity, he responds by saying, ‘I mention corporate social responsibility’ to not only, align with the ‘social values of businesses and government agencies’ but also to remind them of their ‘social responsibility’, which is to act ‘responsibly’ and ‘support social causes’. Nevertheless, he goes on to explain, the reasons why he set up a social enterprise was to improve the ‘outcomes of care for children’ than having ‘social responsibility’. SE21’s interpretation is consistent with Swanson and Di Zhang’s (2010), who differentiate between ‘social responsible businesses’ that may act in a responsible way and donate
money to social causes and ‘social transformational entrepreneurial ventures’ that act directly to engender social change.

A further reason why SE21 contested using the term ‘social enterprise’ is due to his felt understanding that social enterprises are often regarded as ‘short-term projects’ that get ‘allocated a bit of money to get it off the ground and then disappears’ and ‘everybody else disappears as well’. This contradicts his desire to create long-term social impact for the next ‘twenty to thirty years’. He also signals that ‘social entrepreneurs are confused about their identity’ and, therefore, ‘it doesn’t matter what he calls [himself]’. Recounting his experience of attending a meeting at the Arts Council, he notes, ‘people are still as confused in that room about their identity and say they’re looking for a definition of social enterprise and I think, well, if you can’t get a definition after ten years, you’re never gonna get one… nobody can give you a clear indication so just make your own definition of it’. SE21’s account is consistent with research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise which have found there is a lack of an agreed definition of social enterprise (e.g. Dees, 2001; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006). As such, for SE21, he can make his own definition as long as he achieves his social mission.

It was noticeable through the participants’ accounts that their social mission is key to their entrepreneurial (social) identity. SE17s (F, 59), for instance notes, despite ‘tweaking’ part of her business, her environmental and social missions are core to her identity. SE12 (F, 55) also states, with her business partner they have ‘been less clear about the best way of becoming viable’ and spent the last eighteen months debating whether ‘they’re a restaurant or a cookery school’. However, they are ‘really clear about their social mission’, which is to ‘teach people to cook from scratch with fresh produce on a tight budget so they can access a healthy diet’. Nevertheless, when I asked SE12 whether she perceives herself a social entrepreneur, she said, ‘I kind of do now. It took me a long time. I didn’t even know the term. I didn’t know the term social enterprise when I started […] school meals and then I was kind of reluctant’. SE12’s initial reluctance could be explained by her lack of understanding of the term ‘social entrepreneur’, however, knowing she is creating social impact within her community, she felt ‘comfortable’ saying ‘yes I am a social entrepreneur’. Thus, for SE12, ‘creating social impact’ is part of her entrepreneurial (social) identity.

The lack of an agreed definition of social enterprise was evident in the accounts of many interviewees who signalled it had a negative impact on their social enterprise. SE15 (F, 58) notes, ‘people…businesses don’t understand what a social enterprise is’, making her question whether ‘it’s worth saying she is a social enterprise’. She states, private businesses ‘look at you…and think what kind of business is that if it’s not for personal gain’. Indeed, her account suggests, private businesses lack an understanding of
why social enterprises trade if it is not for private gains. However, contrary to my own assumptions, some participants themselves lacked an understanding of social enterprise until they had started collaborating with UnLtd and other stakeholders.

SE3’s (M, 53) notes, ‘I didn’t know anything about social enterprise until six or seven years ago. I had no idea what it was. I thought it was something in the public sector ... something to be avoided’. However, he explains, when he was told by one of the ‘founders of Big Issue, ‘there is a big difference between a charity and a social enterprise... a social enterprise is definitely for making money, a charity is for giving out money’, he decided to set up a social enterprise, not for personal gains, but to ‘apply’ his skills to alleviate poverty.

SE3’s account highlights how the ‘hybridity’ of social enterprises have blurred the boundaries between not-for-profit and private sector organisations (Mair and Martí, 2004; Swanson and Di Zhang, 2010). However, as noted by SE4 (M, 50), it is important for social enterprises ‘to be commercially viable...otherwise, it won’t work... It’s got to be financially sustainable. It’s got to be socially and economically viable. The very definition of sustainability is that if you can’t do it, it won’t work’. The expressions made by participants about income generation, is consistent with existing research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, demonstrating despite overlapping boundaries, social enterprises trade in the pursuit of their social mission however; not-for-profit organisations depend on government subsidies and philanthropic donation (e.g. Dees, 1998; Swanson and Di Zhang, 2010). As argued by SE3 (M, 53), ‘social enterprise is definitely for making money, charity is for giving out money in one form or the other, social enterprise is for making money’.

Nevertheless, the word ‘social entrepreneur’ conveyed a different meaning for other participants. In the extract below, SE14 (F, 57) describes how she sees her role:

SE14 (F, 57): ‘being at the heart of the community. Just making sure that you know what’s going on and everybody knows that we’re here. When we get people who say we didn’t know you were here, we get quite upset, how didn’t you know we are here? [Laughter]’.

SE14 regards her entrepreneurial (social) identity to be ‘at the heart of her community’ and ‘giving everybody a fair deal’. Her repetition of the word ‘community’ conveys her understanding that social entrepreneurs are required to ‘meet the needs’ of their own community. However, when I asked SE14 about her perception of the primary goals of social enterprises, she states, ‘the goal of this is to be self-sustaining’, demonstrating her belief that income generation is significant to her sustainability. Nonetheless, for SE28’s (F, 72), the word ‘community’ conveyed a different meaning, instead
perceiving her role to be ‘help[ing] others’ without the pursuit of income. She notes, ‘money is nice but money is not the be all and end all of everything. First, you need your health and then you need to be happy. You do because you’re gonna struggle’. SE28 has been retired for almost twelve years and considers herself ‘an ordinary person’ trying to support young school leavers learn transferable skills, such as writing a Curriculum Vitae and interviewing skills. Thus, contrary to SE14, SE28 perceived her entrepreneurial (social) identity to be ‘giving back’ to her community without the pursuit of an income. However, she concurrently explains, ‘if she could set up her social enterprise’, she cannot only engender ‘change that can go through generations’ but also support her ‘big local funders earn money so they don’t just spend it’. SE28, therefore, perceives her identity as creating a social impact by supporting those ‘young people’ gain transferable skills and benefit her funders.

‘Not to earn an income’ is further illustrated by SE27 (F, 71), who set up her social enterprise to help children with complex health needs rather than ‘gaining a personal wage’. When I asked SE27 how she perceived herself, she responded, ‘I see myself to be on the fence because I don’t need it for my business to earn pennies to live on’. This suggests, gaining an income for SE27, is seen to be incompatible with her social orientation. However, her reluctance to gain an income, demonstrates her lack of identification with being a social entrepreneur, asking ‘am I a social entrepreneur? I don’t know. I have no idea. All I see myself is somebody who sits up in my office every day trying to get money [laughter] and if that makes me a social entrepreneur then that’s what I am’. SE27, therefore, did not identify with the term ‘social entrepreneur’ since she sees herself ‘a person who sits in an office’ and ‘bid for funding’. This was apparent during the interview when she asked me if I could give her a definition of a social entrepreneur since she did not think she was one.

Nevertheless, she concurrently responds to my question, ‘what do you think are the main characteristics of a social entrepreneur? By saying, a social entrepreneur it is ‘somebody who is trying to improve the social aspects of other people’s lives’. Similar to SE28, SE27 considers the role of the social entrepreneur is to ‘help others’ and ‘improve their lives’. Nonetheless, she feels the title ‘social entrepreneur’ may be useful since she ‘never had any qualifications’. Indeed, my discussion with SE27 during the interview revealed her concern about her ‘outdated qualifications’ since ‘they are not classed as good anymore in the swimming world’ and, therefore, having the title ‘social entrepreneur’ she could regain the qualification she lacks.

The above accounts suggest, the participants perceived their entrepreneurial (social) identity differently. However, it was apparent from the data that some participants perceived themselves as ‘community workers’ rather than social entrepreneurs. This is consistent with research on social
entrepreneurship and social enterprise, criticising the ‘idealised’ definition of the ‘social entrepreneur’, pointing to the need for a more inclusive definition (e.g. Martin and Osberg, 2007; Nicholls, 2010a).

Notwithstanding, further patterns emerged from the data, identifying those who were ambivalent about their entrepreneurial (social) identity. SE26 (F, 65) explains:

SE26 (F, 65): ‘I don’t see myself as a social entrepreneur. I told UnLtd I didn’t and I told you if you remember that I didn’t [referring to the first telephone conversation we had to arrange the meeting]. I do not see myself as a social entrepreneur. I just see myself as somebody ...sort of side adjunct to what I do, writing bids for people. I don’t see myself as a social entrepreneur. No, I don’t because I’m not trying to build a business that’s gonna make a load of money and things like that. I’m not doing it for that. I’m doing it because I like doing it and I like helping people but I don’t see myself as a social entrepreneur at all. No. I never have’.

SE26’s repetition of the word ‘I don’t see myself as a social entrepreneur’ conveyed her tacit belief she is not trying to ‘make loads of money’. As such, during the interview, she referred to our telephone conversation when she was reluctant to meet because she did not consider herself a social entrepreneur. However, SE26’s lack of identification with the term ‘social entrepreneur’ stemmed from her understanding she is ‘not trying to run a business’ and ‘make a profit’, instead, she sees herself as ‘writing bids’ and ‘helping people’. Yet, when I probed further to understand the reasons why she did not consider herself a social entrepreneur, she replied, ‘I do funding bids for people. I do bits and pieces for people. So, I suppose I’m a social entrepreneur’. This implies, SE26 is ambivalent about her entrepreneurial (social) identity, as on the one hand, she sees the term to be incompatible with her social mission, and on the other, she considers herself a social entrepreneur when describing her business. Her perceptions are congruent with Thompson (2002), who argues some people would not feel comfortable with the use of the term ‘social entrepreneur’ as they associate this with business rather social, which influences how they view their identity.

SE9’s (M, 54) account also highlights his ambivalent feeling towards his identity. Despite describing himself as ‘an old fellow trying to do the right thing and was not a social entrepreneur’, he is quick to add, he is ‘a social entrepreneur waiting to come out’. For SE9, being a ‘person who looks at a problem and thinks that’s something we’ve got to solve’ signalled his entrepreneurial mindset which, he thinks, ‘something he is born’ with. Indeed, the concept of social entrepreneurs ‘born or made’ was apparent in the accounts of five participants, such as SE19 (M, 62), who notes, ‘social entrepreneurship is actually something already in your blood. It’s not something you decide to do’. As such, the ‘main traits’
attributed to social entrepreneurs are the ability to ‘relate to people’, ‘compassion’, ‘creativity’, ‘boldness’, and being a ‘role model’.

In the extract below, SE14 (F, 55) explains how being a ‘role model’, supports her beneficiaries ‘move themselves forward’:

SE14 (F, 55): ‘We need people to be able to see that potential and that’s what we’re trying to do. I’d like to think there’re people coming up, children coming up, who can look at what we do’.

SE14 describes her ‘poor background’ was the main motive to ‘move herself forward’, suggesting if she can be a ‘role model’ to those disadvantaged within her community, they could be inspired to improve their social conditions, concluding growing up in a disadvantaged background ‘doesn’t have to hold you back unless you want to’. Being a ‘role model’ was also echoed in SE16’s (F, 58) account, who notes, this has stemmed from being able ‘to do it’ and therefore others ‘can’. As discussed in Section 5.3.2, SE16 failed her eleven plus and setting her social enterprise gave her a sense of achievement, signalling to others, ‘it’s possible’. However, SE22 (M, 61) interpreted his experience of being a role model differently. He notes, working with young apprentices and out in in ‘the factory on a Wednesday morning boxing’, he has to ‘lead by example’, conveying his belief if he ‘can do it’ they also ‘can’.

A further trait attributed to the social entrepreneur is the ‘ability to relate to people’. SE5 (F, 50), states, she has ‘always been friendly’ and ‘a people’s person’, a trait she was born with. Nevertheless, when I asked whether she perceives herself as a social entrepreneur, she said, ‘I’m a man trying to run a business’ and ‘compassionate’ about improving the livelihood of children and their families. ‘Relating to people’ was also expressed by SE11 (M, 56), who built a good rapport with his ‘customers’ to the fact he ‘hugs’ all his beneficiaries and their families, making him ‘feel happy’.

The social entrepreneur has been described in social entrepreneurship and social enterprise literature as a ‘special breed’ (Dees and Elias, 1998) who have unique traits, such as ethical fibre, leadership, a unity of purpose, opportunity recognition, resourcefulness, and boldness (Weerawardena, et al., 2003). Nonetheless, it is evident from the interviewees’ accounts, the way they describe their attributes is not related to the ‘idealised’ description suggested by Dees and Elias (1998), since their primary concern is to be part of their ‘their local community’, empowering those disadvantaged, tackling deprivation, promoting a sense of solidarity, and looking after the ‘welfare of others’. This suggests, the social element of their activity is primary, which is congruent with current studies, demonstrating ‘social value creation’ is one of the primary objectives of social enterprises.
(Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006). This contradicts the entrepreneurship discourse, describing the ‘entrepreneur’ as a special person exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities to generate profits and create shareholders’ value (e.g. Gartner, 1990; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).

Central to all of the participants’ accounts is that, their entrepreneurial (social) identity is dependent on their subjective views of what it means for them to be a social entrepreneur. As in the case of SE21, who uses the term ‘corporate social responsibility’, he believes social entrepreneurs are confused about their identity, and therefore, he can ‘choose his own definition’. For other participants, however, the word ‘social entrepreneur’ conveyed their understanding of being a ‘community worker’ addressing the needs of the local community, such as SE14, who perceived her role as ‘being at the heart of her community’ and giving everybody a ‘fair deal’.

The findings also highlighted some participants viewed their identity as a ‘crossroads’ between social and commercial, as in the case of both SE4 and SE17, who ‘wore hats’ depending on the context. In addition, the participants had different interpretations about income generation. Whilst, for some, income generation is critical to their sustainability, others saw this to be incompatible with their social mission. This is illustrated by SE23, who runs his social enterprise a ‘business first and then social’ to be self-sustaining. SE27 and SE28, however, perceived income generation to be incompatible with their social mission.

Notwithstanding, the findings suggest some participants are ambivalent about their entrepreneurial (social) identity, such as SE26, who contested the term since running a business conflicts with her social aims. However, she concurrently describes herself ‘a social entrepreneur’ when explaining her activity. Furthermore, the data highlights, other participants considered social entrepreneurs ‘born not made’, as in the case of SE5, who explains ‘relating to people’ is what makes her a social entrepreneur.

### 6.4.3 Theme Two ‘Self-Identity’: Summary and Discussion

This theme ‘self-identity’ has explored the participants’ interpretations of their age identity and entrepreneurial (social) identity. The concept of ‘age being meaningless’ was conveyed by all participants, presenting their subjective perspectives about how age is no longer perceived a barrier to their continuation with their social enterprise activity. Despite some reporting they experienced health issues, such as lack of energy and reduced mobility, none of the participants saw their age a barrier, instead they signalled to their experience and skills presenting an advantage to their social enterprise activity. The concept of ‘younger age identity’ (e.g. Barhnart and Peñaloza, 2013; Schafer and Shippee, 2009; Shmerlina, 2015) has, therefore, been used to draw the way the participants
identified with their age identity, which according to their accounts, played a significant role in their decision to set up their social enterprise.

As discussed in the preceding findings chapter (Chapter Five), the participants felt that, reaching the age of fifty gave them not only a sense of urgency to make a difference to people’s lives but also recognising the value their age brings in terms of their experience, independence, and the social networks they built over their lifetime careers. This contradicts the findings in the theme ‘ageing society’, demonstrating their concern about how ‘older’ age is perceived as a decline and an economic and social challenge, which is congruent with current studies that examined medical and economic discourses on ageing, indicating ageing is perceived a phase of dependency and decline in health and cognitive abilities (e.g. Greller and Simpson, 1999; Hudson, 2015; Provencher, et al., 2014). The concept of ‘younger age identity’ has indeed been translated into how the participants perceived the term ‘later life’ negatively, as this can reinforce a narrative differentiating ‘younger’ from ‘older’ entrepreneurs. This is consistent with, for instance, Barhnart and Peñaloza’s (2013) who have found more often ‘older’ people are reluctant to identify with their ‘older’ age even if they are positioned an ‘older’ person by others.

Feeling younger than their age has also revealed the way participants identified with their entrepreneurial (social) identity, which is discussed in the subtheme ‘self-identity as social entrepreneurs’. Although none of the participants perceived their age as a barrier, several explanations have been drawn from their ambivalence towards their entrepreneurial (social) identity. Whilst fifteen out of twenty-eight participants were strategic in their social orientations and, therefore, adopted a ‘hybrid’ model to trade and achieve their social objectives, others perceived income generation incompatible with their social mission. This is consistent with existing studies on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, which has found social enterprises may take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations, trading in the pursuit of their social mission (e.g. Boschee, 2001, Di Domenico, et al., 2010). However, as Nicholls (2010b), Caulier-Grice, et al., (2012) argue, the discourse on social innovation seems to prioritise the ‘heroic’ figure of the social entrepreneur over the role played by community organisations and individuals who create social value without the pursuit of income. Nevertheless, it was also identified from the data, some participants felt they had a double identity – that is social when interacting with local authorities and voluntary organisations and business when cooperating with businesses, demonstrating the perceived lack of understanding of the discourse on social enterprise. This is consistent with the views of, for instance, Dees (2001), Thompson (2002), and Spear, et al., (2009) who argue, although the concept of social enterprise is poorly defined, social
enterprises often take the form of ‘hybrid’ organisations, employing business strategies to create social value.

A related insight generated by this theme is the interplay between gender and social entrepreneurship. The two female participants suggest that, although their gender has been beneficial in building a good rapport with beneficiaries and income generation through trading, they are still being seen as ‘middle-aged women’ who are less capable than their male counterparts. This is consistent with Kautonen (2008) and Cannon and Kurowska (2013) who found females aged 50+ are more enthusiastic about business ownership than males. However, McKay (2001) argues, women between the age of fifty-seven and seventy-three tend to be constrained by ‘public perceptions’ of what is acceptable for their age.

The findings discussed in this theme, therefore, highlight the importance of understanding the subjective interpretations of participants about their age identity and how this has shaped their entrepreneurial (social) intentions, which is emphasised within social gerontology perspectives that found the experience of ageing is a subjective construct and is, therefore, dependent on how individuals categorise their age, influencing their intentions in pursuing work and new knowledge. As defined by Bengtson et al., (1997), the micro perspective of social gerontology focuses on understanding how people interpret the ageing process and their experience of it. The participants understanding of their ‘everyday’ lives as social is further explored in theme ‘personal enrichment’ in Section 6.5.

6.5 Theme Three: ‘Personal Enrichment’

This theme identifies the understanding expressed by the majority of participants, in that they had developed a wide range of skills during the social entrepreneurial process, enhancing their personal enrichment. It was evident from the data that the participants had gained a wide range of management and business skills, including interpersonal skills such as assertiveness and self-confidence. In the extract below, SE27 (F, 71) conveys her felt belief about the skills she had gained:

SE27 (F, 71): ‘I have always been a bit of a flitter and through doing social entrepreneurship I have realised different people had given me tips...for example, when I first started with UnLtd, I didn’t have a clue where do you go to get funding? Now, I have learnt there are lots of places you can go to that people don’t tell you ... just by learning all these different things. Another example is, when you have to fill in applications for grants, we had a session on the things they needed to know and that has been really useful... when you fill in a form, it’s hard to know what they actually need because you’re given a blank sheet of
paper...This is something that has helped me a lot because I filled in a grant for Red Nose Day and we got £1000’.

The support SE27 received from UnLtd, has helped her develop ‘research’ and ‘statistical skills’ when filling out grant applications to bid for funding. Indeed, central to SE27’s account is a felt sense that, by developing her business skills; her life has changed from ‘it being something’ she did ‘once’ to ‘something she does every single day’. She notes, she spends most of her time ‘fundraising and trying to promote the club’, whilst learning ‘a great deal’ about social media. Nevertheless, SE27’s use of the phrase ‘because I’m not a business person’ conveys her belief about her uncertainty in running a business, as she puts it, ‘I wouldn’t have a clue of how to run a business’. This is illustrated when noting that, having knowledge about ‘swimming’ is different to running a business and, therefore, she ‘needed to transfer [her] skills to improve the club’. This suggests, having a ‘subject specific knowledge’ complemented the skills she gained during the social entrepreneurial process.

Notwithstanding, in response to my question ‘has anything changed in you since you started the social enterprise?’ She responds, ‘with the business side of things’, she had learnt ‘self-confidence’ when pitching for funding at UnLtd, enhancing her collaboration with other clubs such as the rotary club, something she ‘has never done before’. Indeed, gaining ‘self-confidence’ was broadly acknowledged by participants, such as SE16 (F, 58), who notes, what ‘came out’ from her experience as a social entrepreneur is a ‘huge personal confidence’.

Giving the example of the ‘Great British Bake Off’ TV programme, SE16 explains, ‘the winner […] had said I’ll never ever say I can’t do it’, making her realise she should ‘never run herself down’ since she ‘has done this’ and she ‘can do it’. For SE16, the winner of the ‘British Bake Off’ mirrored her own achievements, noting ‘yes, I thought actually that’s me. I can do it and I have done it’. Thus, for SE16, gaining ‘self-confidence’ demonstrates her felt perception of her own achievements, making her feel ‘really proud’. However, besides ‘self-confidence’, SE16 felt she was taught ‘a huge amount’ of skills, such as ‘accounting’, ‘excel’, ‘social media’, such as ‘Twitter, and ‘web design’ which she bought ‘off peg’, something she has ‘never done in [her] life before’, giving her a ‘real sense of learning’. As such, despite her seventeen years prior experience in the voluntary sector, SE17 attributes the skills she gained to her experience as a social entrepreneur rather than her previous employment.

‘Self-confidence’ has also surfaced in SE22’s (M, 61) account, explaining being a social entrepreneur has been ‘more enabling’ than anything he had done previously. Recounting his experience of ‘losing confidence’ when he was told off by one of his managers about a mistake he had made in his previous job, how he was ‘nervous’ ever since ‘about getting it wrong’. However, enhancing his ‘self-confidence’
has been one of the skills he gained as a social entrepreneur. What made ‘self-confidence’ key for SE22, was that he was able to challenge the ‘status quo’, telling the Minister at the ‘House of Commons...no, you’re wrong, you’re wrong’. Here, SE22 demonstrates his frustration with authorities not ‘knowing anything about his world’, despite proving he was ‘getting people into jobs’. Thus, for SE22, challenging the ‘status quo’ made ‘self-confidence’ personally meaningful to him, noting, ‘I have never been so confident because I knew that I had the ability to do it but now I’m this confident person who has done it’.

For SE14 (F, 57), however, ‘self-confidence’ stemmed from ‘standing up’ in front of the ‘panel’ at UnLtd ‘explaining herself’ and ‘pitching for funding’, extending her confidence to ‘doing it now’ with alternative funders and businesses in the community. Indeed, referring to our interview meeting, she says, ‘I wouldn’t have spoken to you like this before because I’m not generally a person that speaks very well but I’m quite happy to share with people what I do’. ‘Self-confidence’, for SE14, is, therefore, an opportunity for her to ‘share’ her experience, noting ‘that’s something. A lot of confidence I suppose’.

A related way in which SE14 constructed her self-development is by writing ‘grant proposals to bid for funds’. Similar to SE27, she notes, ‘writing grant proposals’ and ‘understanding statistics and being able to explain them’ ‘is a huge learning curve’. Gaining skills in completing grant proposals has also been expressed by SE19 (M, 62), who states, ‘what I learnt from the social enterprise is how to fill out grant applications’ and learn ‘about the language and the vocabulary’ required by funders and ‘how it should be portrayed’. However, for SE19, understanding the significance of ‘evidencing the need for the projects’ and ‘monitor the impact’ he is creating has been a huge ‘learning curve’. This suggests, besides practical value, completing grant applications had informational value, enhancing SE19’s knowledge of the importance of evaluating and evidencing social impact. Indeed, SE19 felt, grant proposals are a good ‘tool’ not just for funders but also to ‘make sure [he’s] is hitting targets’.

However, besides grant proposals, SE19 notes, he learnt to ‘keep abreast of the latest cameras [and] the latest audio technology’ so he can impart this knowledge to his beneficiaries. ‘Keeping abreast of technology’ has also a further meaning for SE19, which is how he perceived his role as a social entrepreneur. His repetition of the word ‘teacher’ conveys his understanding that social entrepreneurs should play the role of a ‘teacher’ equipping those underprivileged with skills they could use in the workplace, and therefore, they should ‘build their social enterprise around something they’re passionate about themselves otherwise forget it’. Thus, for SE19, the social entrepreneur’s role is to ‘teach’ rather than just make a living.
A further way in which the participants gained ‘personal enrichment’ is by developing their management, leadership, and interpersonal skills, such delegation and assertiveness. SE11 (M, 56), for instance, felt, despite his prior business experience, he is ‘getting better at saying no, can I call you back and I’ll look into it’. Learning how to be assertive and say ‘no’ enhanced SE11’s determination in getting ‘things done’. However, central to SE11’s account is his felt perception about ‘running the show by himself’, presenting challenges in balancing his strategic and operational objectives, a theme that will be further explored in Section 6.6.2. SE8 (M, 50), on the other hand, states, he is ‘getting better at managing people’ since he ‘has never done it before’. He explains, he has no prior management experience, and being a social entrepreneur has enabled him to learn how to manage people. However, ‘managing people’, for SE8, meant he is ‘treating people’ as he ‘would like to be treated’ and being ‘considerate and not to take advantage’ of his beneficiaries. This conveys his belief that being a manager meant that you treat your employees fairly and be considerate. Moreover, ‘managing people’, for SE8, meant ‘treating people’ as he ‘would like to be treated’ and being ‘considerate and not to take advantage’ of his beneficiaries. This conveys his belief that being a manager meant that you treat your employees fairly and be considerate. Besides learning how to ‘manage’, SE8 notes, it made him ‘think about planning...better at communicating and better at woodwork’. Hence, ‘personal enrichment’, for SE8, meant he not only gained management skills but also applied skills such as ‘communication’ and ‘woodwork’ skills.

SE9 (M, 54), on the other hand, notes, despite his prior business experience, the training he had received from UnLtd enhanced his delegation skills ‘one area where [he] needs to practice’ and enabled him to have access to ‘business mentoring’ which ‘has been fantastic’ since he was able to ‘sit and learn from some people’. Indeed, ‘business mentoring’ has surfaced in the accounts of many participants, conveying their beliefs about the importance of ‘receiving advice’ and ‘practical’ guidance. Like SE9, the support SE5 (F, 50) had received from her ‘local business adviser was wonderful’. Despite her prior financial and organisational experience, having access to ‘business mentoring’, for SE5, has been beneficial since she was able to ‘get help with the business plan’ for her social enterprise. Recounting her experience of meeting with her business adviser, she notes, it was an ‘opportunity to ask questions’ and for him to ask ‘what’re you doing with this? What’re you doing with that? Have you put your flyers?’ all of which has helped her to promote her club.

Nevertheless, the mentoring SE5 had received from an existing social entrepreneur who ‘does the same’ as her club, ‘really helped’, since she felt ‘this person knew exactly what [she was] going through...’ However, SE5’s repetition of the word ‘Facebook’ during the interview conveys her belief that learning ‘social media skills’ has been invaluable in promoting her club. She notes, ‘Facebook, I mean I very rarely went on Facebook; it’s now my life because most of my bookings come from Facebook from advertising. It’s a fabulous thing but I’ve had to learn from scratch, which is very hard. Twitter is the next thing I’ve got to learn’. 
Indeed, the majority of participants spoke of the benefits of learning social media skills in promoting what ‘they do on the ground’. However, for others, using social media has been perceived as one of the challenges they experienced, a theme, which will be discussed in Section 6.6.5. Nonetheless, central to the participants’ accounts is learning through ‘trial and error’. SE17 (F, 58), for instance, notes, ‘total immersion and learning on the job’ has been an invaluable experience for her. Indeed, the participants felt despite the wide range of support available for small businesses, ‘there is just nothing like going through it’ (SE17, F, 58) and learning how to ‘make mistakes’ and ‘adapt’ to them (SE5, F, 50). Increased capacity in social capital, such as confidence and gaining a positive learning experience have been found as the main benefits LLSEs gain from their social enterprise activity (McDowall, 2013).

It was evident from the accounts of several participants that they had gained a wide range of skills, which helped them to keep their mind stimulated and contributed to their wellbeing.

A further pattern which emerged from the data is the concept of ‘lifelong learning’. This was constructed as the ‘self-motivated’ pursuit of knowledge so the participants can enhance their personal and professional skills. SE1 (M, 53), who had a prior experience in marketing and public relations, states he had to develop ‘new knowledge about healthcare and social care sectors’ so he can better understand his beneficiaries’ needs:

SE1 (M, 53): ‘You get out into the big wild world, understand what’s going, it’s completely different. I was marketing for large corporates, I didn’t have a clue. You know, I didn’t have a clue how these things are structured in the sort of, you know, the health and social sector, no idea at all, and in a way that’s kind of nice because I’m going into it’.

Developing his knowledge about ‘healthcare’ and ‘social care’ sectors demonstrates SE1’s lack of understanding of how ‘things work in practice’, and hence, he needed to gain a ‘good grasp’ of how, particularly the NHS works, since he is partnering with them to address the social need he identified. Lifelong learning is further illustrated by SE18 (M, 65), who furthered his knowledge about mental health issues, a social need his social enterprise is targeting. Indeed, ‘being more aware of mental health’, for SE18, meant he understood ‘the way it affects the sufferer but also how people with mental health are perceived by the public’, giving him a better understanding of his beneficiaries’ needs.

A related explanation of the concept of ‘lifelong learning’ may be explained by the participants’ unwillingness to attribute this to the word ‘journey’, conveying there is a ‘beginning and an end’ to their experience. This is illustrated by SE18 (M, 56), who contested the word ‘journey’ in response to my question ‘how would you describe your journey?’ stating, ‘he has not finished yet’ and ‘he never thought he was on a journey’ since he is constantly learning ‘new things’. This was further
demonstrated by SE27 (F, 71), who states, she is ‘ready to learn’ because ‘it doesn’t matter how old you are you can always learn something new’. Here, SE27 conveys her standpoint that, individuals are intrinsically motivated to ‘learn new things’ regardless of age. This is similar to SE3’s (M, 53), who is a ‘huge believer in lifelong learning’ since there are ‘things he can do well’ and there are ‘things he can’t do well and then that’s a great learning experience’. This is congruent with existing research, which has found ‘lifelong learning’ enhances physical, psychological, and social wellbeing. As stated by Age UK (2009, p. 1), ‘lifelong learning helps older people stay in good physical and psychological health and continue living active and independent lives’.

The concept of the ‘feel good factor’ has also emerged from the participants’ accounts. This was evident when the participants were describing their experience as ‘uplifting’, ‘rewarding’, ‘worthwhile’ and ‘enjoyable’, contributing to their wellbeing. SE12 (F, 55), for example, despite finding her experience ‘frustrating at times’, it was ‘a hugely satisfying journey’ and, therefore, ‘can’t think of anything that [she]’d swap it for’. As discussed in Section 5.3.4, SE12 was dissatisfied with the schooling system and therefore, setting up her social enterprise enabled her to help her beneficiaries ‘becoming more confident’ and ‘learning practical skills’ to ‘get them closer to the job market’, giving her a sense of ‘enjoyment’. SE11 (M, 56), on the other hand, felt the ‘feel good factor’ he gained stems from ‘relieving the pain’ of others, noting, ‘I have changed quite a lot, I feel very happy’. This is also illustrated by SE4’s (M, 50), who notes, there is ‘an underpinning positivity to it’ as compared to working for larger organisations that ‘just want to make money’; he gets ‘a dopamine rush that flows’ and an ‘uplifting’ experience.

The participants, therefore, found their experience as social entrepreneurs beneficial on two levels. On one level, they gained a wide range of business, management, and social media skills, and on the other, they found their experience ‘emotionally uplifting’, contributing to their wellbeing. However, five participants highlighted the potential emotional, physical, and reputational risks encountered during the social entrepreneurial process. Risk is often associated with financial risk in entrepreneurship literature (Brockhaus, 1980; Begley and Boyd, 1987). However, as noted by Brockhaus (1980, p. 433) ‘there are entrepreneurial risks, which are not of financial nature’. This can include work-life balance, emotional, reputational, and physical risks (Brockhaus, 1980; Stumbitz, 2013). SE3’s (M, 53) account below illustrates how working in under-resourced communities and witnessing poverty, at times affects him emotionally.

SE3 (M, 53): ‘I have my moments when I got deeply affected...you’re standing in front of a little girl whose mother has just been thrown on the back of the truck the day before, carted off, and the last time she’d ever seen her. She just died the next day. No chance of
saying goodbye and you stand there in front of this little girl, four years old who’s just completely somewhere else...completely lost, doesn’t know what’s going on. I have a bit of a reaction to that...in general, I don’t think I get too affected by it really. I mean some people get very affected. I have my moments’.

The little girl’s ‘emotional-laden’ story communicates the extent of the social problem SE3 is addressing, however, his use of the sentence ‘in general I don’t get too affected by it’ conveys, despite being affected emotionally, his compassion in alleviating poverty remains his primary objective. As he notes, ‘what I have really spent a lot of my time in the last twelve months, finding out where all the kids that have been lost their care givers are, registering them, providing aid, relief, help, trying to get them into a family, trying to get them back to school’. Similarly, SE14’s (F, 57) ‘found it hard’ when she was helping a family in need during Christmas, however, this conveyed her ‘anger’ with the ‘injustice’ of benefits systems (‘they’re all in his name...stopped the benefits system’) and the ‘very sharp divide between the rich and poor,’ leaving young children growing up in ‘poverty’. She states, despite being affected emotionally, with her business partner they take greater care in ‘meeting the advantage’ of their community and ‘see the potential’ of their beneficiaries, noting ‘that’s what we’re trying to do here’.

SE3 and SE14’s accounts demonstrate the intensity of the social problem they were addressing, affecting them emotionally. However, SE11 (M, 56) spoke of ‘reputational’ risk as one of the challenges he had experienced. SE11 ‘bonded’ with his beneficiaries and their families, demonstrated a deep interest in their personal lives and personal problems, and felt accountable for their welfare. However, building and sustaining a good relationship with his beneficiaries meant he continuously thought about his ‘personal reputation’ and ‘creating a good name in the community’. Thus, building good reputation in the community is how SE11 constructs the word ‘risk’.

The word ‘reputation’ described by SE14 (F, 58) is different to the way it was constructed by SE11. She suggests, building ‘reputation’ as a social entrepreneur is ‘more difficult when you are over fifty’. Noting, ‘if you’re someone who’s done engineering or building, for example, for a lot of time, and then suddenly setting up on your own, you’ve not got the clients, you’ve not got the reputation because your reputation has always been in the name of the firm you’ve worked for and not yours’. SE14, therefore, associates the word ‘reputation’ with difficulties in building an entrepreneurial (social) identity when aged 50+.

This theme ‘personal enrichment’ has highlighted the participants’ held belief about their ‘everyday lives’ as social entrepreneurs. In particular, it illustrates the wide range of skills the participants gained
such as business, management, interpersonal and social media skills, contributing to their wellbeing. This can be seen in SE16’s (F, 58) account, who gained a wide range of skills such as social media and website design, accounting, and Excel skills. Indeed, learning new skills has broadly been recognised by participants, as in the case of SE8 (M, 50), who has learnt management skills, concluding it has been beneficial in managing his employees and broadening his skills set.

It is apparent from the data, learning how to complete ‘grant proposals’ cultivated the interviewees’ understanding of terminologies required by funders and the importance of evaluating and evidencing social impact. This is illustrated in SE19’s (M, 62) account, who argues, ‘filling out grant applications’ helped him understand the significance of evidencing social impact. However, gaining ‘self-confidence’, had been perceived as one of the greatest benefits they gained, as in the case of SE27 (F, 71), who enhanced her self-confidence by ‘standing up’ and ‘pitching’ for funding at UnLtd.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate the benefits of business ‘mentoring’. As in the case of SE5 (F, 50), who found it beneficial to receive support from both her business mentor and an existing social entrepreneur, enabling her to write a business plan and promote her club on Facebook. Besides, the interviewees’ spoke of ‘lifelong learning’, demonstrating their views that, learning is not age related. This is shown in SE27’s (F, 71) account, who believes people regardless of age, can ‘always learn something new’. In addition, the participants highlighted the ‘feel good’ factor they gained during the social entrepreneurial process, as in the case of SE4 (M, 50) who felt his experience has been ‘emotionally uplifting’.

Despite their positive experience, five participants highlighted the emotional and reputational risks associated with their social enterprise activity. This can be seen in SE3’s (M, 53) account, who was emotionally affected by the ‘little girl’s’ story, together with SE11 (M, 56), who was concerned about his ‘reputation’ in the community.

6.5.1 Theme Three ‘Personal Enrichment’: Summary and Discussion

The significant insights generated from this theme ‘personal enrichment’ is how the participants interpreted their experience during the social entrepreneurial process overall as positive. They demonstrated a general sense of learning and ‘a feel-good factor’, many voicing their opinions in how by becoming social entrepreneurs, they have gained a wide range of skills such as business, management, social media skills and interpersonal skills, such as self-confidence and effective delegation, enhancing their emotional wellbeing. The potential of gaining wellbeing and a positive learning experience has been suggested by, for instance, Busenitz, et al., (2015) who argue, social
entrepreneurs who may wish to remain small and localised gain self-satisfaction and wellbeing from serving their local communities. Besides, McDowall (2013) found increased capacity in social capital such as confidence and a positive learning experience have been found to be main benefits LLSEs gain from their social enterprise activity.

Additionally, the participants viewed ‘learning’ should not be attributed to ‘older’ age, conveying their beliefs that age is not a barrier to their continuous learning. As highlighted in the preceding theme ‘self-identity’, the participants did not subscribe to the objective view of ageing, presenting the ageing process as a phase of decline and dependency. Instead, they saw their age an opportunity to engage in their social enterprise activity. This is consistent with Annear, et al., (2012), who argue the external environment could play a significant role in enhancing the wellbeing of ‘older’ people. This includes access to social networks and social participations that will positively influence how this age group experience the ageing process. Conversely, social disengagement and smaller social networks may be detrimental to their health and wellbeing. Despite their positive perceptions, the participants faced a number of challenges, as explored in theme ‘sustainability’ in Section 6.6.

6.6 Theme Four: ‘Sustainability’

Research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has gained wider academic attention and a considerable interest from policy makers and practitioners (Lyon and Fernandez, 2012), however, little is known about the challenges LLSEs face (Stumbitz, 2013). This theme, therefore, provides an in-depth analysis of the type of challenges and barriers the participants faced and the support they require.

The interpretation of the word ‘sustainability’ generated six tacit perceptions held by participants: ‘access to funding’, ‘balancing strategic and operational objectives’, ‘balancing social mission with for-profit motives’, ‘measuring social impact’, ‘resource capabilities’, and ‘legitimacy’. These six perceptions are, therefore, discussed, in this section, as sub-themes to provide the reader with a better understanding of the participants’ perspectives about the challenges they faced.

6.6.1 Sub-Theme One of ‘Sustainability’: ‘Access to Funding’

This sub-theme focuses on the understanding, expressed in the majority of the interviewees’ accounts, that one of the main challenges they faced was ‘sustainability’ from an economic perspective. In the extract below, SE6 (M, 53) explains how he found ‘access to funding’ difficult, having a negative impact on his social enterprise activity:
SE6 (M, 53): ‘where I’m not so good at is actually getting some funding to do it. So, I’ve done it myself, but I mean I’d have like to have done more to try to show what can be done. The thing is because my things is [sic] to do more with being a KTP person, a conduit of ideas and I one of the problems is people undervalue a few words...the actual economic significance of a few words because the vast majority of people don’t think about these things and when you say it, the trouble is they use it and they don’t acknowledge it. Financially, they don’t acknowledge it’.

SE6 spoke of the initial funding he received from UnLtd helping him to start ‘his project’, which is to ‘encourage people, growers, and food producers’ understand the benefits of local healthy resources. However, he feels ‘unless he gets a lot of funding to cover him for a long period’ he will ‘end up doing more work than it is represented by any funding that comes in’. This suggests, limited access to funding had a negative effect on SE6 since he was often ‘doing work on the ground’ whilst uncertain of the viability of his ‘project’. Nevertheless, his use of the phrase, ‘the thing is because my things is [sic] to do more with being a KTP person...conduit of ideas...I’m an innovator by nature’ demonstrates his felt perception of being an ‘innovator’ rather than a social entrepreneur. He constructed an ‘innovator’ as someone who ‘observe things that are different and then see they can be put together in different ways and in different areas’, highlighting the reasons why he found it difficult to be enterprising. He notes, ‘I need people appointing me to the right direction, in terms of getting funding for doing it but it’s not my strength in terms of doing that but that’s really where I have to do a bit more really’.

SE6, therefore, found access to funding difficult due to his perception of himself as an ‘innovator’ needing support and guidance to be enterprising. Despite this, SE6 subscribes to the ‘hybridity’ of social enterprises, generating an income to achieve their social mission. As he notes, ‘I’m not a good example but I understand the economic way of continuing. I don’t think there is nothing wrong with that. There are ways you could do it and still be a socially responsible organisation. The money from doing something economically can be ploughed back into a social thing as well really but it should be encouraged’.

SE19 (M, 62) also describes how ‘slow things are to move forward’, making his experience challenging. He explains, the funding he was awarded from UnLtd ‘supported [him] for a year and allowed [him] not to have to run around left, right, and centre’ however, ‘things are slow to come together’. The reasons why SE19 found ‘things slow’ is due to lack of sales in his music shop and the uncertainty of ‘winning government projects’. However, contrary to SE6 who found ‘access to funding’ challenging, SE19 argues, it is ‘not that hard’. He recounted his experience of being ‘turned down’ for a ‘funding bid’ however, being advised to adjust his grant application, he was successful in winning the bid, noting ‘there’s plenty of money out there...but it’s more about your idea and how you can present it properly’.
Hence, SE6’s identification with the word ‘sustainability’ is more related to the uncertainty of the viability of his enterprise rather than access to funding.

Whilst SE6 was uncertain about the sustainability of his social enterprise, SE4 (M, 50) spoke of a different challenge, relating this to ‘raising money’ and ‘persuading organisations to look at new business models and new ways of doing things’. SE4 argues, ‘organisations’ are often reluctant to invest in start-up social enterprises because ‘it is a challenge to get them firstly to buy the concept and secondly to think that a small team...a start-up can actually do something about it’. SE4’s view is consistent with studies that found access to funding is a major challenge for social enterprises, particularly at the start-up stage (e.g. Dees, 1998; Kingston and Bolton, 2004; Salamon, 1994). Indeed, it took SE4 ‘three years to make any argument to the point’, demonstrating the challenges he faced in convincing organisations to invest in his business.

‘Sustainability’ is communicated differently by SE23 (M, 60), who views ‘the crippling up costs’ such as paying ‘suppliers’, ‘rent’, ‘business rates’, and ‘staff’ presents more challenges for start-ups rather than established social enterprises. Hence, he argues, ‘I am not gonna get into financial difficulty if the sums don’t add up’, concluding ‘deliberately opening the door and knowing it’s not gonna work that would be a stupid thing to do’. Indeed, during my conversation with SE23, he demonstrated his uncertainty about the viability of his social enterprise if he does not access alternative funding.

SE1 (M, 53), on the other hand, who is also at the start-up stage, notes, although he accessed funding and resources through UnLtd and his partnership with the NHS, ‘no one is gonna fund all of this’. Recognising the investment he needed, to set up his social enterprise, he was in the process of seeking alternative funding opportunities. However, he argues, social enterprises have to ‘fund themselves’ and ‘make money to provide people with some volunteering skills and job opportunities’. SE1, therefore, recognises that social enterprises may require funding at the start-up stage but his ‘suggestion would be, don’t make your venture dependent on getting grants. Do it on a low-income basis when you can get the contracts’. His view is consistent with existing research, which found social enterprises are essentially a business trading for a social purpose (e.g. Boschee, 2001, Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Lyon, et al., 2010).

SE24 (M, 63) identification with ‘sustainability’ is different, since he relates this to the ‘chicken and egg situation’ of social enterprises. Despite developing innovative solutions to social problems, he notes, social enterprises are not profitable enough to access funding due to lack of evidence of the viability of their business model. He spoke of his experience when he was turned down for funding because he was ‘at the stage where [he] couldn’t prove the business model’, which he believes, is a ‘chicken and
egg situation of starting a new business. You can’t get the finance if you got the income stream but you can only get the income stream once you got the finance’.

Although SE24 recognises ‘trying to get off the ground’ is often difficult for both commercial and social enterprises, it is ‘more so for social enterprises’ due to the challenges they face in accessing ‘traditional financial markets’ such as banks. Hence, he believes ‘charitable trusts’ are ‘more sympathetic’ than financial institutions towards social enterprises because of their explicit social mission. Nevertheless, SE24 attributed this general lack of understanding that ‘social enterprises are to an extent a business’, constraining their ability to access funding.

Indeed, his view highlights the perceived ‘lack of support’ provided when social entrepreneurs apply for funding from financial institutions, which according to SE1 (M, 53) is due to being 50+. He states, being aged fifty and ‘not being around for longer’ meant financial institutions consider ‘you a high level of risk’. He notes, although ‘there is advantage of being a bit older whether a bank will say, ‘I’m not giving you that investment because you won’t be around for long’ conveys the barriers social entrepreneurs aged 50+ face.

On the other hand, SE24 (M, 63) spoke of ‘strings attached’ to funding as funders ‘still lend you money if you can prove you can pay it back’. The issue of ‘strings attached’ has also surfaced in SE21’s (M, 60) account, who argues, more often investors ask ‘where is my return? Where am I gonna get my 7%? I’m giving you a loan to set it up, I need it back’, lacking an understanding ‘there is no return on social enterprises except the social value’. The issues with ‘string attached’ is also illustrated in SE23’s (M, 60) account, arguing ‘there is always somebody standing behind you with a clipboard and they wanna have a say in how it is spent’. This conveys his understanding that social enterprises are required to report on how the money is spent despite funders not wanting to ‘take the responsibility of the way they say it’s gotta spent but they wanna tell you how it is spent’. As such, he demonstrates his frustration with funding systems, stating ‘poof, go away’. You either fund it or you don’t’.

Lack of access to funding has surfaced in the accounts of many participants, such as SE25 (F, 64), who responded to my interview question, ‘what do you think your main challenges are?

SE25 (F, 64): ‘funding is an issue. We spend a lot of time trying to find money but I think that’s pretty normal isn’t it? Just funding really. Funding is the key issue. There’s just not enough money and […] is expensive. It’s not a cheap pastime time. Funding is the main issue. I don’t know how we are gonna sustain it. It seems to go from one funding issue to another. We’re having a meeting in the next fortnight to try and figure out what to do next because we’re down to almost no money. That’s it really. It’s up to us to find funding. We’re just applying for something with them. There’re lots and lots of funding organisations, it’s just whether we fit their criteria’.

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SE25’s repetition of ‘funding’ being an ‘issue’ conveys her uncertainty about the sustainability of her social enterprise due to ‘going from one funding issue to another’. However, her use of the phrase ‘is up to us to find funding’ meant, she felt accountable in sustaining her social enterprise despite the increased ‘strain’ of having to ‘fit with the funding criteria’. When I probed further what she meant by ‘funding criteria’, SE25 explains, she ‘regularly’ works with the county council, yet due to government spending cuts, ‘contracting services’ are less available, having a negative impact on her income. The issue with government spending cuts has also surfaced in SE14’s (F, 57) account, who argues ‘to get money out of [...] Council is always a nightmare. It is like any council. All the money has been stopped to be fair. There isn’t any but you know you have to push them all the time until they get them set up’.

SE25 and SE14, therefore, highlight the negative outcomes of government spending cuts on the sustainability of their social enterprise. This theme will be explored further in Section 6.6.6 in sub-theme ‘legitimacy’. On the other hand, SE16 (F, 58) explains, adopting a Community Interest Company (CIC) structure has had a negative impact on her sustainability. She explains, funders expect ‘you to be self-sufficient and selling’ which is not ‘the case’ for her since she is not ‘going to get enough by selling workshops and to cover free counselling for families with disabilities’. Here, she recounts her experience of being told by a ‘community foundation’ they ‘don’t expect [her] to be going to them because they expect [her] to be selling enough to cover, which [she] doesn’t see it will ever happen’. Indeed, SE16 believes, she is ‘considered bottom of the list’ and comes ‘after charities’ due to funders’ expectations she is trading and generating a revenue. However, she expresses her concerns about the long-term sustainability of her social enterprise since she can ‘barely’ cover ‘insurance, website, perpetual but not enough to cover the whole’. As such, she believes if ‘some funders are expecting me to run the charitable side from the profits of the business side that’s never gonna happen’ as ‘nobody makes enough profits’.

Nevertheless, she further explains, adopting a CIC structure has been challenging due to a lack of understanding, particularly among banking institutions, of what it means. She describes her ‘nightmare’ experience of ‘taking six months’ to open a bank account since the business manager ‘didn’t know what a CIC was’. Here, she suggests ‘if there was a pack that says, get insurance from these people they know what it’s about; go to this bank that would have been useful’. Having ‘a pack’, demonstrates SE16’s beliefs that LLSEs may require practical guidance when setting up their social enterprise. This theme will be explored further in Section 6.7, when discussing the support required by participants. SE16’s account is also echoed by SE24 (M, 63), who argues, ‘not many charitable funds will give to community interest companies that are not registered as a charity’. He explains, since the
CIC structure is considered ‘halfway between for-profit and a charity’, there is always an expectation to be self-sustaining.

Nevertheless, SE19 (M, 62) provides a different explanation concerning the CIC structure. He argues, he has an ambivalent feeling about its usefulness due to the perpetual need for evidencing. This stems from his ‘frustration’ with the way ‘every funded project’ he has to evidence ‘value for money’, detracting him from ‘doing work on the ground’. SE19, therefore, perceives the CIC structure just a ‘tool’ for funders to justify social impact, with less consideration being made at the ‘real ground work’ made by social enterprises. Notwithstanding, his phrase, ‘I will need to become either a charity or a CIC. Charity doesn’t fit the bill because I need to relinquish control over what it does and I’m not prepared to do that’ suggests his decision to adopt a CIC structure was to avoid relinquishing control and his desire to retain a certain degree of power or more explicit choice regarding its activities and direction.

The ‘negative’ perceptions held by participants about the CIC structure was by no means a consensus, as SE4 (M, 50), argues, from a practical viewpoint, it ‘does make it easier to have productive discussions with local authorities’. His understanding of the CIC structure is more related to sharing the ‘values’ of local authorities and the ‘meeting of like-minded people’ to ‘build partnerships’. Hence, for SE4, the CIC structure demonstrates to government agencies he aligns with their social values, fostering better partnerships.

The participants, therefore, held different beliefs about the CIC structure as, on the one hand, they felt it fosters collaboration with local authorities, and on the other, it is constraining due the expectations placed on them to be self-sustaining. In addition, they highlight there is a lack of understanding among funders, particularly financial institutions, of what CIC structure means. This is congruent with existing research that has demonstrated social enterprises may take a variety of legal structures. However, this remains secondary to their social mission (e.g. Dees and Anderson, 2006; Spear, et al., 2009; Townsend and Hart, 2008). UnLtd (2016), for instance, has highlighted social enterprises can adopt multiple legal structures. These can include, for instance, a company limited by guarantee, a company limited by shares, a charitable incorporated organisation, a limited liability partnership, and a CIC, which can be limited by either shares or by guarantee. Nevertheless, the CIC legal structure requires social enterprises to satisfy a ‘community interest test’, thereby ensuring they operate for the benefit of the community. In addition, they are subject to an ‘asset lock’, which limits the distribution of assets and profits, thereby ensuring they are used for the benefit of the community rather than serving the interests of shareholders (UnLtd, 2016).
Participants’ accounts highlight the constraining element of CIC structure due to there being an expectation placed on them to be self-sustaining. However, it was evident from the data that, most participants saw income generation to be significant to their sustainability. This supports existing literature on social enterprise (e.g. Boschee, 2001; Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Lyon, et al., 2010) who found trading is ‘a rational solution at a time when government funding and philanthropic giving is failing’ (Teasdale, 2010, p. 6).

Nevertheless, besides the ‘strings attached’ and the constraints of the CIC structure, SE17 (F, 58) argues, large-scale social enterprises tend to be in a ‘gap area’ where ‘they are generally looking for grants around about £5,000, £10,000, £15,000’ yet, most of community funding is ‘about £500-£2000’, which is insufficient since her social enterprise is ‘bigger than that’. SE17 indicates, her main challenge is ‘financial, financial, financial’ despite having a ‘good team, lovely customers, good reputations and good premises in a reasonable location’. Her description of ‘financial strains’ conveys her belief, social enterprises face challenges in scaling since funding is often oriented towards ‘small scale’ social enterprises than those aspiring to scale beyond the boundaries of their local community. Indeed, her description is congruent with Lyon and Fernandez’s (2012, p. 2), who found, although there are a number of alternatives to scale social impact beyond the organisation’s boundaries’, there is little understanding of social enterprises that aspire to grow.

However, when I asked AAA2 (M) his views about the challenges faced by LLSEs, he argues, this is related to ‘personal risk’. He notes, most social enterprises are ‘small in scale’ and community embedded, hence, face difficulties in ‘making the move from small to scaling’ due to ‘taking a huge risk personally and financially for no return’. Indeed, AAA2 conveys his understanding ‘it takes a very special person to be able to start a social enterprise’ especially when ‘profits and the value is returned within the company itself’ rather than to the social entrepreneur. Hence, for AAA2, social entrepreneurs who have ‘little personal or financial return must have amazing qualities’. AAA2 believes a social entrepreneur who ‘can be ‘comfortable with having a relatively modest return and building what would hopefully be a scalable impact’ must be a ‘special person’. Indeed, his views are consistent with Dees (1998), who describes social entrepreneurs as ‘a special breed’, who have special qualities, conveying his heroic and idealised approach to social entrepreneurship. However, as indicated in Section 6.4.2, some participants felt revenue generation to be incompatible with their social mission.

This view is consistent with AAA5 (F), who states, LLSEs are likely to be driven by the desire to ‘give back’ to their local community rather than building their identity as social entrepreneurs. She argues, ‘to make a social enterprise, you’ve got to be an entrepreneur who works like that’. However, ‘lots of
people 50+ can’t work like that or don’t want to. That’s not for many people, a life they have good reason to value. They’re not at a stage in their lives when they’re trying to build their identity’. It was evident from the data that, the participants found ‘sustainability’ to be one of the hardest challenges they faced. However, they held different perspectives about what sustainability meant for them, as in the case of SE6, who relates ‘sustainability’ to lack of access to funding due to his felt perception that he is an ‘innovator’ rather than a social entrepreneur. On the other hand, SE19 associates ‘sustainability’ with ‘slow progress, conveying his uncertainty of the viability of his social enterprise. Contrary to SE6, who believes access to funding is limited, SE19 argues, funding opportunities are available however, they are dependent on how social entrepreneurs present their entrepreneurial ‘idea’.

SE23, however, argues, ‘sustainability’ is related to the ‘crippling costs’ at the start-up stage, threatening the viability of his social enterprise. By contrast, for SE1, ‘sustainability’ meant social enterprises trade to avoid dependency on government grants and philanthropy. Yet, he recognises more often, social enterprises require funding at the start-up stage. This view is extended by SE24, who argues, social enterprises are in a ‘chicken and egg situation’ due to there being a gap between access to funding and funders’ uncertainty of the viability of their social model. Furthermore, SE24 spoke about the ‘strings attached’ to funding, demonstrating the expectations placed on social enterprises to be self-sustaining. On the other hand, SE25 spoke of government spending cuts constraining access to ‘projects’ commissioned by government agencies, threatening the sustainability of her social enterprise. However, SE16 conveyed her belief about the constraining aspects of the CIC structure since there is a lack of understanding of what it means.

Finally, the AAA interviews highlight the issues related with the heroic interpretation of social entrepreneurs, as in the case of AAA2 (M), who argues, they must have ‘amazing qualities’ due to personal risks and lack of financial rewards. On the other hand, AAA5 states, the model of social enterprise is limited, if the interpretation is made to incorporate those who have the aspiration to scale compared to those embedded within their community.

Nevertheless, the way in which the participants’ interpreted ‘sustainability’ also conveyed the challenges they faced in balancing their strategic and operational objectives due to limited resources, as discussed in Section 6.6.2 below.
6.6.2 Sub-Theme Two of ‘Sustainability’: ‘Balancing Strategic and Operational Objectives’

Central to the participants’ perceptions of ‘sustainability’ is the beliefs they held about the ‘perceived lack of time’ to balance their strategic and operational objectives due to resource constraints. As illustrated in Table 6.3, only twelve participants were operating on a full-time basis and sixteen on a part-time basis alongside other jobs and/or family commitments. In addition, eighteen out of twenty-eight participants were operating for more than one year, nine were at the start-up stage, and one participant was temporarily withdrawn.

Table 6.3 Participants’ levels of participation in their social enterprise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage in Enterprise’s development</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently at start-up</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 year</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Withdrawn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of participants felt balancing strategic and operational objectives were important to diversify their services and/or products, maximise social impact, and addressing social needs in other parts of public sectors. However, due to resource constraints, they experienced challenges, as illustrated by SE11’s (M, Age 56) account below.

SE11 (M, 56): ‘I’m more of a fire extinguisher. Therefore, I’m running around like a rabbit doing all these things and running the business, interviewing people and meeting new clients …it’s not exhausting but I don’t find the time to do anything else. So, it’s become like a wheel. What I have been criticised for lately is I have gone too nitty. I’m too involved in the business. Therefore, it wouldn’t grow. So, I need to step back and get somebody to do what I’m doing to be able to grow’.

SE11 explains by running his social enterprise as a ‘one-man band’ constrained his ability to pursue long-term strategic goals and ‘branch out...across the UK’. He further explains, ‘running the show by himself’ and his commitment in providing a quality in-home care service, meant he is ‘too involved’ in the business rather than developing strategic goals for growth. As such, he describes himself as a ‘fire extinguisher’, illustrating the extent of his involvement in the business. He recounts his experience of receiving ‘free advice’ from a social entrepreneur through UnLtd’s Expert Impact in which he was told he needed to ‘step out of what [he was] doing and get somebody to do that otherwise [he] wouldn’t see from above and can start focusing on other areas’. The advice he was given was to recruit ‘a
manager to manage the business’ so he could ‘stop running like a rabbit’. Nevertheless, he also expresses his felt belief that being too involved in operating his business meant he has ‘learnt everything’ and therefore, would be ‘easier’ to ‘communicate to another person that’s the best way to do it’.

SE11’s account, therefore, reveals ‘being too involved in the business’ constrained his ability to develop long-term strategic goals for growth. Indeed, his account is congruent with entrepreneurship research which found strategic planning is fundamental for business growth (e.g. Boschee, 2007; Kraus and Kauranen, 2009). However, as indicated in Chapter Two, contrary to commercial businesses that maximise profits in the interest of shareholders, social enterprises use their financial structure to reinforce their social mission (Dees, 1998). The issue of ‘balancing strategic and operational objectives’ is further illustrated by SE19 (M, 62), who argues, by being a ‘one-man band’, more often he plays the role of a ‘manager’ and a ‘marketer’ rather than an entrepreneur. His expression ‘I’m not happy about that but I haven’t got any choice’ suggests, he felt ‘resigned to carry on this way’ since he lacks resources to recruit paid staff. However, he explains, due to ‘running a commercial operation as a school and a studio operation’, he spends most of his time trying to ‘promote the tuition, collating questionnaires…running the shop’, making it difficult to strategically grow his social enterprise. He also notes, although collaborating with the Arts Council and Big Local is ‘helping’, it has taken a long time for projects to take place and, therefore, further support mechanisms are required to expedite collaboration between sectors. This theme will be discussed further in Section 6.7 in relation to the theme ‘capacity building and ecosystem of support’.

The way in which the participants’ felt the need to balance their ‘strategic and operational objectives’ is further illustrated by SE22 (M, 61), who felt ‘stretched’ and ‘responsible’ to collaborate with industries and public sector organisations to promote his business, limiting his ability to ‘replicate’ his social enterprise ‘across the UK’. Although SE22 demonstrates his ‘stretched’ situation, he states, ‘if I’m lucky enough to get investment to put in a facilities manager to run this to allow me to go off to do the sales and business development’. This suggests SE22 aspires to recruit paid staff so he can focus on building ‘strategic partnerships with commercial people’ to generate further revenue, as he notes, ‘we will have six times as much revenue I strongly believe, and if we do that, we can help 120 people in work every year. Those sorts of volumes I’m predicting. So, this is what it can do’.

Contrary to SE19 who felt building ‘strategic partnerships with commercial people’ is important for growth, SE21 (M, 60) explains, social entrepreneurs are often expected to be managers rather than entrepreneurs. He notes, ‘social enterprises are stuck in the middle of it. You’ve gotta be a business manager and some form of entrepreneur they’re looking for. An entrepreneur in poverty, meddling in
poverty’. This account is similar to SE19, who perceived himself a manager and/or a marketer rather than an entrepreneur. The participants’ accounts about the significance of building strategic goals is consistent with Carland, et al., (1984, p. 358), who note, ‘a business owner is an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principle purpose of furthering personal goals...an entrepreneur is characterised by innovative behaviour and will employ strategic management practices in the business’.

The role of entrepreneurs in employing strategic practices for growth is also discussed by Boschee (2007, p. 2), who argues, building entrepreneurial strategies is fundamental for the growth of social enterprises. He notes, whilst ‘managers secure the future by installing and overseeing the systems, standards, infrastructure, and human resource policies needed, entrepreneurs are builders...for them, financial viability is the single most important aspect of what they do’. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter Two, commercial entrepreneurs adopt business strategies to maximise shareholders’ values whereas social entrepreneurs develop entrepreneurial strategies in the interest of their social mission (Thompson, 2002). Such view is illustrated by SE19’s (M, 62) account.

*SE19 (M, 62): ‘that’s where the difference comes in ...ok we do have to survive and we are trying to make a living. We do need to make a living and if we got families, it needs to be worthwhile, why struggle when you could be doing another job and being ok. Why do this and have to struggle? So, we do need to make a living, but the whole point is to have some social impact and I think what’s being a social entrepreneur is all about’.*

For SE19, therefore, social entrepreneurs adopt business strategies in the interest of their social mission. This is congruent with Martin and Osberg (2007), who argue, despite social and commercially driven entrepreneurs being motivated by the opportunity they identified, the critical distinction is their value proposition. Whilst the value proposition for commercially driven entrepreneurs is to generate financial profits, social entrepreneurs target the underprivileged and those in need and aim for transformational impact. This subtheme has, therefore, provided significant insights about the challenges the participants faced in ‘balancing their strategic and operational objectives’, such as SE11, who felt like a ‘fire extinguisher’ running the ‘show by himself’ rather than pursuing strategic objectives for growth.

Furthermore, the participants’ accounts revealed resource constraints restricted their ability to employ paid staff, and therefore, played the role of marketers and managers rather than social entrepreneurs. As in the case of SE19, who was not able to employ paid staff, hence he was more of a manager than a social entrepreneur. However, he conveys his understanding that entrepreneurs should be focused
on growing their business rather than being managers. Furthermore, SE19 spoke of the differences between social and commercially driven entrepreneurs concerning the primacy of their social mission. SE22’s also spoke of the importance of building strategic partnerships with ‘commercial people’ but as he is ‘running the show’ by himself, it was difficult to pursue business development activities.

The participants’ insights also generated further challenges in relation to the subtheme ‘balancing social mission with for profit motives’ due to lack of income generation, as indicated in Section 6.6.3 below.

### 6.6.3 Subtheme Three of ‘Sustainability’: ‘Balancing Social Mission with For-Profit Motives’

This subtheme focuses on the understanding, expressed by the majority of the interviewees about the challenges they faced in ‘balancing their social mission with for-profit motives’. Indeed, fifteen out of twenty-eight participants considered income generation significant to avoid dependency on government grants and philanthropic donations. This is consistent with research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, as discussed in Chapter Two, which found social enterprises adopt for-profit trading activities to avoid dependency on philanthropic donations and government support, ensuring their long-term survival and growth (Boschee, 2001; Dees, 2001; Mair and Martí, 2004; Thompson, 2002; Zahra, et al., 2009).

In the interview extract below, SE3 (M, 53) explains why he decided set up a ‘social enterprise rather than a charity’:

*SE3 (M, 53): ‘We made more of a social enterprise than charity, seeking to have some sort of sustainability in it rather than continually needing to go and look for funds and supporters…this is a new model for charities. That is what they should be doing. Running like businesses, operating like businesses, trying to make a profit but then redistributing the profit into good causes rather than into the pockets of shareholders’.*

SE3 decided to set up a ‘social enterprise’ rather than a ‘charity’ to avoid ‘continually needing to go for funds and supporters’. As such, SE3 demonstrates his frustration with the UK government’s investment schemes which are ‘ring fenced...mandated in the spending review’ by using ‘tax payers’ money’ that could be deployed to ‘have more hospitals, junior doctors, schools, childcare places, looking after older people better, the poorer ones’ rather than financially supporting Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO’s) and charities. Like SE3, SE21 (M, 60) decided to ‘adopt a business model’ rather than a ‘charity’ to generate revenues and improve the outcomes of care for children. SE21 had run a charity for ‘ten
years’ and was ‘always trying to fund it’, hence, this time, he decided to ‘get the funding and then meet the needs’ so he ‘can have sustainability’, concluding if he goes ‘for the change and then funding, it won’t happen’. SE23’s (M, 60) is intending to adopt a ‘hybrid’ model by opening his restaurant to the public since he believes if everybody comes in and ‘drank a cup of tea and had a cup of coffee and had every meal that they ever ate and bought it all, there’s still not enough money in the till’. Here, he goes on to explain, trading a restaurant as a social enterprise ‘is not all rosy’ since ‘if a cup of coffee costs 4p you sell it for £2’, he has to ‘make that amount just to keep the place open’. However, he is quick to add, he is hopeful to receive ‘support from the council’, get ‘twelve months holiday period on the rent and rates’ and if he could convince a ‘private philanthropic landlord to move in without paying rent but pay the business rates’, conveying his beliefs social enterprises, at the start-up stage, may require ‘philanthropic donations’. Although SE23 considers ‘hybridity’ an important aspect, he recognises financial support may be needed at the start-up stage.

Strategic social entrepreneurs, therefore, demonstrate their held beliefs about the role of income generation in fulfilling their social mission, as noted in Table 6.2 (Section 6.4.2) when asked about their views of what a social enterprise means for them. They, for example, perceived a social enterprise as ‘a non-profit making venture that has within its remit a social aim’ (SE1, M, 53), ‘plough an economic benefit from something into to the local community’ (SE6, M, 53), and ‘meet the need of the community and be self-sustaining’ (SE 14, F, 57). Although some strategic social entrepreneurs invested their personal money at the start up stage, such as SE22 (M, 61), who invested his retirement savings to set up his social enterprise, sustainability is still considered significant to achieve their social mission. This is consistent with existing research on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, arguing despite lack of an agreed definition; social enterprises are essentially a business that trade for a social purpose (Boschee, 2001; Di Domenico, et al., 2010; Mair and Martí, 2004). However, as argued by Dees (1998, p. 59), ‘commercialisation may pull away the organisation from its original social mission’. This suggests, some social entrepreneurs may view income generation as diluting their social mission. This has surfaced in SE28’s (F, Age 74) account who perceives herself as ‘someone trying to do good in the community’ and, therefore, does not ‘expect to make money out of it’, displaying her understanding that the main role of social enterprises is to ‘give back’ to the community rather than generating profits. Her account is consistent with SE6 (M, 53), who notes, the role of social enterprises is to fulfil their social mission and ‘make a difference’ rather than making a profit. Indeed, as discussed in Section 6.6.1, although SE6 understands the ‘economic value in trading’, he believes ‘income should not be the driving motive’.
The above participants’ accounts highlight their perspectives about the primacy of their social mission over generating profits. This is consistent with the literature review, as discussed in Chapter Two, and the argument that income generation may undermine the legitimacy of individuals and communities who create social value without the pursuit of income (e.g. Felício, et al., 2013; Caulier-Grice, et al., 2012). Nicholls (2010a), for instance, notes, the overall discourse on social innovation and social value creation seems to prioritise the ‘heroic figure’ of the social entrepreneur over the role of communities who are less motivated by income generation.

Nevertheless, as shown in Figure 6.2, experiencing a ‘mindset shift’ during the social entrepreneurial process was apparent in the accounts of two participants who felt they have become more enterprising, seeking opportunities to trade to generate an income. The figure below, therefore, demonstrates the way in which, at the start up stage, SE5 and SE16 were focused on social value creation and ‘making a difference’ to beneficiaries. At this stage, both participants felt income generation to be incompatible with their social mission and hence, were more social than entrepreneurial. However, upon realising the significance of generating an income to sustain their social enterprise, they started looking for ways to trade. The mindset shift experienced by both participants seems to have happened halfway through the social entrepreneurial process when they both realised trading would support their social mission. However, the participants also highlight they had experienced a shift both in their mindset and their behaviour.

Figure 6.2 Participants’ interpretations of their ‘mindset shift’
SE16 (F, 56), for instance, explains her mindset shift meant she had changed her behaviour and actions, becoming more entrepreneurial than social:

SE16 (F, 56): ‘you kind of change completely. You get a bit mercenary and you don’t...actually, this is the good thing about social enterprise. If it was a business, I don’t think I could be pushy. So because I know it’s a bloody good cause. Because I’m not making a profit for me, ideally yes as yet it hasn’t. I think if it is for the good of the community, I’m happy to push for that’.

As discussed in Section 5.3.2, SE16’s decision to set up her social enterprise in intervention theory for families of children with complex health needs stemmed from her redundancy and seeking to gain control over her life. At the start-up stage, SE16 was funded through UnLtd core award programmes however, most of her income is generated through projects commissioned by government agencies. Hence, at the start-up stage, SE16 was dependent on collaborating with government agencies to generate income. However, her mindset shift could be seen in the way she has ‘become a bit mercenary and pushy’ to support her social mission. When I probed further what she meant by ‘mercenary’ and ‘pushy’, she explained she is happy to generate an income as long as she is responding to a ‘good cause’ changing the lives of those families.

The way in which SE16 changed her behaviour was by becoming ‘braver’ in promoting her social enterprise. She recounts her experience of meeting ‘a couple of parents’ who have children with complex health needs at her yoga class, using the opportunity to promote her workshops. She further explains, she has become more ‘confident’ in seeking support by asking if anyone ‘can do fundraising or know how to do accounts, [she] need[s] them as well’. However, central to SE16’s account is the way she built her ‘self-confidence’ helping her to be more ‘mercenary’ so she can further her social objectives, concluding it is ‘one of those things where [she] knew [she] would make so much difference’.

The mindset shift experienced by SE16 has also featured in SE5’s (F, 50) account, explaining at the start-up stage, she found it difficult to sell her singing classes as she felt it was in conflict with her social mission. She notes, it was difficult to ‘push [herself] to a stranger and shove [her] nose’ since she believed ‘people that are pushy are very arrogant sometimes’ and she ‘doesn’t want to become that’. However, the way in which SE5 had changed her behaviour and say, ‘this is what I do’ stemmed from realisation that her ‘time is worth the money and that [her] expertise is worth the money’. Here, SE5 describes herself as ‘a businessman’ and ‘needs to make money out of this’ to support her children and family.
To generate an income, SE5 has changed the way she promoted her club. She explains, the ‘biggest problem’ she had faced at the start-up stage was to ‘get the bookings’ since she thought ‘people don’t wanna hear what [she] is telling them’. However, she has become ‘smarter and wiser’ and, therefore, has started asking her customers for ‘payment by the first of December’ for ‘January start’, concluding ‘I have become better at this’. She notes ‘I’ve made a lot of mistakes over the years’ and, therefore, ‘I had to adapt my ways...I make a bit of money...make a living wage’. However, she is quick to add, she is ‘just building it up ... I’m only one and a half years in...I want to earn money but it is secondary to what I’m wanting to do. it’s still important but it’s secondary’. This suggests although for SE5 gaining an income is important, it is still secondary to her social aspiration, which is to ‘spread’ her singing classes ‘as far as’ she could go. When I probed further what she meant by aspiration, SE5 says, ‘I want to be able give away free classes to underprivileged children’ since she is concerned she is ‘excluding people that can’t afford her classes’.

Nevertheless, the way in which SE5 demonstrates her ‘mindset shift’ is also through conducting her business. She explains, she became ‘much more careful with the money’ she uses to promote her club and asking whether she ‘really need it for [her] business to help [her] bring more money? As such, she started using Facebook as a free advertising tool, ‘tailoring’ her services to her ‘audience’, and forming ‘friendships’ with customers. In addition, she set up new classes for childminders, formed new partnerships with children’s nurseries, and set up priority bookings, noting she has ‘already 80% rebooking for next term’ which is ‘better than last term’.

However, central to SE5’s account is the way she has changed her shopping behaviour, conveying her belief, she is keen to support small businesses since she ‘knows what they go through’. She states, she ‘learnt to appreciate what [she] buys so rather going to Marks and Spencer, [she]’ll look for a small business because [she] likes to have support’. Indeed, she recounts her experience of using a small business supplier to print her ‘marketing flyers’ because she wanted to ‘be able to support’ them, knowing ‘how important it is for them’. SE5’s mindset shift was, therefore, beneficial not only in promoting her social enterprise but also in supporting small local businesses gain a revenue stream.

Thus, although SE16 and SE5 felt gaining an income is in conflict with their social mission, they had learnt to become enterprising in the pursuit of their social mission.

Nevertheless, the concept of ‘relevance’ is a further pattern that has emerged from the data. This is interpreted as moving beyond ‘sustainability’ to achieve ‘relevance’, which is to deliver long-term sustainable solutions. As illustrated in Figure 6.3, the participants interpreted the entrepreneurial process to involve four stages: ‘opportunity recognition’ by using their tacit knowledge of social issues; ‘resource allocation’ by acquiring the necessary resources to address the social need they identified,
sustainability which is generating income in support of their social mission, and finally, relevance which is delivering long-term sustainable solutions.

Figure 6.3 Social entrepreneurial process

SE1 (M, 53), for instance, explains, although he set up his enterprise to address a personal need, he drew on his prior knowledge in the ‘opportunity recognition’ process. After he was made redundant, SE1 volunteered for a charity when he ‘saw a kind of a gap’ in the ‘addiction market’ and, therefore, decided to set up a social enterprise to help those affected. Central to SE1’s account is his level of identification with the word ‘entrepreneur’, noting the ‘classic definition of an entrepreneur in the UK is somebody who sees an opportunity in the market and fulfils it’. However, he feels not only has he identified a gap in the market but he is also saving medical care costs through his cost-effective solutions.

‘Opportunity identification’ also conveyed his understanding of the interplay between creativity and social entrepreneurship. He notes, identifying social needs, requires the social entrepreneur to ‘take the idea, mapping it out’ and demonstrate ‘how it works’, which is something he enjoys the most. However, he argues, social enterprises have to be ‘financially sustainable’ and provide novel and efficient approaches to addressing social problems. He notes, his solution would save £25,000 to the community...then if it works, the NHS gets a service which they can franchise out...a guaranteed income for the NHS...then it provides employment...save people from that perpetual sort of addiction prison cycle...and save tax by getting people contributing’. This is consistent with Dees (2001), who argues,
Schumpeter’s concept of ‘creative destruction’ is central to understanding social entrepreneurship. Despite commercially driven entrepreneurs create financial wealth; social entrepreneurs are ‘change agents’ who have an explicit social mission to create social value.

As indicated in Section 6.6.2, fifteen out of twenty-eight participants were strategic in their social orientations and hence conveyed their understanding of the significance of adopting a ‘hybrid’ social enterprise to gain ‘financial sustainability’. However, this has also demonstrated the resource constraints they experienced during the social entrepreneurial process. As such, ‘resourcefulness’ has surfaced in the accounts of many interviewees, highlighting since they are embedded within a community characterised by limited resources, they utilised new and existing resources in the pursuit of their social mission. A number of ways in which the participants assembled resources, included ‘bootstrapping’ and ‘bricolage’, which are interpreted as ‘making do with the limited resources they have’.

SE15’s (F, 58) explains, to generate an income, she uses ‘textile’ materials that are judged useless by private businesses, noting ‘what can we make from it so that we can sustain ourselves?... be a bit more commercial’. ‘Bricolage’, for SE15, meant she could generate further revenues through her resourcefulness and fund further workshops for those on long-term unemployment and/or on probation to enhance their social inclusion and transferable skills. ‘Making do’ also surfaced in SE18’s (M, 56) account, who explains, with his co-founder, they ‘didn’t have a chair; didn’t have a computer, and scrounged everything’.

Although SE18 invested his redundancy money, resource constraints, meant with his co-founder ‘went and salvaged things’ from a ‘school that was closing down’ and ‘brought things from home’ to save ‘buying anything’. Consequently, ‘organisations have started to recognise’ his music intervention ‘is actually working’, resulting in ‘getting little pots of money’, which have enabled them to ‘think about mental health in terms of a broader description’. ‘Bricolage’, for SE18, therefore, not only helped him acquire the necessary resources to set up his social enterprise but also to validate his ‘intervention therapy’ as a good solution to the local community. This is consistent with existing research on social entrepreneurship and ‘bricolage’ which has found social entrepreneurs often face challenges because ‘they purposely locate their activity in areas where markets function poorly’ (Di Domenico, et al., 2010, p.684). Hence, ‘bricolage’ is one way of using existing resources to balance resource constraints.

‘Bricolage’ has also involved ‘financial bootstrapping’, with some participants investing their retirement savings and/or redundancy payments. SE11 (M, 56), notes, although his main motivation is to downshift, he invested his redundancy money to ‘set up his social enterprise’. SE22 (M, 61) also ‘put
his retirement savings into this’ knowing his solution ‘will make a lot more and [he] will get [his] money back’. Like SE11, SE22 perceives ‘bootstrapping’ a necessary process to achieve his social mission. However, SE12 (F, 55) has a different view about ‘financial bootstrapping’, explaining, she has ‘no wealth’ or ‘retirement savings’ hence, gaining a personal income, although important, it is difficult to achieve due to resource constraints. She states, ‘the only thing that bothers me is that I haven’t got a pension, I’m not saving any money…I need to make this place work so it can sustain itself…and I get a proper wage’.

Indeed, personal income has also surfaced in SE26s (F, 65) account, who notes, ‘when I started, I wasn’t getting a pension and I did need a certain amount of money coming in. I wanted to raise some money and live…even with a pension it’s quite nice to have another little string of money coming in because I mean quite honestly, bills mount up otherwise’. The participants, therefore, conveyed their held beliefs about ‘financial bootstrapping, highlighting the differences between those who invested their retirement savings or redundancy money to set up their social enterprise and those who need an income through their social enterprise activity. Notwithstanding, the concept of ‘relevance’ has surfaced in the accounts of many participants, conveying their understanding, social enterprises are required to extend beyond ‘sustainability’ to ‘relevance’, delivering long-term solutions to social problems. This was apparent in SE9’s (M, 54) account, who although he is financially sustainable, he felt he needed to ‘go beyond sustainability to a model of relevance and stay confident that you’re going to get there, then actually confident that you’re going to achieve your goal and make a difference’. The meaning of ‘relevance’ for SE9 is, therefore, to create long-term solutions to the problem he identified.

The finding of the sub-theme ‘balancing social mission with for-profit motives’ has highlighted key perceptions held by participants about ‘sustainability’. Strategic social entrepreneurs felt ‘sustainability’ is key to avoiding dependency on government funding, as in the case of SE21, who adopted a business model to meet ‘sustainability’ first and then achieve his ‘social mission’, demonstrating his high level of identification with ‘hybridity’ of social enterprises. The findings also suggest, income generation for some participants is perceived to be incompatible with their social mission, such as SE28, who believes her main role is to ‘give back’ to her community rather than generating an income. Nevertheless, two participants experienced a ‘mindset shift’ during the social entrepreneurial process, such as SE5 who, although found it difficult at the start-up stage to be enterprising, she shifted her ‘mindset’ and sought ways of commercialising her singing classes using Facebook to promote her activities, offering priority bookings, and building partnerships with childminders and local children’s nurseries.
A further finding that has emerged from the data is the concept of ‘relevance’. The social entrepreneurial process was understood by participants to include four stages. This includes ‘opportunity recognition’ involving identifying a social need to be addressed, such as SE1, who recognised a gap in the market when he was volunteering and decided to set up his social enterprise to meet the needs of those affected. ‘Resourcefulness’ meant despite being constrained by limited resources, the participants used their ‘resourcefulness’ to acquire new and existing resources. SE18, for instance, ‘salvaged’ old furniture from a local school to set up his community centre, providing music therapy to those disadvantaged and with mental health problems. ‘Bricolage’ has also been perceived to involve ‘financial bootstrapping’ investing their retirement and redundancy money, as in the case of SE22, who invested his retirement savings to meet a social need he identified. Nevertheless, the findings also highlight ‘financial bootstrapping’ is not a solution for all, as illustrated by SE26, who due to lack of savings and retirement income, felt gaining an income from her social enterprise activity was important. However, ‘relevance’ is seen by participants to involve going beyond ‘sustainability’ to deliver long-term solutions to social problems. This is illustrated in SE9’s account, who despite being financially sustainable; his main motive was to create long-lasting solutions to the social need he identified. Nevertheless, as highlighted in Section 6.6.4 below, ‘measuring social impact’ is a further challenge experienced by participants.

6.6.4 Subtheme Four of ‘Sustainability: ‘Measuring Social Impact’

This subtheme ‘measuring social impact’ highlights the participants’ perceptions about the challenges they experienced in evidencing ‘social impact’. Research on social enterprise has highlighted a number of ways in which social impact can be measured (e.g. Bucaciuc, 2015; Clifford, et al., 2013; Lyon, et al., 2010). As noted by Lyon, et al., (2010, p. 30), ‘this can be divided between the direct social and environmental impacts in terms of services provided and jobs created and the indirect benefits that are related to the spending and activities of the social enterprise’. Measuring social impact is, therefore, an important element in the social entrepreneurial process. Nevertheless, as was apparent from the data, this presents challenges as well as opportunities for participants.

The importance of ‘measuring social impact’ is evident in the accounts of the majority of the interviewees. This has been interpreted as a way of building credibility with potential funders, demonstrating social value, and monitoring their social enterprise activity. SE25 (F, 64), who runs a social enterprise to promote outdoor activities for those with dementia notes, ‘measuring social impact’ makes it ‘easier’ to evaluate if her beneficiaries are ‘less stressed, have better appetites, if
they’re sleeping better, and if there is a reason they’re not able to get out’. For SE25, ‘measuring social impact’ is also an opportunity to help those who work in care homes do ‘something else to make it easier’ for their residents to use outdoor spaces. Thus, for SE25, ‘measuring social impact’ is a way of evaluating the impact of her solution on beneficiaries and upskilling care workers so they understand the reasons why their residents are not changing their behaviour and if they ‘can help them get outside’.

SE23 (M, 60), on the other hand, argues, he is creating social impact by not only helping his beneficiaries overcome addiction but also reduce the burden on the state. He notes, ‘people are being helped to stay sober, keep them out of court, and keep them away from crime’, which ‘saves money on the police, the courts, probation service, social services, a whole chain of very expensive services is saved and for every £1 invested, £5 were saved to the community’. SE23, therefore, demonstrates the social and economic value created through his social enterprise. This is similar to SE1’ (M, 53), who notes, although the social impact he would create ‘is going to be quite small’, in the long-term, it will lessen the burden on the state:

SE1(M, 53): ‘the way the figures work, if we get twelve people coming through the programme, I would imagine what that means when they replace it’s usually a catastrophic event that goes with it. There is police intervention, social service intervention. These things often come as part and parcel of it. Police intervention is gonna cost £5000 - £8000. That is what is costs the local commissioner. Social service intervention is £10000-£12000 depending how long it goes on for. So, if you can stop one person from relapsing and not having the catastrophic event part of that, there are about £25000 savings to the community. So potentially...these numbers are debatable, but certainly, they’re the best’.

For several participants, ‘measuring social impact’ is a way of ‘monitoring’ their activity at the organisational level and ‘see what is working and what to tweak or amend’. SE19 (M, 62), for instance, argues, by ‘measuring social impact’ he cannot only ‘satisfy the funding bodies’ but also ‘tweak and readjust what [he’s] doing to make sure [he’s] actually fulfilling what [he] said [he] would do in the first place’. For SE19, ‘measuring social impact’ at the organisational level is a way of ensuring he is not ‘deviating’ and ‘missing the mark for what [he] set out to do’, which is to generate economic and social benefits. Similar to SE19, SE15 (F, 58) developed a ‘social impact report’ to monitor the impact she generates ‘on the individuals with whom [she] is working’, such as ‘emotional wellbeing, resilience, and resourcefulness’. However, she argues, her social impact extends beyond self-development to include ‘the amount of money she is saving’ by upskilling those from the probation services so they ‘don’t re-offend’ which is saving approximately ‘£43,000 of keeping a woman in prison for a year’. This is
consistent with studies on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise that have shown social enterprises create social impact by delivering novel and effective solutions that reduce burden on the state (e.g. Leadbeater, 1997). Thompson, et al., (2000), for instance, argue social enterprises create tangible services such as employment and volunteering opportunities and reduce costs on welfare services.

However, the interviewees felt, the purpose of ‘measuring social impact’ should be about demonstrating the ‘real’ social, environment and economic outcomes created by social enterprises rather than used as a ‘tool’ to ‘satisfy funders’. SE23 (M, 60), argues, the whole process of ‘measuring social impact’ seems to satisfy funders who ‘love their clipboards. They like to look at things and make reports. It makes them look important. It keeps somebody employed to wear a suit and that’s about it really but the funding, I’m sure it’s there’. SE23’s account suggests, while ‘measuring social impact’ is invaluable, under the current approach, it is just a ‘tool’ to make [funders] feel important’ rather than demonstrating the ‘real ground work’ created by social enterprises.

On the other hand, SE18’s (M, 56) argues, ‘evaluating social impact is important for two reasons. One is to apply for funding you have to be able to identify that process and how it works’ and ‘the other is to demonstrate there are absolute benefits’. However, he notes, funders tend to focus on social impact, making ‘the job a little less fun’ because ‘it means you’re forever collating evidence for the next pot of funding’. SE18 considers ‘the thing he does on Monday afternoon with people at risk or living with dementia’ is already generating benefits by them ‘having a good time’. However, he expressed his frustration with how the funding system works, leading him to conclude, ‘It’s obvious a programme like that is gonna benefit people. It’s gonna work’.

This is supported by SE13 (F, 55), who argues, social enterprises are expected to ‘work the system rather than change the status quo’. SE13’s frustration stems from her felt understanding ‘what matters is having a compassionate organisation that care about its people’ rather than evidencing social impact for funders’ benefits. As such, she notes, ‘I totally get the need for evaluation’ from a ‘financial point of view’ however, this meant ‘I would need to sit down every week with my volunteers to get them do the paperwork’ which would reduce the level of ‘real ground work’ they are supposed to do. She concludes, ‘I have worked for organisations who have received millions in funding because the bits of paper are so neat’ but ‘it doesn’t mean they’re doing a quality of work’. For SE13, having a ‘compassionate organisation’ is crucial and, therefore, she believes ‘all the policies, procedures and all that paperwork are for the sake of funders’ rather than demonstrating real impact. Noting the impact she creates, she argues she is providing ‘volunteering’ opportunities and ‘healthy food’ products, contributing to the economic and social development of her local community. Therefore, SE13’s
understanding of ‘social impact’ is to have a ‘compassionate organisation’ rather than perpetually evidencing social impact to satisfy funders.

Nonetheless, she goes on to explain, one of the challenges faced by social enterprises is to ‘evidence social impact’, particularly for non-tangible outcomes, such as an increase in ‘socialisation’ and ‘self-confidence’. As she notes, ‘I get really kind of frustrated with this. We kind of tick boxes and say these people have done these courses. These people’s self-confidence increased. People do reverse health conditions. People do things they couldn’t do when they started. We write it down but how to evaluate it’. Her account resonates with SE7 (F, 50), who argues, it is difficult to ‘monetise’ outcomes, particularly if they relate to self-esteem and self-confidence. She notes although there are ‘formulas’ that can be used, they ‘don’t apply to some situations’ since ‘you couldn’t say, well that was worth £30 quid partly because it’s priceless and partly who says £30 or £20 or 5p or whatever’. Although SE7 recognises there are some outcomes that could be measured such as diet, ‘there are bits that are more nebulous and you can say I can’t tell you how much that’s worth but I can tell you it’s worth a lot and you have to be confident enough to be able to say that’.

Similar to SE13, SE2 (M, 54) states, his solution will ‘keep people from unnecessary hospital visits, keep people more safely in their homes and there will be less burden on emergency services’. However, ‘social impact is constructed over time’ and hence, ‘it is difficult to measure until the social needs are addressed and improvement have been noticed’. Here, SE2 expresses his belief, shared by many participants, it is often challenging to access ‘funding through private investors’ who ‘have no way of measuring social impact against past performances’. This is similar to SE18, who argues, ‘for a ten-week course, I won’t find out if those people stopped re-offending for another year’ and as such, he needs to ‘sit back and wait for the STATS to come in’. This suggests, both SE2 and SE18, although recognise the value of measuring social impact; they felt it is often not achieved immediately.

The participants’ accounts highlight therefore, social impact is created by making a difference to people’s lives and reducing the burden on the state. Indeed, the analysis of data highlights the social impact created by participants extends beyond providing employment and voluntary opportunities and upskilling to include improving interpersonal skills, social skills, self-esteem, self-reliance, empowerment, and building community resilience. This reinforces the argument I put forward in Chapter Two, indicating social enterprises develop innovative solutions to social problems and fulfil their social and/or environmental goals by reinvesting most of their profits into the needs of the community (Boschee, 2001; Di Domenico, et al., 2010).
It was evident from the accounts presented in this section, the participants had an ambivalent understanding of the term ‘social impact’, such as SE23, who despite recognising the value of ‘measuring social impact’, he is frustrated by the ways in which it is constructed as a ‘ticking box’ exercise to satisfy funders. Nevertheless, the majority of participants acknowledge measuring social impact is a useful tool to monitor outcomes, as in the case of SE25, who can monitor if her beneficiaries are ‘eating and sleeping better’. On the other hand, SE15 and SE23 spoke of the costs saved such as social care and probation services. It was also highlighted by participants that measuring social impact is beneficial at the organisational level. As in the case of SE19, who explains, he is able to evaluate whether he is achieving his social aims. SE7 and SE13 on the other hand, explain the challenges faced by social enterprises in evidencing non-tangible social outcomes such as an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem. This suggests, some participants found it challenging to demonstrate real impact, if associated with soft skills. However, a further challenge is identified which is ‘resource capability’, as discussed in Section 6.6.5 below.

6.6.5 Subtheme Five of ‘Sustainability: ‘Resource Capabilities’

This sub-theme ‘resource capabilities’ is defined by the interviewee’s understanding of the skills and resources they require to deliver social outcomes. The participants felt they lacked the necessary skills to promote and develop their social enterprise; however, others spoke of limited resources that presented a threat to their scalability. Indeed, it was evident from the data, several participants were operating on a small to medium scale, resulting in facing challenges in employing paid staff, instead depending on the support of volunteers and apprentices, which in itself, was a problem.

SE17 (F, 58), argues, if she had ‘more staff there will be more chances to get things done’, however, since wages ‘are big outliers’ she is not able to recruit paid staff due to ‘shortage of money’. Although SE17 has a medium scale social enterprise, she felt she ‘needed more money to get the right number of staff for the right number of customers’. Here, SE17 conveys her belief the ‘commercial side’ of her social enterprise is ‘pretty important’ since it is supporting the ‘social side’, which is to help those with ‘learning disability or ex-offenders’ gain skills and ‘take part in things’. However, she spoke of the challenges she faced in recruiting ‘apprentices’ with relevant ‘technical skills’, signalling her frustration with how ‘apprentices’ who are often ‘sixteen years old, had no idea about turning up for work’.

SE13’s (F, 55) also describes, due to resource constraints, she is not able to offer ‘full-time jobs’ to her volunteers, resulting in losing one of her volunteers who left for a ‘paid job’, leaving her with only ‘two doing one day a week’, which has limited her ability to scale her social enterprise. This view has also
surfaced in SE19’s (M, 62) account, who explains, due to ‘shortage of revenue’, he is in no position to recruit paid staff, and therefore, he is often dependent on the support of his ‘apprentices to man the shop floor’. However, he further explains, ‘apprentices turn up’ as part of their ‘job seeker’s agreement’ and hence, may lack commitment and/or ‘resent coming’. He notes, ‘since I have been here, I’ve had three or four people in from the Job Centre on work experience but only on one occasion, it was successful’. This suggests, SE19 found his apprenticeship scheme challenging, resulting in him being involved in the daily activity of his social enterprise, leaving him little opportunities to scale.

The challenges presented with the ‘apprenticeship scheme’ was, however, not a consensus. SE22 (M, 61), spoke of his successful apprenticeship scheme, proving beneficial to his beneficiaries by gaining skills but also supporting him with the daily running of his social enterprise. He adds, his apprenticeship scheme is also helping industries and businesses recruit well-skilled workforces, saving them ‘recruitment and training’ costs. Here, SE22 spoke of his positive achievements by ‘getting thirty-eight people out of forty-eight into jobs’, and employing ‘sixty-nine people on short contracts’, offering ‘these people jobs’ but also a ‘career’. Pointing at the display board in his office, he states, his ‘first apprentice was the first lady to pass her test here’ with another apprentice ‘marrying his long-term partner’ and now ‘having a child’, which means he not only gave them a ‘career’ but a ‘life’. Running a successful apprenticeship scheme was also echoed in SE8’s (M, 50) account, who has been able to provide his apprentices ‘wages’ and skills. Nevertheless, the challenges in recruiting and attracting the ‘right skills’ has also surfaced in SE9’s (M, 54) account, who argues, since he ‘cannot reward’ his staff ‘financially’, it has proven difficult to ‘maintain their commitment’. This has conveyed his concern with ‘getting the best skills available, about affording them and about keeping them’, leading him to question whether he will ‘ever be able to recruit staff’ due to resource constraints. The concern with rewarding and paying competitive salaries has also surfaced in SE11’s (M, 56) account, who felt ‘guilty’ about employing his staff on ‘zero hours contracts’. However, he concurrently notes, he pays his staff ‘30% more than the average living wage’, which means, he is not only acknowledging the ‘work they do on the ground’ but also giving them incentives to deliver good quality care to beneficiaries. Conversely, SE15 (F, 58) considers offering ‘flexible working’ arrangements is how she rewards her staff. She gave the example of one of her volunteers who had severe mental health condition, and came for ‘just one hour a day’ however, by ‘developing her capacity’, her volunteer ‘became more resourceful and strong’, and is now a part-time employee at her social enterprise.

Highlighting the challenges they faced in attracting the rights skills and or maintaining staff, the participants demonstrate the constraints they experienced in scaling their social enterprise. However,
it was also hinted by some, gaining a personal income is challenging. Although ‘personal income’ remains secondary to their social mission, they were unable to ‘pay themselves a salary’ due to resource constraints. This is illustrated by SE26 (F, 65), who although does not perceive herself a social entrepreneur, she requires an income to support her retirement, as she notes, ‘never make any money out of it because the trouble is that community groups can’t afford to pay people. I get paid a little bit. Well, it doesn’t actually pay anything’. Her view is supported by SE18 (M, 56), who despite generating revenues, his personal income was only ‘£50 a month’, which, as he notes, ‘it was like a massive pay rise’. Although ‘personal income’ remains secondary to his social mission, SE18 would like to earn a salary so he can support himself. This was by no means a consensus, as SE4 (M, Age 50), notes, personal income ‘doesn’t bother [him] in any given year’ since he is paid through business consultancy projects he undertakes outside his social enterprise. However, he concurrently notes, ‘at some point I will need to make some money because I do want to retire’. His views are also shared by SE8 (M, 50), who argues, although she is not ‘motivated by money’, ‘a salary would be nice [laughter]’.

Gaining ‘personal income’ has, therefore, been perceived by some participants to play a key role in supporting their living and/or supplementing their retirement income. Nonetheless, it was identified from the data; some participants chose not to gain a personal income since they perceived it to be incompatible with their social mission. SE27 (F, 71), notes, she is reluctant to use the money she has been awarded by UnLtd as a ‘personal salary’ since ‘it wouldn’t work’; she ‘only wanted the money for the club’. She explains, by using her award as ‘personal income’, she ‘would have to pay income tax’ which is ‘not what she is after’. Instead, she wants the money to develop her club. Her views are different to other participants who perceived the funding they received from UnLtd has been invaluable since they were able to use this towards their ‘personal’ salary, giving them the opportunity to develop their social enterprise. SE14 (F, 57), states, the fact ‘UnLtd pays her wages [she] can actually free her time to do something like go for grants, look for new avenues and approach businesses to see they are working in the community’.

Although SE14 does not state it explicitly, she expressed her felt belief she must oversee the running of her social enterprise, hinting to her inability to delegate. As she notes, ‘I struggle to delegate really’, suggesting, she felt responsible for ‘checking on her volunteers and make sure they’re doing the things the way [she] would do it’. Nevertheless, she concurrently states, one of the benefits she gained is ‘learning to delegate’. Similar to SE14, SE19 (M, 62) notes, the award he had received from UnLtd enabled him to focus on his social enterprise without having to think about a ‘regular paycheque’ to support his living. As he states, ‘UnLtd are actually supporting me for a year of literally living expenses, allowing me to focus on this [pointing to the shop] to develop it’.
It is, therefore, evident from the data the participants had an ambivalent understanding of ‘personal income’. Although the majority perceived ‘personal income’ to be secondary to their social mission, some contested using the awards they had received from UnLtd as a ‘personal wage’ since it was incompatible with their social mission. Others, however, viewed UnLtd’s awards as an opportunity to support their living. Furthermore, the interviewees’ spoke of some of the skills they lacked to develop their social enterprise. Contrary to my own assumptions, many participants lacked skills in sales, business development, and social media. Yet, it was apparent from the data, those who had a previous career in sales, marketing, and a prior entrepreneurial experience found their prior skills to be an advantage to their social enterprise. This was highlighted by SE2 (M, 53), who had a prior management and business development experience, noting, one of his strengths is ‘networking’ and ‘doing business deals’, hence he is able to ‘look for opportunities’ and ‘seek investment from business angels’ so he can develop his social enterprise.

Other participants, however, highlight their lack of social media skills, which, they felt is important to promote the ‘work they do on the ground’ and identify business opportunities. SE16 (F, 58), notes, when she set up her social enterprise, she had ‘no clues about Facebook or Twitter’ however, she felt it was necessary to learn how to use social media, particularly ‘Twitter’ as a tool to ‘dump articles online’ and use them ‘when referring for funders’. SE14 (F, 57), also notes, she is ‘ok on Facebook’ and ‘quite good on LinkedIn’ however, she ‘can’t use Twitter’ and ‘doesn’t really understand it’. Here, SE14 masks her uncertainty by making a joke saying, ‘I don’t really get the idea of this tweeting aid at all [laughter]. Everybody keeps saying, ‘you need to tweet all the time. You need to tweet what you do’.

Central to SE14’s account is her felt belief that people aged 50+ ‘need support selling themselves than anything else because they’re not proficient with computers sometimes. They haven’t had the skills of, for example, internet skills, selling themselves on Twitter or on Facebook’. SE14, therefore, believes there is an interplay between ‘older age’ and IT skills, conveying her belief, although those aged 50+ have ‘got fifty years’ experience’, they do not ‘actually know what they’ve got’ and hence, they ‘need help to sell what they do’. Thus, the participants’ accounts are consistent with existing literature on social enterprise which has found marketing activities are significant for social entrepreneurs to promote their work as well as strategically develop their business. Boschee (2007), for instance, argues, social enterprises need to make key strategic decisions in marketing in relation to the products and services they offer and to the target market they need to pursue. He goes on to explain, besides taking steps to strengthen their internal systems, social entrepreneurs face challenges in developing
key marketing strategies to promote their social enterprise and, ultimately, grow their earned revenues.

However, what emerged from the data was the way some participants felt the reasons they lacked business skills was more related to an inherent failure in the way they perceived themselves, feeling more of ‘an entrepreneur’ rather than a ‘sales or a marketing person’. SE5 (F, 50), for instance, argues, ‘I am not a natural born sales lady’ and, therefore, she found it difficult to ‘sell her merchandise’, instead ‘she would recommend it to her customers’. For SE5, ‘selling’ meant she is ‘asking for money’ whereas ‘recommending her merchandise’, meant her customers would have ‘a choice to have a look and if they like it’, they would purchase it.

SE16 (F, 58) shared SE5’s views saying, ‘I’m not a sales person, and it doesn’t feel like I’m a salesperson and doing something that I believe in’. Here, SE16 considers being a ‘sales person’ to be incompatible with ‘doing good for her community’. Contrary to SE16 who does not perceive herself a ‘sales person’, SE8 (M, 50) describes, ‘pricing has been one of the big things [he] had to struggle with, along with measuring social impact, legal structures and tax and all the things that somebody is new to it’. Here, SE8 notes, since he lacks prior entrepreneurial experience, he had to ‘find out from scratch’ how to run his social enterprise, which meant ‘he is still not getting it right’ and still receiving ‘fine letters’ from HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC) with him ‘writing back’ and saying, ‘I must have ticked the box somewhere wrong’.

The participants, therefore, conveyed their beliefs about the skills they lacked such as social media, sales and business development skills, all of which were perceived important in developing their social enterprise. Besides, due to resource constraints, the participants experienced challenges in attracting and recruiting ‘relevant staff’, as in the case of SE17, who found it difficult to recruit paid staff and balance her commercial and social activity. However, SE17 also spoke of the barriers she faced in recruiting apprentices with technical skills. Her views are supported by SE19, who notes, more often apprentices resent coming and hence, lack commitment in gaining transferable skills. However, this was by no means a consensus, as SE22 argues, he runs a successful apprenticeship scheme since he is helping underprivileged youths learn skills and industries to recruit a skilled workforce.

Nevertheless, the participants had an ambivalent understanding of ‘personal income’. Although it remains secondary to their social mission, some argue, it is important to support their living and/or retirement income, as illustrated by SE26, who needed a personal income to support her retirement. Yet, SE27 was reluctant to use the award she had received from UnLtd as a personal salary since she ‘only wants it for [her] club’. On the other hand, SE14 and SE19 were grateful for the award they had
received from UnLtd since it gave them the opportunity to focus on their social enterprise and not to have to worry about supporting their living, such as SE19, who no longer has to worry about a ‘personal pay cheque’ to live. However, further patterns emerged from the data concerning staff salaries. The participants felt, due to a lack of income generation, they were not in a position to offer competitive salaries, instead depended on volunteers’ support. This was demonstrated by SE11, who felt ‘guilty’ about employing staff on ‘zero hours contracts’. Yet, he states, he is paying his staff more than the average UK salary, giving them incentives to offer good quality care for his beneficiaries.

Although some participants gained business skills through their prior professional experience, as in the case of SE2 who ‘is good at networking and finding good business deals’, lacking social media, sales and business development skills was felt by the majority of participants. This was illustrated by both SE14 and SE16, who did not ‘have a clue’ about ‘Facebook’ or ‘Twitter’ and hence, sought the support of professionals and/or friends. Nonetheless, the participants felt learning social media skills was important to promote their social enterprise activity. It was also highlighted, by some, the reasons why they found it challenging to sell their services was due to an inherent failure in their perceptions of themselves as ‘entrepreneurs’ rather than a ‘sales person’. This was illustrated by SE5, who perceived herself ‘not a natural born sales lady’ and, therefore, found it difficult to sell her offerings to customers.

6.6.6 Subtheme Six of ‘Sustainability: ‘Legitimacy’

Social enterprises often collaborate with government agencies and private businesses to access resources and develop their competitiveness (Di Domenico, et al., 2009; Nicholls and Huybrechts, 2013). However, according to Nicholls and Huybrechts (2013, p. 131), ‘managing legitimacy becomes particularly challenging when organisations from different fields embody different logics and respond to various legitimating stakeholders’.

The issue of ‘gaining legitimacy’ was evident in the accounts of several interviews who felt the ‘clinical approaches’ adopted by government agencies to address social needs were incompatible with their innovative solutions. Despite playing a significant role in filling gaps in the provision of public services, the participants felt more often government agencies tend to approach social problems in clinical ways, creating a barrier to their collaboration with social enterprises. This was illustrated by SE21 (M, 60), who spoke of the challenges he faced in collaborating with government agencies since they tend to focus on regulations and processes rather than adopting novel approaches to social problems. He notes, he would like to introduce ‘a reversed innovation approach’ to address the problems of children in care however, social care services tend to be stringent about how the needs of children in care are
addressed. Here, SE21 spoke of how ‘management in these places’ tend to focus on ‘processes rather than innovative solutions’, and, therefore, they ‘need a different type of management and training leaders’ to understand why ‘children are behaving like this’ and what can be done to support them. In addition, he expresses his deep frustration with how ‘things work in silos’, leading to a lack of coordinated approaches between sectors. As he states, ‘why shouldn’t they be enterprising in the childcare sector? We can’t keep over regulating, shall we say. That was one of the things I really pushed on. The outcomes of care for children should improve and it ain’t gonna improve the way they’re doing it’.

His view is shared by SE18 (M, 56), who faced challenges in collaborating with educational authorities since more often they are ‘concerned about data protection and safeguarding’ rather than embracing enterprising solutions to solve children’s disruptive behaviour. SE18 set up a community centre using music to address mental health problems, an approach, he thinks, would enhance the social inclusion of ‘kids’ with disrupted behaviour, however, he is ‘always having this battle with people who have been stuck on these tramlines, lecturers, school teachers, education welfare officers, virtual schools’ who often argue they ‘don’t do it that way’. Here, SE18 conveys his understanding that introducing ‘change is a slow process’, and, therefore, it requires a social entrepreneur, like him, to ‘keep ringing and saying, ‘no you’ve gotta do it’’. Although SE18 is aware of the benefits of safeguarding vulnerable children and/or adults to reduce the risk of harm, he notes, ‘risk is actually in people’s head’ and as such, innovative approaches to tackle social problems are needed. He gives the example of his community centre which uses a novel approach through music to help the social inclusion of those with dementia to have ‘fun’ and find a ‘purpose’ in their lives. Thus, for SE18, ‘music’ represents his understanding of novel approaches as efficient ways of addressing social needs.

SE28 (F, 74) also spoke of the challenges she faced in collaborating with schools. She notes, when she first started contacting schools to promote her social enterprise, which is to help school leavers gain transferable skills, the schools ‘didn’t wanna know unless money was involved’. However, she concurrently states, some were concerned about ‘data protection’ and as such, ‘didn’t feel they could open their door’. Here, SE28 describes her experience of emailing a local school asking for permission to talk to students, and being ‘put through to a second person and a third person’, and all she received ‘we will keep you in touch and [they] never got back’. Here, SE18 expresses her felt belief that schools tend to be concerned with ‘confidentiality’ and ‘safeguarding’, losing opportunities to ‘open their door’ to social entrepreneurs who can deliver novel approaches to social problems.

‘Gaining legitimacy’ was also one of the challenges the participants faced during the social entrepreneurial process. This was related to the barriers they experienced when ‘bidding’ for public
contracts. They argue that, more often procurement processes tend to favour large private organisations with resources and financial capital to bid for multiple bids, leaving small organisations, such as social enterprises, not being able to compete. This was illustrated by SE22 (M, 61), who despite investing his retirement savings to set up his social enterprise, and had been successful in getting ‘his kids into jobs’, he was perceived a ‘financial risk’ by tenders. He recounts his experience of receiving a call from the DWP procurement department to encourage him to ‘fill in a tender about a possible opportunity for doing IT training’. However, he was told afterwards, he was ‘category red, at risk on finances’ resulting in failing to win the tender. Here, SE22 demonstrates his frustration with public procurement processes that fail to recognise the lower costs and efficient services provided by social enterprises. His view is also shared by SE21 (M, 60), who argues, government agencies tend to focus on lower cost solutions, leading to a competitive tendering process. He notes, if social enterprises ‘go into a local authority type of work’, they are more often competing against ‘Capita and Group 4 who would bid for things as loss leaders and they can afford that to get through the door’. However, he concurrently states, government agencies are ‘all cutting-down employees’ salaries in the blink of an eye’ which is a ‘big problem for social enterprises’. He explains, spending cuts have forced government agencies not to go down ‘via the expensive tendering route’, and, therefore, seek cheaper options, which big private organisations can afford. SE21’s account, therefore, suggests the UK austerity measures influenced the way public ‘bids’ are commissioned. However, SE8 (M, 50) presents a different view about the impact of the ‘UK austerity measures’.

SE8 explains the UK austerity measures forced a ‘different working model’ for government agencies, with most adopting a social enterprise model to generate a revenue stream to fund their services. This had a negative impact on social enterprises that are often competing with services provided by government agencies that have ‘all the assets and back-up’ and ‘staff’. He further argues, although the ‘new working model is great because that’s about the community providing the support available’, government agencies require ‘knowledge and experience to make sure it keeps viable’. SE8’s account, therefore, suggests the ‘new working model’ adopted by government agencies can only work if stronger collaboration is built with social enterprises that have ‘knowledge and experience’ of local problems.

For SE17 (F, 58), on the other hand, the ‘new working model’ adopted by government agencies is ‘obviously creating a duplication of services’. She notes, to subsidise their activities, government agencies are adopting social enterprise models, having a negative impact on small to medium scale social enterprises. Here, she describes her experience of attending a ‘meeting in the city council and
chatting to someone,’ discovering that her local authority is ‘thinking of setting up’ a similar service to hers, making her furious by asking ‘what are we then? They don’t know how to run a business. For goodness sake stop trying to run everything yourself, why not come to us and say, let’s work together. We’ve got the experience [raising her voice]. It is something we come across a lot. They seem to be sitting in city halls and think, ‘what can we do? What will we do? I know, run….’’

Although SE17 communicates her frustration with the ‘new working model’ adopted by government agencies, she also spoke of lack of collaboration between sectors. She notes, her local authority ‘recently put a policy paper on the third sector and they used this term, voluntary and community sector’ however, she contested this by highlighting to her authority the term should be ‘VCS: voluntary, community, social enterprise’. Nevertheless, the reply she received from her local authority, ‘we don’t want to confuse acronyms’ which irritated her as she believes social enterprises ‘would want to be included in their policy report’. Here, SE17 argues, there is a divide between ‘the too goody sector, which is the voluntary sector’ and the social enterprise sector which not only people ‘do not have a real understanding of what it is’ but also ‘think it’s got loads of money’ and, therefore, ‘don’t need help’.

SE17’s account, therefore, demonstrates her frustration with the lack of recognition of the social enterprise sector, having a negative impact on their legitimacy. Her perspective about how the ‘too goody sector’ is perceived compared to social enterprises is congruent with SE16’s opinion (Section 6.6), arguing funders expect social enterprises to be self-sustaining and, therefore, do not require financial support. Besides, her comment ‘people do not have a real understanding’ of the social enterprise sector conveys the belief held by the majority of participants about the lack of an agreed definition of social enterprise, creating a lack of legitimacy. Nevertheless, central to SE17’s account, is her felt belief about the significance of building collaboration between sectors, a theme that will be explored further in Section 6.7.

The sub-theme ‘legitimacy’ highlights the participants’ held perceptions about the challenges they faced when collaborating with government agencies. SE21 and SE18, for instance, spoke of the issues they experienced in collaborating with government agencies that tend to focus on regulations and processes, missing opportunities to open their doors to social enterprises. This was also illustrated by SE28, who found barriers in collaborating with her local schools since they were more concerned about children’s safety rather than welcoming new ideas.

The manner in which the participants communicated the issue of legitimacy also involved the barriers they faced in tendering for public contracts, as in the case of SE22, who developed a novel approach
to address the needs of children in care, however, he experienced uncertainty in competing with large private organisations that have resources and financial capital. Here, SE22 also conveys his felt belief about the negative impact government cuts has on tendering processes. His view is supported by SE21, who argues, spending cuts have forced government agencies to pursue ‘cheaper options’, creating a competitive landscape between large organisations that have capital compared to social enterprises that lack resources. On the other hand, SE17 spoke of the ‘new working model’ adopted by government agencies, creating duplication in services. In addition, SE17 highlights the issue with the terms used by local authorities when representing the social sector, undermining the legitimacy of social enterprises and creating a division between the ‘too goody sector’ that needs help and social enterprises that are expected to be self-sustaining. However, further insights could be drawn from the participants’ accounts concerning the significance of building collaboration between sectors. As such, the next theme ‘capacity building and ecosystem of support’ in Section 6.7 provides a detailed account of how the interviewees felt in understanding the support they require.

6.6.7 Theme Four ‘Sustainability’: Summary and Discussion

The findings discussed in this theme ‘sustainability’ highlight the main challenges participants faced during the social entrepreneurial process. All participants signalled that, lack of, or limited access to funding had a negative impact on financially sustaining their organisations. This stems from the expectations placed on them by funders to be self-sufficient due to their ‘hybrid’ model and their ‘CIC structure’. This is supported by Kingston and Bolton (2004), who note, more often, not-for-profit organisations including social enterprises find it difficult to raise funds to invest in their growth and development for a number of reasons. Firstly, they may be regarded as ‘too risky’ or too commercial for ‘grant aids’. Secondly, many banking institutions are unfamiliar with the organisational structure and status of these sectors. Besides, these sectors often lack assets against which capital can be secured and, therefore, find it difficult in obtaining funding. This extends the view of Spear, et al., (2009), who argue, social enterprises may take a range of structures such as cooperatives and charities, however, the income to be raised from trading for an organisation to be classified a social enterprise is debatable.

The challenges the participants experienced in gaining funding, further accounts for the issues they faced in balancing strategic and operational objectives. Having to operate as a ‘one woman/man band’ due to lack of resources, meant they are often running the day-to-day operation of their organisations rather than pursuing strategic practices to further their social objectives. This may be explained by
what Boschee (2001) suggests in that building strategic approaches are essential to the sustainability of social enterprises. Besides, Dees and Elias (1998), argues, social enterprises need to craft their strategies so they can achieve their social mission.

Besides, the interviews spoke of the challenges they faced in measuring and evidencing social impact. Although they acknowledge there are benefits in measuring social impact so they can build their credibility with funders and evaluate if they are achieving their social mission, this is often used as a tool to satisfy funders rather than demonstrate their real ground work. Besides, they felt more often social impact is non-tangible such as a raise in self-esteem and confidence and hence, it is difficult to evidence. This supports the work of Lyon and Fernandez (2012, p.2) who argue, there are considerable expectations placed on social enterprises to scale the social impact beyond successful small projects, however, there is a need for clear understanding of ‘what the social impact might be and the development of strategies for growth’. This strongly suggests, there should be an understanding that the social impact created by participants may not extend beyond the boundaries of their beneficiaries, and hence, this should be taken into consideration.

A further pattern emerging from the data was the challenge the participants experienced with their skills sets. They felt they lacked social media, business development and sales skills, having a negative impact on promoting their activities and devising strategies for growth. Although it was evident from the data, for some, this was related to their inherent failure in perceiving themselves as social entrepreneurs rather than sales people, a common pattern emerging through the participants’ accounts is their perceived lack of skills. This is congruent with Stumbitz, et al., (2012), who found those aged 50+ may lack confidence in their ability to become social entrepreneurs. However, most described growth in confidence and improvement in skills such as leadership, communication, and project planning are some of the benefits they gained during the social entrepreneurial process.

Gaining legitimacy by collaborating with other sectors such as public sector agencies and private businesses were also perceived by participants to be a challenge. On the one hand, they felt their novel entrepreneurial (social) solutions to social problems are at odds with the clinical approaches adopted by government agencies and on the other hand, procurement processes tend to favour large-scale private organisations that have resources and financial capital to tender for public projects over small businesses such as social enterprises. Besides, they spoke of the issues they faced in collaborating with private businesses which stem from a lack of understanding of what social enterprises do. Although the participants recognise collaboration with private businesses can generate benefits on two levels: on one level, private businesses can access tacit knowledge of local problems and social entrepreneurs to access resources to further their social objectives, there tends to be constraints in building
collaboration with these businesses. This is consistent with Seelos and Mair (2004) who argue, to build successful social enterprises models, strategic alliances between for-profit oriented businesses and social enterprises should be built. Besides, Yang and Wu (2016), argue, building collaboration with private businesses generates benefits on two levels: Firstly, it generates sufficient financial returns for for-profit businesses and secondly, avoids conflicts by each focusing on what they do best.

Nevertheless, further patterns emerged from the participants’ accounts concerned the ways in which they differentiated between not-for-profit organisations such as charities that tend to draw their resources from government subsidies and social enterprises that trade in the pursuit of their social mission. According to participants, charities often rely on government subsidies to address social needs, whereas social enterprises adopt business strategies to achieve their social mission. This is consistent with Dees (2001) who argues, despite the blurring boundaries of social enterprises, social entrepreneurs are ‘change agents’ who adopt an explicit social mission to create and sustain social value. Besides, Boschee (2001) notes, social enterprises should not perpetually rely and depend on philanthropic donations and support from the government, instead should generate revenue with an explicit social mission.

Besides, the participants spoke of the challenges they experienced in balancing their social with their for-profit motives. This is explained as having to create social value but at the same time trade to sustain their organisations and further their social objectives. This is congruent with Cornforth (2014, p.3), who argue, social enterprises are ‘hybrid’ organisations that trade in the pursuit of their social mission. However, they tend to experience ‘some tensions’ between combining market trading activity and social motives, which may result in a ‘mission drift’ as on the one hand, business ‘logic may take over’ or conversely too much emphasis on the social element of their activity may ‘weaken the organisation’ and possibly lead to failure. However, as noted in Chapter Two, social enterprises adopt business strategies to achieve their social objectives (e.g. Swanson and DiZhang, 2010; Weerawardena, et al., 2003).

In addition to the above findings, it was identified, despite some participants perceiving income generation incompatible with their social mission, two out of twenty-eight participants experienced a ‘mindset shift’ during the social entrepreneurial process, by becoming more enterprising to achieve their social mission. This was illustrated by SES, who experienced a mindset shift halfway through the social entrepreneurial process, seeking ways to commercialise her singing classes by building strategic collaborations with local children’s nurseries. However, a key practical implication emerging from the findings concerns the ways in which the participants perceived the social entrepreneurial process to involve four stages: opportunity recognition, resource allocation, sustainability, and relevance.
Although, as noted in Chapter Two, these findings extend the current study conducted by Perrini, et al., (2010), the concept of ‘relevance’ is seen as important by participants, since they are committed to creating long-term sustainable solutions to social problems. As such, the participants suggest, developing collaboration between sectors could lead to better solutions to social problems. This argument is further elaborated in the next theme ‘capacity building and ecosystem of support’.

6.7 Theme Five: ‘Capacity Building and Ecosystem of Support’

This theme ‘capacity building and ecosystem of support’ conveys the participants’ held perceptions about the significance of building collaborations between government agencies, private businesses, and the UK government to engender social change. The participants felt gaining government agencies’ and government’s support could contribute to their ‘legitimacy’, promoting the ‘work they do on the ground’, and foster the social enterprise sector.

6.7.1 ‘Capacity Building and Ecosystem of Support’

Building collaboration with government agencies and the UK government was perceived by the majority of participants to play a significant role in bringing together different stakeholders who can collectively tackle the UK’s pressing social problems. Although they had received a wide range of support such as funding, business mentoring, and the support of the UK government that has ‘moved the social enterprise agenda forward’ through ‘social investment’ and the ‘CIC structure’ (SE5, M, 50), they felt further support is required. SE17 (F, 58), for instance, argues, often social enterprises are in a ‘kind of a very tight situation’ due to ‘risk involved’ and hence, it ‘would be good to have a little bit more support locally’. Here, SE17 expresses her frustration with the lack of support she had received from her local authority despite delivering a good service to the community, which ‘would be nice to be recognised for’ it. However, she explains, the support she would like to have is more about gaining legitimacy rather than financial support. Hence, she believes local authorities should create a ‘level playing field’ between all sectors, paying more attention to promoting social enterprises. She notes:

SE17 (F, 58): ‘I’m not really looking for money because we don’t want to be sort off-shoot, but they ran events without inviting us along...it’s been a struggle to get them to sort of include us in their publications and things. Tried for ages to get a piece in their magazine, we never got in...we could at least have a level playing field with the other [...] shops...it’s a bit stressful. It would be nice to even just have their verbal support, mentioning us in things. It would be nice’.
SE4 (M, 50) also notes, government agencies ‘don’t have the right knowledge or the right understanding or their rules and regulations are not written in a way that they can act’ and, therefore, should be collaborating with social enterprises to address social problems. He adds, regulations within government agencies are often ‘under the influence of people with very different agendas who would like to keep things the way they are or move things in a different way’, creating barriers to their collaboration with social enterprises. On the other hand, SE14 (F, 57) argues, government agencies should understand that ‘a one best-fit approach’ to addressing social problem is not always the best solution. She argues, government agencies can ‘be stringent and stick to things’ however, there requires a degree of ‘flexibility’ to how social needs are addressed.

SE14 spoke of her experience of helping a family in need during Christmas who was not able to gain support because the ‘lady’s name was not on the claim on the computer’. As such, she argues, ‘flexibility is the one thing that needs to change’. She adds, not only should government agencies be required to be ‘flexible’ but also ‘connect with the hard to reach’ to gain a better understanding of local issues and enhance their knowledge of what ‘social enterprises do on the ground’. For SE14, therefore, government agencies should be ‘approachable’ and ‘roll their sleeves up, even if they just turned up and ate a meal with the people’ to understand the extent of the social needs she is addressing. She concludes, if government agencies ‘talked about things’ with social enterprises rather than ‘being us and them situation’, better solutions could be achieved.

For SE7 (F, 50), however, although government agencies ‘don’t have the time or the money to help much’ as they are often running on a ‘shoe string’, they should be ‘opening their doors’ and collaborating with social enterprises to achieve better solutions for stakeholders and local communities. She spoke of her experience of having to hire a kitchen to run her cookery classes, whereas if her local authority ‘opened their building’ she could have saved the costs of ‘having to lease a building and then install a small kitchen’. She concludes, local authorities should ‘see their kitchen as a massive asset for the people of the area’, including social enterprises.

The participants also conveyed their held beliefs about the significance of collaborating with private businesses. They felt this could bring benefits on two folds: on the one hand, social enterprises could access resources, and on the other, private businesses could access ‘skills’ and ‘entrepreneurialism’. SE22 (M, 61), for instance, argues, his social enterprise is upskilling disadvantaged youths which would ‘help the industry’ access skilled workforce. This is congruent with existing studies that have found social enterprises seek collaboration with private businesses to ‘improve their viability as businesses’ (Di Domenico, et al., 2009, p. 887). However, private businesses collaborate with social enterprises to
improve their knowledge of local social issues, and as such, fulfil their corporate social responsibility (Di Domenico, et al., 2009).

SE2 (M, 50), for example, spoke of his experience of collaborating with Google, enabling him to access ‘advice’ and ‘chat to their technicians’ about his digital solution which he found very beneficial. However, he concurrently states, if his digital solution proves to be successful, private businesses such as Virgin and/or BT could use his solution as part of their social responsibility. He notes:

SE2 (M, 50): ‘frankly this product will ideally need Wi-Fi, every person in care will need it but it may be a very good PR exercise for BT or Virgin... like having a personal care package, Wi-Fi package in these homes, and give something back and say, ‘this is important’...she needs this’ because it puts people’s lives in danger so they need the very best one at a reasonable price. The big companies may want to look at that because it looks good to give something without being cynical...being socially responsible’.

On the other hand, SE8 (M, 50) argues, to improve social outcomes, support should be led by the UK government. He explained the UK government ‘needs’ to start ‘supporting the sector and acknowledging that social enterprise is a huge drive to the economy and has got an amazing potential’. His view is shared by SE15 (F, 58), who notes, the UK government should be providing ‘tax incentives’ to social enterprises so they can deliver long-term solutions. As such, SE15 demonstrates her ‘anger’ and ‘frustration’ with how ‘social enterprises are taxed just the same as any other business’ despite ‘doing so much good’ for ‘the community’. She notes, ‘a £5,000 tax’ paid by a social enterprise could be deployed to address further local community needs.

Her view is shared by AAA2 (M), who argues, ‘tailor-made reward structures’ could incentivise social enterprises to ‘still do good and return funds to the organisation’. AAA2 thinks, there should be ‘some sort of mechanism’ of ‘rewards’ tailored to the needs of social entrepreneurs who ‘took risk’ with their ‘family and time’ so they are ‘still able to enjoy’ what they do’. As highlighted in Section 6.6.1, AAA2 subscribes to the ‘heroic’ views about social entrepreneurs who have ‘amazing qualities’. Hence, he felt, they should be rewarded for the risk involved with setting up their social enterprise. Fostering collaboration and incentivising social enterprises is also seen by SE8 (M, 50) to be invaluable, noting, ‘a collaborative approach is as valuable as anything’. He suggests, the UK government should be ‘providing opportunities for business training and keep business rates sensible’ to help ‘start-ups and making sure they’re sustainable and they’re gonna stay around’.

Although SE8 argues the government could provide training opportunities and business rates incentives, SE22 (M, 61) highlights these incentives ‘hasn’t helped him’ at the start-up stage. He states, although he invested ‘£35,000’ from his ‘retirement pocket’ and ‘didn’t take any wages’, all he had
received was, ‘wow, it’s fantastic what you’re creating’. Here, SE22 expresses his frustration with how government officials seem to lack an understanding of the ‘pain’ he endured to get his social enterprise ‘off the ground’, raising his voice during the interview saying, ‘yes you haven’t helped us. You haven’t helped us’.

On the other hand, SE9 (M, 54) signalled, the UK government should understand the differences between social models that have a ‘capacity to grow like a virus’ and those that ‘continuously depend on government subsidies for their survival’. Although, as discussed in Section 6.6, the participants were explicit about the differences between charities that draw their income mainly from government subsidies and social enterprises that trade for the benefits of their social mission, SE9 argues, ‘there is a huge issue’ with how the government seems to lack an understanding of where the ‘money should go’. He, therefore, suggests, the government should ask if ‘that money is delivering a long-term, sustainable, and positive contribution to the goal? Is it capable of growing like a virus into this problem, infecting the problem, destroying it? Is it capable of doing that?’ and, therefore, should ‘invest its money, support it, make it happen, and resource it’ and ‘if it isn’t, switch it off and let something grow that’s gonna work’.

For SE9, therefore, the government should recognise the ‘difference between charities that can spend money and charities that can make a difference’. However, SE19’s (M, 62) brought a different perspective, arguing the government should be ‘giving more considerations to arts and music education’ since they are as equally ‘important as learning Maths and English’. Talking of the benefits of music in enhancing the social inclusion of the ‘elderly’, he notes, there is research evidence it is ‘good as it favours the secretion of particular hormones in the brain. It promotes better breathing, which in turn makes older people sleep better and improve their appetites’. However, he concurrently states, the government ‘should be promoting Big Local programmes’ to engage with disadvantaged youth and develop their ‘entrepreneurial’ skills. He explains ‘young’ disadvantaged ‘kids’ are not involved in the Big Local programme in the community, which he considered a lost opportunity. As such, he suggests, the UK government should be ‘promoting that and then potential social entrepreneurs will manifest and be identified’, instead of ‘trying to find and looking for social entrepreneurs’.

For SE19, therefore, the ‘Big Local project’ should be considered as the ‘place’ where ‘potential social entrepreneurs’ are supported to turn their ideas into practice. Nevertheless, for other participants, the role of the UK government is to ‘influence’ and ‘enable change’. They suggest, the government should influence ‘policies’ and provide an ‘infrastructure’ for social enterprises. This is illustrated by AAA1 (M), who argues, the government ‘should be thinking far more on how to be strategically influencing as
opposed to making policies which is all about ‘you will do this’. He explains, the UK government should be ‘providing an infrastructure of enabling ordinary folks, in their own life, in their communities, in their own social networks, family networks, to feel there is hope and vision for themselves’.

Although AAA1 relates the word ‘infrastructure’ with enabling ‘ordinary folks to have hope and vision’, SE21 (M, 60) relates this to going as far as ‘having a Minister’ to support social enterprises and small businesses. He argues, there is ‘a children’s Minister, a Charity Commission’ but ‘who’s fighting the corner of social enterprises? There is nobody’. For SE21, although ‘there’s a lot of support to get small businesses off the ground…nobody wants to sit next with you at 2 o’clock in the morning when you’re writing stuff out. You’re doing the hard work’. As such, he suggests, government policies should be about ‘execution’ rather than written in ‘grand words’. He gave the example of the ‘one and a half page Social Value Act’ stating ‘we’re gonna work with the third-sector, we’re gonna do this, we’re gonna do that’, however, there is a lack of practical implementations.

The participants’ accounts, therefore, convey their different perceptions about how the UK government could support the social enterprise sector. Promoting collaboration between sectors has been seen to play an important role in helping social entrepreneurs tackle social problems. In addition, the participants conveyed their beliefs of how policies should ‘influence’ and ‘enable’ social change to happen. The participants also spoke of the benefits gained by collaborating with private businesses and government agencies in addressing social needs. Nevertheless, further patterns emerged from the data concerning the skills required by participants to develop their competitiveness.

This is illustrated in SE4’s account (M, 50), who argues, ‘understanding risk is really important’ for social entrepreneurs. When I probed further what he meant by ‘risk’, SE4 replied, social entrepreneurs need to understand the level of risks involved in setting up their social enterprise and, therefore, gaining risk management skills could help them understand ‘their bias, blind spots and self-delusion’ and how not to ‘misrepresent or misunderstand risk’. SE6 (M, 53), on the other hand, argues, ‘management skills’ and ‘guidance on how to access funding’ are some of the skills required by social entrepreneurs. As discussed in Section 6.6.1, SE6 perceived himself an ‘innovator’ and, therefore, needing guidance on ‘where to get funding’, but central to his account is his related belief he needed support ‘with the management and the financial sides’ of the business since he is ‘missing opportunities’ by spending time ‘preparing’ rather than strategically developing his social enterprise. Gaining further skills such as social media, accountancy, and (IT) was also evident in SE16’s (F, 56) account, stating, ‘she’s gonna have to go to an accountant…and needs a dummies’ guide on social media on how to design a website, how to make it clear, and what sort of things she should be looking at when designing a website’.
Despite receiving financial and professional support from UnLtd, the participants felt ‘a critical expertise’ is required if they were to succeed in ‘what they do’. SE6 (M, 53), for instance, explains, there is ‘encouragement’ from which social entrepreneurs are benefiting, however, ‘most of the support’ is not-tailor made, leading him to conclude ‘critical expertise isn’t being there’. This was highlighted by SE16 (F, 58), who argues, tailor-made practical guidance for LLSEs such as ‘how to register’ or how ‘to put in place an article of association’ would be beneficial. As she notes, ‘I know UnLtd gave me some support. I think what would be good and really useful is if I had someone say, ‘this is where you go to register...I know it’s all online but it’s knowing what to ask for... It took me a while to realise I can go online and look for policies and adapt them and perhaps that’s because of my experience’.

The participants’ accounts convey, therefore, the wide range of support they require. This included fostering a collaborative culture between sectors to access resources and further address social needs. However, it was evident from their accounts; they experienced a set of challenges in collaborating with government agencies that seem to adopt ‘clinical approaches’ in addressing social needs. This was illustrated by SE4, who believes government agencies are often constrained by ‘regulations’ and ‘governance’, making it difficult for them to ‘open their doors’ to novel approaches provided by social enterprises. As such, he suggests, in collaborating with social enterprises, government agencies could gain access to their enterprising solutions, experience, and tacit knowledge to develop better solutions to local problems.

In addition, the participants felt there is a lack of ‘recognition of the work they do on the ground’, as in the case of SE17, who argues, government agencies tend not to promote the social enterprise sector, creating a divide between the ‘too goody sector’ such as the voluntary sector and social enterprises. SE14 on the other hand, highlights the issues related with the ‘one best-fit’ approach to addressing social needs. As such, she argues, there should be a degree of ‘flexibility’ in how government agencies address social needs. In addition, they should connect with the ‘hard to reach’ and collaborate with social enterprises rather than seeing themselves as ‘us and them’.

The participants also highlight the benefits that could be gained by collaborating with private businesses. SE22, for instance, argues, industries could benefit from skilled workforces through his social enterprise. SE2 also notes, his digital solutions could be used by private businesses such as BT and/or Virgin as part of their corporate social responsibility. A key pattern which emerged from the data is the role the UK government could play in fostering collaborations between sectors. As noted by SE4, although the UK government has ‘pushed’ the social enterprise agenda forward, further support is required if it is to succeed in its mission of tackling the UK pressing social problems. This
could be achieved, as noted by SE15, through ‘tax incentives’ to avoid an ‘unfair’ tax system that charges social enterprises similar tax rates to private businesses. On the other hand, SE9 argues, the UK government should understand the differences between enterprises that ‘can grow like a virus’ and those that remain dependent on government subsidy. However, SE22’s notes, he was not helped by the UK government due to its lack of understanding of the pain he had to go through to get his social enterprise ‘off the ground’.

Conversely, SE19 conveys his felt perception about the role of the UK government in paying more considerations to arts and music to tackle social problems. He further explains, Big Local programmes should engage with disadvantaged youths and enable them to turn their ideas into practice. SE21, on the other hand, suggests the UK government should be appointing a Minister to ‘fight the corner’ of small businesses and social enterprises. Here, SE21 expresses his frustration with how the ‘Social Value Act’ seems to be written with ‘grand words’ lacking practical implementations.

A further pattern which emerged through the participants’ account is their need to develop their skills. SE4, for instance, argues, he needs to develop risk management skills to enhance his understanding of risk and its mitigation. SE16 also notes, she requires financial management, IT, and social media skills to develop her social enterprise. Nevertheless, what emerged from the data is the need for a ‘critical expertise’, as in the case of SE6, who feels there is a lot of ‘encouragement’ with no ‘critical expertise’. SE16, on the other hand, suggests ‘tailor-made’ practical guidance, such as ‘how to open a bank account’ and put together an ‘article of association’ would be invaluable.

6.7.2 Theme Five ‘Capacity Building and Ecosystem of Support’: Summary and Discussion

This theme ‘capacity building and ecosystem of support’ conveys the participants’ held beliefs about how they might be supported. Firstly, the accounts indicate, building collaboration with government agencies and private businesses could generate benefits on two levels: on the one hand, public and private sector organisations could access entrepreneurial (social) solutions to social problems, and on the other hand, social enterprises could gain legitimacy and access to resources to further their social objectives. This is consistent with the views of Dees (2001), who note, social entrepreneurs use scarce resources efficiently through collaborating to achieve their social mission. However, the participants felt for such collaboration to take place, government agencies need to avoid the ‘one best-fit’ clinical approaches to social problems, but instead should open their door to entrepreneurial (social) solutions that could be considered an effective vehicle in delivering public services. This is consistent with Spear,
et al., (2009) who note, social enterprises are seen by government as another vehicle for delivering effective public services.

A related insight generated by this theme is building collaboration with private businesses, generating positive outcomes. On the one hand, private businesses can access tacit knowledge of local problems and fulfil their social responsibility mission, and on the other hand, social enterprises can access resources that would further their competitiveness. Besides, the support of the UK government was considered valuable by participants since it can foster a culture of collaboration between sectors on two levels: on a policy level, the UK government could promote the social enterprise sector and ‘showcase’ their real groundwork, and on a practical level, provide tax incentives and tailor-made solutions to support social entrepreneurs aged 50+. As highlighted in this theme, the participants felt they lacked a number of skills such as social media, sales, and business development skills, which therefore suggests that tailored support is important if they were to build their competitiveness and secure long-term sustainability. This is congruent with Spear, et al., (2009), who suggest social enterprises have become one of the cornerstones of government policy since they are seen to play an important role in ‘restructuring public services’ and as a source of innovation in tackling social problems. However, as highlighted by Kautonen, et al., (2008), ‘older’ entrepreneurs may have far more advantages than their younger counterparts, including industry and management experience, skills and expertise. Therefore, policies should be focused on encouraging business ownership and entrepreneurship among those aged 50+. The authors argue ‘policy support’ can generate two possible benefits by firstly, enhancing the social and economic participation among those aged 50+ and, secondly, provide relevant support mechanisms that would enable those with an entrepreneurial drive to succeed (Kautonen, et al., 2008).

Hence, the key practical implication of this theme, is that it identifies that the external policy context plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of LLSEs. This finding are congruent with existing research conducted by Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006), who suggest, ‘environmental dynamics’ such as changes in the external context, government funding, and policy dynamics increases competitiveness between sectors. Hence, the authors suggest, social enterprises should innovate in the way social value is created and focus on sustainability, which is key to their long-term survival. Since the participants expressed their beliefs that an ‘ecosystem of support’ based on a culture of collaboration between sectors, they are likely to view the context as indicative of the levels of support they require.
6.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of my thematic analysis to answer my second and third research questions which were posed in response to a lack of understanding of how LLSEs view their ‘everyday’ lived experiences and the challenges they face and how they might be supported. In the theme ‘ageing society’, participants expressed their concerns over how ‘older’ people are perceived from public perspectives, as dependent and a burden on the state, demonstrating the fascination with youth in the UK culture. However, they also spoke of shifts occurring within the UK context due to longer life expectancy and changes in lifestyles and working patterns, meaning ‘older’ people changed their felt perceptions of what it means to be old.

Indeed, all participants signalled that ‘age’ is ‘meaningless’, instead it signifies their prior professional experiences and social networks, resilience, and independence, all of which are an advantage to their social enterprise activity. Besides, this theme highlights the participants’ ambivalent feeling towards their entrepreneurial (social) identity. Although some identified themselves with terms such as ‘social entrepreneur’ and ‘social enterprise’, others contested these terms since they are seen incompatible with their social mission. Nevertheless, it was also identified from the data that some participants viewed themselves as community workers, seeing their primary role as being able to make a difference to the lives of others within their community. Further insights emerged from the data concerning those who felt they had a double identity – that is social when collaborating with public sector organisations and business when cooperating with private businesses.

Despite their ambivalent feelings about their entrepreneurial (social) identity, the participants felt their experience during the social entrepreneurial process overall was positive, contributing to their wellbeing. Theme five, ‘personal enrichment’, therefore, provides an account of what the participants gained during the social entrepreneurial process. On one level, they developed their business and interpersonal skills, and on the other, gained a positive learning experience and a feel good factor. However, theme four, ‘sustainability’ provides a detailed account of the challenges and barriers they faced.

Lack of or limited access to funding was perceived to be one of the major challenges they faced. This demonstrates the barriers the participants faced in accessing funding which is on the one hand, due to the ‘hybridity’ of their organisation and the expectations placed on them to be self-sustaining and on the other hand, due to their CIC structure, signalling to funders they are self-sufficient financially and, therefore, do not require any support. Limited access to funding further accounts for the challenges they faced in balancing their strategic and operational objectives. Since the majority of
participants were operating as a ‘one woman/man band’, it was difficult for them to devise long-term strategic goals. Besides, the participants felt due to their ‘hybridity’, it is difficult to balance their social with their profit motives. However, it was also identified the participants held varied perspective about the role of income generation. Whilst some perceived this incompatible with their social mission, others (strategic social entrepreneurs) felt income generation important to secure long-term sustainability and further social objectives. Measuring and evaluating social impact was also seen by participants to be one of the challenges they faced, particularly when it involved non-tangible societal outcomes. However, they also felt the term social impact is often used a tool to satisfy funders rather than showcase the real ground work they make.

This chapter has also brought significant insights on how the participants can be supported. This is discussed in Theme Seven ‘capacity building and ecosystem of support’, highlighting the significance of building collaboration between sectors to provide better solutions to social problems. This collaboration has advantages on two levels. On one level, the participants can access resources that would help them achieve their social objectives, and on the other level, private and public sector organisations can access tacit local knowledge and entrepreneurial solutions to social problems. A key practical implication of this theme demonstrates the role that could be played by the UK government to foster the social enterprise sector by heightening the role of social entrepreneurs through policy implementations and tax incentives.

The above empirical insights have emerged by analysing the data collected from twenty-eight LLSEs who have been funded through UnLtd award programmes and seven AAA participants, by adopting a thematic analysis approach, looking for emerging patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006) that convey the participants understanding of their ‘everyday’ lived experiences, from their perspectives. Hence, all of the empirical insights discussed in this chapter were supported with extracts drawn from the participants’ interview transcripts, and where appropriate discussed in relation to relevant literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise.
Chapter Seven:
Conclusion, Research Contributions and Implications for Future Research

7.1 Introduction

This thesis aimed to contribute to a better understanding of how LLSEs understand their ‘everyday’ lives from their own perspectives. In Chapter Two, a critical review of existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has identified a gap in our knowledge of what factors LLSEs consider important in their decisions to set up a social enterprise, the way they view their ‘everyday’ lives, the challenges they face and how they might be supported. In response to this gap in our knowledge, three research questions were iteratively developed from the literature review and the research process as follows:

1. What are the factors LLSEs consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise?
2. How do LLSEs view their everyday lives from their own perspectives?
3. How do they explain the challenges they face and how they might be supported?

The role played by social enterprises in developing effective solutions to social problems has been a matter of growing policy, academic and practitioner interests. In the UK, social enterprises have been presented to play a significant role in delivering public services more effectively than government agencies and private sector organisations (e.g. Cornforth, 2014; Dees, 2001). In addition, academic and practitioner literature have brought significant insights into how social enterprises create social value by addressing pressing social needs. This literature has focused on examining the differences between commercially-driven entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs, identifying the term ‘social enterprise’ and its blurred boundaries, and exploring social entrepreneurial traits (e.g. Austin, et al., 2006; Dees and Elias, 1998; Massetti, 2008; Thompson, 2002, Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006). Despite this growing interest in social enterprise, there is little empirical evidence that examines how LLSEs understand their ‘everyday’ lives from their own perspectives.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Stumbitz (2013) has conducted a study on LLSEs, explaining who social entrepreneurs aged 50+ are in respect of their demographic characteristics, motivation, activities, and social orientations. Yet, little empirical evidence provides an in-depth understanding of their ‘everyday’ lives. As such, the approach of this study and its focus have been developed in response to this gap in our knowledge, by adopting social constructionism as a theoretical lens, foregrounding the subjective
views of those involved (e.g. Andrews, 2012; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Cunliffe, 2008). In giving priority to the voices of participants, this study makes theoretical and empirical contributions to existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise by enhancing our understanding of the subjective views of the participants in this study.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the increase in the number of ‘older’ people approaching the retirement age compared to those in the labour workforce, has prompted the UK government to introduce new policy reforms to extend their economic and social participation (e.g. Carmel, et al., 2007; Casey, et al., 2003; Daniel and Heywood, 2007). The anti-age discrimination laws, the removal of the DRA of sixty-five, and pension reforms, for example, were introduced to protect ‘older’ workers against ageism in the workplace and provide further opportunities for their inclusion in the labour market (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017). However, the UK government’s main response has been on extending the working lives of ‘older’ people without there being an assessment of how ‘older’ age interacts with other factors, such as, health, experience, wealth, pension arrangements, gender, and care responsibilities (e.g. Banks and Tetlow, 2008; Berry, 2010; Foster, 2012). Nevertheless, research has found those aged 50+ have considerable experience, skills and expertise, such as management and leadership skills, and industrial and technical knowledge and social networks, all of which increase their entrepreneurial intentions (e.g. Akola, 2008; Kautonen, et al., 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012; Singh and De Noble, 2003). As such, social enterprises may be considered a policy option in furthering the participation of this age group by making use of their experiences and transferable skills (Kautonen, et al., 2011).

The final chapter of my thesis, therefore, draws together the main findings I presented in Chapters Five and Six, all of which answer my research questions that were iteratively developed from my literature review on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. As such, I begin this chapter by briefly reflecting on my research process and my methodological approach. Next, I provide an explanation of the theoretical contribution of this study by reviewing my research questions in view of the findings presented in my finding’s chapters, followed by demonstrating the main empirical contribution of this study.

Finally, I address the practical implications of my findings for government policy and organisations supporting LLSEs. This chapter concludes by discussing the research limitations and future research directions that may assist future researchers in enhancing their understanding of the underlying factors influencing entrepreneurial (social) intentions in ‘later life’.
7.2 Overview of the Research Process

My research process began with a comprehensive review of existing academic and practitioner literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise to identify the main issues and gaps in our knowledge about LLSEs. This literature review has identified a number of key insights, which were invaluable in understanding the concept of social enterprise and the role of social entrepreneurs in creating social value. Furthermore, since my research involved LLSEs, and therefore, their age is key to who they are as individuals, I conducted a literature review on the UK ageing policy to develop a more nuanced understanding of the policy ‘context’ in which my research participants are embedded. This has generated key insights concerning how the ageing process is interpreted from objective and subjective perspectives (e.g. Barnhart and Penâloza, 2013; Bengtson, et al., 1997; Provencher, et al., 2014). Medical and economic discourses, for instance, tend to view the ageing process as a phase of decline and dependency, presenting fiscal implications on public resources (e.g. Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Coupland, et al., 2008; Razanova, 2010). However, social gerontology has furthered our understanding of how the ageing process is interpreted from those who experience it. This has highlighted ‘older’ people may not perceive themselves as ‘old’ and hence, seek to continue their social and economic participation (e.g. Barnhart and Penâloza, 2013; Schafer and Shippee, 2009; Shmerlina, 2015).

In addition, this literature has found due to longer life expectancy, the retirement process is no longer perceived as a cliff-edge event, but instead an opportunity for ‘older’ people to bridge into employment and/or entrepreneurship (e.g. Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Ruhm, 1990; Say and Patrickson, 2012). Nevertheless, research has found the decision to fully retire or remain in the labour market is dependent on health, income, care responsibilities, and family structure (e.g. Banks and Tetlow, 2008; Beehr and Bennett, 2015; Berry, 2010; Foster, 2012). Consequently, I decided to adopt social constructionism as a theoretical lens to delve deeper into understanding how LLSEs interpret the factors they consider important in their decisions to set up a social enterprise, their ‘everyday’ lives, and the challenges they experience and how they might be supported.

The interpretations presented in my findings chapters, Chapters Five and Six, demonstrate there are a number of factors that have influenced the participants’ entrepreneurial (social) intentions, determining, in the process, their social orientations, perceptions about age, entrepreneurial (social) identity, and the challenges they face and the support they require. However, it is important to highlight the complex and paradoxical nature of the data presented in these chapters. As I noted throughout, my participants held conflicting views about their social orientations and entrepreneurial
(social) identity, something I have tried to retain in my interpretations and presentation of their accounts.

Consistent with the research focus on examining the standpoints and perspectives of participants, I decided to adopt a qualitative approach which involved conducting twenty-eight in-depth interviews with LLSEs who have been funded through UnLtd’s core award programmes, including seven interviews with AAA committee members to explore their views about the policy context in the UK. My rationale for adopting a qualitative approach is further outlined in Chapter Four. However, in Section 7.3 below, I provide an account of the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study.

7.3 Conceptual and Research Contributions

The aim of this study is to examine the ‘everyday’ life experiences of LLSEs who are known as ‘later life’ social entrepreneurs (Stumbitz, et al., 2012). Given there is a limited empirical research examining the ways in which this age group interpret their ‘everyday’ lived experiences, an interpretive social constructionist approach has been adopted, foregrounding the subjective views of those involved (e.g. Andrews, 2012; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Cunliffe, 2008). To evaluate how I have achieved the aim of my study, the following sections will now examine my theoretical (conceptual) contribution, followed by highlighting the empirical contribution of this study.

7.3.1 Conceptual contributions

This study makes three major theoretical contributions. Firstly, it extends our understanding of how social entrepreneurs aged 50+ construct their ‘everyday’ lives from their own perspectives and standpoints. Secondly, this study extensively examines the interplay between ‘older’ age and social entrepreneurship bringing significant new insights into how age interacts with the participants’ motives and social orientations in setting-up their social enterprises. Thirdly, this study critically examines the challenges and barriers the participants faced, providing a better understanding of the types of support mechanisms they require. This study therefore extends theoretical knowledge, not only in the field of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise research by focusing on the subjective construction of those involved, but also to the limited related entrepreneurship research on ‘later life’ entrepreneurs. This section addresses the main theoretical contributions to knowledge by assessing each of the research questions that were posed in response to a gap in the existing literature and our knowledge about the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs.
7.3.2.1 Research Question One: What are the factors LLSEs consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise?

This research question was posed in response to a considerable gap in our knowledge about the factors social entrepreneurs aged 50+ consider important in their decision to become social entrepreneurs. This gap had been left unaddressed by existing academic and practitioner literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, as critically reviewed in Chapter Two. However, what has emerged from this literature review is that social entrepreneurs have an ‘explicit’ social mission to address pressing social problems (e.g. Dees, 2001; Shaw and Carter, 2007). Prominent in this body of literature is Dees (2001), for instance, who argues, although social enterprise can exist in a spectrum comprising not-for-profit and for-profit sector organisations, social enterprises create systemic social changes and address the most complex social problems. For Dees, social entrepreneurs are Schumpeterian in their orientations since they develop innovative solutions to social problems. He notes, social entrepreneurs are ‘change agents’, ‘revolutionaries’, and ‘reformers’ as described by Schumpeter but with an explicit social mission.

The first contribution of this study to knowledge is by demonstrating ‘self-fulfilment’ has been perceived by research participants as one of the most important factor influencing their decision in setting up their social enterprise. However, the findings suggest, their interpretations of ‘self-fulfilment’ varied considerably. Whilst some pursued social enterprise in line with their ‘personal values’ and ‘passion’, others saw this as an opportunity to ‘downshift’ and fulfil their ‘need for achievement’. Setting up a social enterprise was, therefore, seen by participants to pursue an activity that, on the one hand, fulfilled their need for ‘self-fulfilment’, and on the other hand, fulfilled their intrinsic needs of ‘making a difference’ to the lives of those disadvantaged and/or in need.

These findings are congruent with previous research which found ‘self-fulfilment’ is strongly mediated by ‘personal values’ related to protecting the welfare of others, benevolence, social justice and equality (e.g. Bardi, et al., 2014; Rohan, 2000). Bardi and Schwartz (2003), for instance, argue, individuals act according to their personal values because they want to achieve consistency between their beliefs and behaviour. In addition, ‘downshifting’ has been seen by researchers to be an opportunity to achieve work-life balance and simpler lifestyles (e.g. Hamilton, 2003). Juniu (2000), for example, notes, downshifting is a means for individuals to lead simpler lifestyles and break away from consumerism and material attachments.

Secondly, this thesis contributes to knowledge by revealing the participants’ entrepreneurial (social) intentions are strongly mediated by external factors. They conveyed their held beliefs that, ‘limited
employment opportunities’ due to ‘perceived age discrimination’, ‘redundancy’, and ‘dissatisfaction in the workplace’ spurred their decision in setting up their social enterprise. This supports previous research, which has found ‘push’ factors such as redundancy and ageism influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. As an example, a study conducted by Singh and DeNoble (2003) suggest, there are three types of ‘older’ social entrepreneurs depending on their risk-taking propensity. Constrained entrepreneurs have entrepreneurial tendencies however, they are unable to act on entrepreneurial opportunities due to perceived risks. Rational entrepreneurs, on the other hand, pursue entrepreneurial opportunities by assessing their current situation and the potential risks involved with entrepreneurship. Finally, reluctant entrepreneurs pursue entrepreneurial opportunities out of necessity due to lack of employment opportunities and financial resources.

Nevertheless, the findings also revealed important variations between the participants’ social orientations and approach to their social enterprise activity. Whilst some viewed income generation incompatible with their social mission, others were strategic in their orientations and hence, income was seen to play a significant role in sustaining their social enterprise and furthering their social objectives. Indeed, the interpretations of terms, such as ‘social enterprise’, ‘social entrepreneur’, and social ‘entrepreneurship’ varied considerably between participants.

In this study, strategic social entrepreneurs considered income generation to be important to their sustainability and to address the social need they identified. This supports the view of academic researchers, such as Di Domenico et al., (2010), who argue, social enterprises are business ventures that trade in the pursuit of their social mission and to avoid dependency on government grants and philanthropy. In addition, Boschee (2007) notes, social enterprises are ‘hybrid’ organisations that have an explicit social mission but adopt business strategies to sustain themselves and avoid dependency on government subsidies.

Indeed, the findings highlight, strategic social entrepreneurs, are explicit about the constraints presented by the external environment, particularly the lack of, or limited access to funding, necessitating the adoption of a ‘hybrid’ model to sustain their organisations. This is congruent with Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort (2006), who argue, social enterprises operate in an increasingly competitive environment and government spending cuts, and therefore, are required to generate a revenue stream by displaying ‘proactiveness’ in the way in which they seek funding, ‘risk management’ by assessing the levels of risk involved, and ‘financial sustainability’, which is key to their long-term survival.
However, other participants perceived income generation to be incompatible with their social mission. This was strongly expressed by participants who viewed their role to be primarily creating social value, and therefore, income generation may dilute their social mission. This supports the views of Dees (2001), who argues, income generation may dilute the social mission of social enterprises, and therefore, they are required to have an explicit social mission despite adopting business strategies. In addition, a study conducted by Massetti (2008) has found, income generation is dependent on how social entrepreneurs define their social mission. Whilst some are driven primarily by their social goals, others have a market-driven mission and tend to pursue for-profit trading activity to scale social impact.

Notwithstanding, it was evident from the data that two participants experienced a mindset shift halfway through the social entrepreneurial process. Although income generation conflicted with their social orientations and personal beliefs, they realised trading could help them sustain their organisations, and therefore, achieve their social mission. Hence, although these participants were concerned about ‘drifting’ (Fritsch, et al., 2014) from their social mission, they changed the way they conducted their business and behaviour by becoming more enterprising. This is congruent with Fritsch, et al., (2014), who argue, the ‘hybridity’ of social enterprises may contribute to a ‘mission drift’ that detracts them from achieving their social mission. However, ‘mission drift’ is less likely to occur if their social mission remains their primary goal. Hence, the mindset shift experienced by these two participants highlight, despite their ambivalent feelings about income generation, it has become significant to trade to achieve their social mission. Nevertheless, what was evident from the accounts of all participants is their held beliefs about ‘making a difference’ to their local community such as empowering those underprivileged and/or in need and enhance their social and economic inclusion. This is congruent with the views presented by Thompson (2002), who argues, social enterprises build the social capital of their local communities by creating jobs in deprived areas, utilise buildings and services that are deemed non-profitable by government agencies and private businesses, help those in need, and provide volunteering opportunities. Leadbeater (1997), also notes, social entrepreneurs develop innovative solutions to intractable social problems and develop new forms of social capital, which, in turn, helps empower those disadvantaged to take control over their lives.

A further way in which this study contributes to knowledge is by demonstrating the role ‘experience and social networks’ play in influencing the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise. As discussed in Chapter Two, entrepreneurship research has found, ‘older’ people have experience, expertise, and transferable skills influencing their entrepreneurial intentions (Akola, 2008; Kautonen, et al., 2011; Say and Patrickson, 2012; Singh and DeNoble, 2003). Prominent in this emerging body of
literature are, for example, Weber and Schaper (2003) and Kautonen et al., (2010) who argue, experience is defined as the cumulative skills, expertise, and know-how which influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. However, as noted by Kautonen, et al., (2010), those who worked in blue-collar industries and/or in public sector organisations may have a negative perception towards entrepreneurship.

Thus, in my interpretations of the participants’ accounts, I drew upon insights from mainstream literature on entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’ (e.g. Kautonen and Palmroos, 2010; Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Shaper, 2003) to explore the participants’ held perceptions of their prior experience and how it had influenced their decision in setting up their social enterprise. The findings presented in Chapter Five illustrate how the participants’ prior experience was seen as an advantage, allowing them access to resources, guidance, and social networks they had built over their lifetime careers. Indeed, social networks, such as family and professionals brokered the participants’ access to resources and reduced uncertainty during the social entrepreneurial process. The findings are, therefore, congruent with existing research (e.g. Kautonen, et al., 2008, Singh and DeNoble, 2003; Weber and Schaper, 2003) that found ‘older’ entrepreneurs have human and social capital that may influence their entrepreneurial intentions. Thus, in highlighting the ‘role of experience and social networks’, this study supports other scholars’ assertions that these factors influence entrepreneurial intentions.

Nevertheless, this thesis has further illustrated the interpretation of the term ‘experience’ varied between participants. Whilst some associated this ‘with prior work and/or entrepreneurial experience’, others spoke of their ‘life experiences’, demonstrating how their ‘older’ age gave them ‘resilience’ to face the challenges and/or barriers they faced during the social entrepreneurial process. This suggests although prior professional experience played a positive role in influencing the participants’ entrepreneurial (social) intentions, there must also be a recognition of the significance of their age on their intentions. This contradicts the findings presented by Lévesque and Minniti (2006), who argue, although contextual factors such as education and taxation systems may be addressed by policy interventions, inherent factors such as age have a negative influence on entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’. As such, the authors note, as people age, they tend to assess whether the income to be gained from paid employment is better than entrepreneurship and hence, their desire for entrepreneurship declines.

The findings also contradict the research undertaken by Curran and Blackburn (2001), who argue, as people age, they tend to be directed towards non-economic pursuits such as volunteering than business ownership. However, the findings of this study, concur with Weber and Schaper (2003), who
note, experience, skills, knowledge, and learning gained over an individual’s lifetime career increase their entrepreneurial intentions. The interpretations of my participants’ accounts, therefore, support entrepreneurship literature on entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’, indicating their previous career backgrounds has influenced their decision in setting up their social enterprise and facilitated their experience during the social entrepreneurial process.

In summary, this study makes a distinctive theoretical contribution to the literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise by identifying three main factors influencing the participants’ decisions in setting up their social enterprise. Firstly, ‘self-fulfilment’ has been seen as the main motivating factor. However, the interpretations of ‘self-fulfilment’ varied between participants as some spoke of ‘downshifting’ and ‘need for achievement’, and others wanted to pursue an activity in line with their ‘passion’ and ‘personal values’. In terms of how ‘self-fulfilment’ contributed to the participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise, the findings strongly suggest that ‘age’ acted as a ‘trigger’ for most to seek ‘self-fulfilment’, resulting in their personal wellbeing, personal growth, and fulfilling their potential. However, as highlighted in Chapter Five, push factors such as ‘redundancy’, ‘perceived aged discrimination, and ‘dissatisfaction in the workplace’ influenced the participants’ decision in setting up a social enterprise. ‘Experience and social networks’, which has been translated by participants to comprise knowledge, skills, expertise, social networks, and prior entrepreneurial experience, have also been perceived to play an important role in their decision to set up a social enterprise, as well as facilitating their access to resources, guidance, and support.

The identification of these three main factors: ‘self-fulfilment’, ‘necessity’, ‘experience and social networks’ have addressed an identified gap in our knowledge of how LLSEs understand the factors they consider important in their decision for becoming social entrepreneurs.

7.3.2.2 Research Question Two: How do LLSEs view their everyday lives from their own perspectives?

This research question diverts attention away from what factors the research participants consider important in their decision to set up a social enterprise to examining how they view their ‘everyday’ lives as social entrepreneurs. A related aim is to explore potential benefits and possible negative outcomes during the social entrepreneurial process.

In my interpretations of the participants’ accounts, I have identified three main benefits gained during the social entrepreneurial process: ‘personal development’, ‘lifelong learning’, and a ‘feel good’ factor, contributing to the wellbeing of participants. Almost everyone I interviewed highlighted how by ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives, made them feel energised and emotionally uplifted. However,
beyond wellbeing, the participants conveyed their held beliefs about the skills they had gained which comprised business, management, leadership, and social media skills, and interpersonal skills such self-confidence, delegation, and assertiveness. These findings support the findings of McDowall (2013), who argues, increased capacity in confidence and gaining a positive learning experience have been found as the main benefit LLSEs derive from their social enterprise activity. In addition, studies conducted by Beehr and Bennett (2015) and Hulmes (2012) found, engaging in meaningful activities in ‘later life’ can enhance wellbeing and social inclusion.

The significant findings that emerged from the AAA participants supported these interpretations. They highlight the retirement process is no longer perceived as a cliff-edge event, instead, an opportunity for ‘older’ people to continue their social and economic participation. Shifts in perceptions about what it means to be ‘old’ and changes in lifestyles and working patterns driven by technology were seen as the main drivers encouraging ‘older’ people to remain in the labour market rather than fully retire. Retirement is, therefore, an opportunity to bridge back into employment and/or contribute to local communities, or start a business. Indeed, even when the research participants (i.e. social entrepreneurs) were asked whether age has had any bearings on their experiences, they considered ‘older’ age to be meaningless; instead, it signified their experience, maturity, life-experiences, skills, and knowledge, all of which were an advantage to their social enterprise activity.

These findings support the literature review on ageing, as discussed in Chapter Three. Prominent in this body of literature are scholars such as Barhnart and Peñaloza (2013), Schafer and Shippee (2009) and Shmerlina (2015), who argue, ‘older’ age and the ageing process are subjective constructs, hence, they are dependent on how ‘older’ people perceive their age and experience the ageing process. Shmerlina (2015) notes, ‘older’ people often associate with their ‘younger age identity’ rather than their chronological age, increasing their desirability in pursuing work and new knowledge. The findings of this study confirm this, demonstrating how research participants expressed their views about ‘long life learning’, seeking new knowledge about other sectors such as healthcare to enhance their understanding of the needs of their beneficiaries. Indeed, all participants felt, learning should not be governed by age, and therefore, chronological ageing is no longer a basis for assessing people’s capabilities and desire for knowledge. As such, the participants viewed their ‘everyday’ lived experiences as positive since they developed their competencies and enhanced their wellbeing.

The study also contributes to knowledge about the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs by demonstrating potential reputational, physical and emotional risks associated with becoming a social entrepreneur. This is congruent with Brockhaus (1980), who argues, beyond financial risks, entrepreneurs may experience further risks such as work-life balance, emotional, reputational, and physical risks. In this study, some
participants experienced health issues such as a lower level of energy and mobility, which were identified to be the result of being aged 50+. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, contrary to medical and economic discourses portraying the ageing process as a phase of decline (e.g. Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Mayhew, 2005; Razanova, 2010), the participants, in this study, recognised the limitations of their age, but did not present this as a barrier to becoming social entrepreneurs. These findings contradict the ones suggested by Curran and Blackburn (2011) and Weber and Schaper (2003) who found ill health and a lack of energy may negatively influence entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’.

Furthermore, the findings highlighted, some participants were affected emotionally when interacting with their beneficiaries. However, this was not constructed to have a negative influence on achieving their social objectives; instead, it demonstrated the intensity of the social problems they addressed and their commitment to improving the lives of others. Other participants also spoke of reputational risk due to feeling accountable for the welfare of their beneficiaries and living up to their expectations. These findings contradict entrepreneurship discourse, associating risk with financial risk (e.g. Brockhaus, 1980), instead, demonstrating the intensity of social problems addressed by participants and their accountability towards the welfare of others.

Prior to this study, literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has focused on defining the term ‘social enterprise’ and its blurred boundaries and comparing commercially-driven entrepreneurs to social entrepreneurs, (e.g. Austin, et al., 2006; Dees, 2001; Dees and Elias, 1998; Shaw and Carter, 2007) with little consideration being given at understanding the subjective views of those involved. Hence, this study adopts interpretive social constructionism as a theoretical foundation in order to contribute to knowledge about the ways in which LLSEs interpret the benefits they gained during the social entrepreneurial process, from business and personal perspectives. As noted in my methodology chapter, constructionism is concerned with understanding meanings at the subjective level (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Schwandt, 2003), and therefore, the reality of those involved can only be known in relation to how they experience it (Andrews, 2012, Prasad and Prasad, 2002).

However, this thesis brings significant insights concerning potential physical, reputational, and emotional risks during the social entrepreneurial process. Nevertheless, all participants signalled the positive role played by their ‘age’, due to their experience, skills, and knowledge, giving them an advantage over their younger counterparts. These findings are supported by literature on entrepreneurial intentions in ‘later life’, demonstrating people aged 50+ have far more advantages than their younger counterparts due to their transferable skills and experience (e.g. Akola, 2008;
A key further theme identified was the lack of identification with terms such as ‘social entrepreneur’, ‘social entrepreneurship,’ and ‘social enterprise’. Although all research participants (i.e. social entrepreneurs) received a funding award from UnLtd and were used to the discourse on social enterprise, only a few were comfortable with identifying with these terms. However, overall, the participants felt the label ‘social entrepreneur’ is meaningless, as what is significant for them is ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives and addressing the social needs they identified. They added, using these terms only adds confusion among the ‘community of social entrepreneurs’. As such, when they were asked whether they perceived themselves as social entrepreneurs, some used the term to collaborate with government agencies, whilst others were negative as it was incompatible with their social mission. Indeed, for these participants, adopting the label ‘social entrepreneur’ signalled to them they are ‘running a business’, instead of ‘making a difference’ to their community.

However, it was evident from the participants’ accounts, identifying themselves as social entrepreneurs was dependent on the context, as some felt they had a double identity – that is social when collaborating with public authorities and business when collaborating with businesses. Hence, being a social entrepreneur has been perceived as one of the roles they played. This supports the view of Thompson (2002), who notes, although the term ‘social enterprise’ is widely adopted, many social entrepreneurs would not identify with the term or feel comfortable with identifying themselves as social entrepreneurs.

7.3.2.3 Research Question Three: How do they explain the challenges they face and how they might be supported?

This research question was posed in response to an identified lack in our knowledge about the challenges experienced by LLSEs. As discussed throughout this thesis, existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has enhanced our understanding of the role of the social entrepreneur in creating social value (e.g. Dees, 2001; Dees and Elias, 1998; Shaw and Carter, 2007; Swanson and Di Zhang, 2010). However, there is limited research examining the experiences of LLSEs from their own perspectives. This research question has, therefore, been posed to further our understanding of the challenges the participants faced and how they might be supported.
A key contribution of this thesis to knowledge is by demonstrating limited or lack of access to funding has been seen as one of the main challenges the participants faced, with many not being able to draw a salary. This was perceived to be the result of the ‘hybridity’ of their social enterprise, which meant they are expected by funders to be self-sustaining and, therefore, do not require any financial support. Further patterns that emerged were related to the ‘strings attached’ to funding, presenting a challenge for most participants having to ‘pay back’ funders despite lack of resources and income.

The findings also revealed there is a lack of understanding of the CIC structure, resulting in the inability of the participants to access funding due to the expectations placed on them to be self-sufficient financially. It was also highlighted by participants there is a lack of understanding among financial institutions of what the CIC structure means, presenting a barrier to access funding from, for example, banking institutions. However, this was by no means a consensus, as some participants found the CIC structure to present an advantage in their collaboration with government agencies since they can align with their social ethos. The issue with the CIC structure is congruent with the views of Dees and Anderson (2006), who argue, many social entrepreneurs employ business strategies to mobilise resources and achieve their social objectives. However, they do not want to be constrained by a particular legal structure and labelled a ‘non-profit’ and/or a ‘charity’, instead there should be an understanding that social enterprises are required to trade to create social value.

A further way in which this study contributes to knowledge is by demonstrating the challenges experienced by participants in evidencing social impact. The participants felt, more often, social impact may not be achieved immediately and/or may comprise non-tangible outcomes such as self-esteem or self-confidence, which is difficult to evidence. This supports the view of Bucaciuc (2015), who notes, the evaluation of social impact is a difficult endeavour for social enterprises since they are often dealing with changes that are difficult to measure, evaluate or trace back to a specific event. However, other participants expressed their views about the ‘chicken and egg’ situation of social enterprises, as on the one hand, they require funding at the start-up stage, and on the other, they are expected to demonstrate social impact.

Other participants spoke of the challenges they experienced in balancing their strategic and operational objectives. This was evident when they felt due to lack of resources; they operated as a ‘one woman/man band’, hindering their ability to develop strategic approaches to scale. Building strategic objectives, as noted by Boschee (2007) play a significant role in securing the long-term sustainability of social enterprises. Hence, social enterprises are required to build strategic and marketing objectives to achieve their social objectives. In addition, Dees and Elias (1998) notes, social enterprises need to carefully ‘craft’ their strategies for growth to secure long-term sustainability.
The participants further emphasised the challenges they experienced in balancing their social and for-profit motives. Although, as discussed in Chapter Six, some considered income generation incompatible with their social mission, there was a consensus among participants, due to the ‘hybridity’ of their social enterprise, they are often trying to balance their for-profit motives with their social mission. This is congruent with existing literature on social enterprise (e.g. Boschee, 2001; Dees, 2001; Mair and Martí, 2004) which has found social enterprises trade to avoid dependency on government subsidies and philanthropy, and hence, they are often trying to balance their social mission with their for-profit motives.

The challenges the participants experienced in balancing their social mission with for-profit motives further demonstrates the ambivalent perspectives held by participants about their legitimacy and collaborating with government agencies and private businesses. The participants felt, more often, their ‘entrepreneurialism’ and innovative approaches were at odds with the clinical approaches adopted by government agencies in addressing social needs, presenting a number of challenges such as bidding or tendering for public projects since government agencies tend to favour larger organisations with resources over small businesses. However, some participants found their collaboration with government agencies to present an advantage, resulting in access to resources, support, and projects through, for example, probation services and local authorities. This is congruent with Nicholls and Huybrechts (2013), who argues, although managing legitimacy is challenging, social enterprises often collaborate with private business and other stakeholders to achieve their social objectives. They note, collaboration is beneficial on two levels: private businesses could access tacit local knowledge and social enterprises could access resources and skills.

Nevertheless, some participants found their legitimacy is undermined due to a lack of recognition from government agencies for the ‘work they do on the ground’. These participants explained due to government spending cuts, government agencies tend to adopt a social enterprise model to commercialise their activity, creating a duplication of services, and ultimately undermining the legitimacy of the social enterprise sector. However, other participants spoke of the challenges they experienced in collaborating with private businesses.

These participants explained collaboration between social enterprises and private businesses is beneficial since it creates solidarity between both sectors in tackling pressing social problems, however, private businesses still lack an understanding of what social enterprises ‘do on the ground’. Nevertheless, this was by no means a consensus, as some participants spoke of their positive experience in collaborating with private businesses, helping them in, the process, to commercialise their activity and gain a revenue stream. Nevertheless, there was a consensus among all participants,
building collaboration between sectors could promote the development of the social enterprise sector and provide better solutions to social problems.

Furthermore, the participants’ accounts highlight, their experience was affected by negative cultural stereotypes about ‘older age’, which were at odds with how they viewed their ‘age identity’, being an opportunity to ‘give back’ to society and continue their participation through their social enterprise activity. Indeed, almost all participants had a negative perception towards the term ‘later life’ since they felt it was incompatible with how they identified with their age identity. In addition, they felt having the label ‘later life’ reinforces the differences between ‘older’ and ‘younger’ entrepreneurs. The paradox between cultural interpretations of ‘older age’ and the subjective perceptions of those who experience the ageing process, is a further key finding of this thesis, contributing to knowledge and an understanding of how LLSEs view their age identity. Indeed, both AAA participants and social entrepreneurs, in this study, expressed a shared belief that discourse on ageing and retirement should be reconstructed to create a positive narrative about ‘older’ people, communicating their invaluable skills and experiences that could be imparted to the labour market.

This is congruent with the literature on ageing, as discussed in Chapter Three, which has found, ageing is influenced by the external environment in which it is interpreted and a subjective construct depending on how ‘older’ people experience it (e.g. Balcombe and Sinclair, 2001; Luborsky and Sankar, 1993; Wood, et al., 2008). Annear, et al., (2012), for instance, argue the environment plays a significant factor in how ‘older’ people experience the ageing process, as this is dependent on the quality of social networks they can access and their workforce participation. In addition, Barrett and McGoldrick (2013) found, health and wealth have an impact on how ageing is experienced.

A further contribution of this thesis is by demonstrating the significance of building an ecosystem of support fostering the development of the social enterprise sector and contributing to better solutions to social problems. In addition, the findings suggest, there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach in supporting LLSEs since they require tailored approaches, taking into account their individual needs and social orientations. Whilst some require practical guidance, such as opening a bank account for their CIC legal structure, others require business-mentoring, upskilling, and support with staffing levels. The participants felt, having tailored support to their needs and building their competencies could help them gain the necessary tools to promote their social enterprise and ultimately achieve better social outcomes.

In summary, the findings suggest, the participants faced a number of challenges shaping their experiences during the social entrepreneurial process. Lack of, and limited access to funding has been
seen by the majority to have a negative impact on their sustainability. Furthermore, the participants spoke of the challenges they faced in balancing their strategic and operational objectives. This was interpreted to be the result of resource constraints, leading them to operate as a ‘one woman/man band’. Besides, the participants faced challenges in balancing their social and for-profit motives due to the ‘hybridity’ of their social enterprise. Measuring and evidencing impact was also presented as a challenge, particularly, with non-tangible outcomes such as improvement in self-esteem. However, other participants spoke of the challenges they experienced in gaining legitimacy and collaborating with government agencies and private businesses. This has been seen to be the result of the lack of understanding of social enterprise and the austerity measures introduced by the UK government that prompted government agencies to favour large businesses when commissioning projects rather than small businesses.

Despite the growing body of literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, there is little empirical evidence examining the ‘everyday’ lives of social entrepreneurs aged 50+. This study, therefore, places its attention on examining, in-depth, the perspectives of LLSEs on the factors they consider important in their decision to set up their social enterprise, their daily experiences, the challenges they face and how they might be supported. Hence, social constructionism has been adopted as a theoretical foundation to delve deeper into the subjective views of participants. A unique aspect of social constructionism is foregrounding the voices of those who are involved as they are seen as active participants who construct their own meanings of their experiences (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Schwandt, 2003).

The findings of this thesis therefore provide an in-depth understanding of the ‘everyday’ aspects of LLSEs. By examining the factors the participants considered important in influencing their entrepreneurial (social) intentions, the findings conveyed that their main motives were related to the need for ‘self-fulfilment’, which was sought in different ways. Whilst some spoke of the ‘need for achievement’, which was gained through independence, flexibility, and gaining control over their lives, others described that their personal ‘passion’ and ‘values’ were the main factors that spurred their decision into becoming social entrepreneurs. However, a recurrent theme among all of the participants’ accounts is the role their prior experience and social networks played in influencing their decision to set-up their social enterprises. Having prior professional experience not only influenced the participants’ decision to become social entrepreneurs but also facilitated their understanding of the social needs of their beneficiaries. However, others spoke of the contextual constraints they faced such as ageism and redundancy, all of which influenced their decision to become social entrepreneurs. This
highlights that some participants found it challenging to find paid employment, making them social entrepreneurs out of necessity rather than through choice.

Nevertheless, when asked about their ‘everyday’ experiences as social entrepreneurs, the participants spoke of the challenges they experienced during the social entrepreneurial process. The main challenges the participants experienced were mainly related to limited access to resources, such as staffing and funding, making them concerned about the viability of their social enterprise model. Due to their ‘hybrid’ model, the participants felt they were expected by funding bodies to be sustainable and therefore did not require any financial support. However, limited access to funding has had a negative impact on balancing their strategic and social objectives. The participants felt that, more often than not, they were trying to access resources to meet the social needs of their beneficiaries, thereby limiting their ability in strategically developing their social enterprise.

A further key finding identified by this study is related to the participants’ construction of their ‘age identity’. It was evident from the data that the participants did not subscribe to the objective views of ageing, which are often seen as a phase of decline and dependency. Instead, they viewed their age as an opportunity to set up their social enterprise. Despite this, some participants recognised the limitations of their ‘older’ age as associated with health issues, such as lack of energy and mobility. However, this was not seen as a barrier to their participation. Instead, they felt their ‘prior’ professional experience and the skills they had accumulated over their lifetime career facilitated their understanding of the social needs of their beneficiaries. Notwithstanding, the participants had an ambivalent feeling towards their entrepreneurial (social) identity. Although some identified with terms such as ‘social entrepreneur’ and ‘social enterprise’, others felt these terms were incompatible with their social mission, since their primary focus was to ‘make a difference’ to people’s lives rather than generating an income.

Despite their ambivalent feelings towards their entrepreneurial (social) identity, including the challenges they experienced, the participants were positive about their experience as social entrepreneurs. They felt they had gained ‘personal enrichment’, which was interpreted as gaining a wide range of skills, such as management, leadership, and social media skills, as well as interpersonal skills such as self-confidence. Besides, the participants felt they enhanced their wellbeing, leaving them emotionally uplifted and energised.

Yet, when asked about the types of support required, all participants felt building an ecosystem of support that fosters collaboration between private and government sectors, including the UK government, could lead to better solutions to social problems. In addition, the participants spoke of
the skills they were required to develop, such as sales, marketing and social media skills, including management skills, which could support their social enterprise activity. A further key finding is the ways in which the participants perceived the social entrepreneurial process as ‘iterative’ rather than a journey that has a ‘beginning and an end’. The participants felt that they tended to assess and re-assess their social orientations as they evolved through the social entrepreneurial process. This re-assessment process was, for example, seen in SE5 (F, 50), as discussed in Section 6.6.3, who became a social entrepreneur primarily to gain flexibility, as she notes ‘I want to be mum first’, as well as to create social value within her community. However, she experienced a mind-set shift half way during the social entrepreneurial process by becoming more enterprising and seeking ways of generating a revenue to further her social objectives.

As such, the findings demonstrate the interplay between contextual and individual factors influencing the motives and experiences of participants. On the one hand, they were intrinsically motivated to gain self-fulfilment by ‘making a difference’ to people’s lives and on the other hand, they experienced external constraints in finding employment, making them social entrepreneurs out of necessity rather than a choice. Nevertheless, all participants felt they had gained a wide range of skills during the social entrepreneurial process, as well as enhancing their emotional wellbeing. Notwithstanding, they experienced some challenges, in particular, lack of or limited access to funding, all of which had a negative impact on balancing their strategic and operational objectives. These findings provide significant insights into the multiple factors that influence those aged 50+ to become social entrepreneurs. As such, the insights from this study have implications for extending academic and empirical research on entrepreneurial (social) intentions in ‘later life’. In addition, this study has practical implications for the development of further policies and support mechanisms that recognise the ‘heterogeneity’ of social entrepreneurs aged 50+ and the ways in which their goals and objectives differ.
7.3.2 Research Contribution

To my knowledge, this is the first empirical large qualitative study examining the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs in the UK, by addressing gaps in our knowledge that were left unaddressed by existing literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. As discussed in my Methodology Chapter (Chapter Four), since the focus of my research is to explore the subjective views of those involved, I decided to adopt a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjective interpretations of my research participants. I have, therefore, conducted twenty-eight in-depth interviews with LLSEs who have been funded through UnLtd core award programmes, generating key insights I considered valuable and discussed in my finding’s chapters. As explained throughout, the age dimension is key to who my participants are, and therefore, a strand of my data collection comprised conducting seven in-depth interviews with AAA committee members, which I have analysed and reported in my finding’s chapters. This is to give the reader an in-depth understanding of the policy context in which my research participants are located.

The in-depth interviews enabled me to bring rich insights about the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs and facilitated my interaction with the participants which, I believe, led to a richer and more nuanced understanding of their standpoints and perspectives. In addition, in-depth interviews have enabled key meanings to emerge from the data, which often surprised me, taking the research into areas guided by research participants rather than my pre-prepared interview guides. Contextualising the experiences of my research participants by locating each within their personal and professional background has enhanced the interpretations of their accounts as discussed in my findings chapters.

As discussed in my methodology chapter (Chapter Four), the beliefs guiding this research are based on the assumptions that the ‘everyday’ lives of LLSEs can only be understood from their perspectives, which is consistent with the interpretive social constructionist approach adopted in this study concerned with the subjective views of those involved (Prasad and Prasad, 2002; Schwandt, 1998). As such, I have adopted an inductive (thematic) approach to data analysis to identify, analyse, and report emerging patterns (themes) within data (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2006; Holloway and Todres, 2003). I was, therefore, able to identify key themes demonstrating the perspectives held by participants about their ‘everyday’ lives as social entrepreneurs, which I have reported in my finding’s chapters (Chapter Five and Six).
7.4 Implications of the Research for Policy and Practice

This research has demonstrated that the factors that had influenced the participants’ decision to set-up their social enterprise were related to individual and contextual factors. On the one hand, they were motivated by the need for ‘self-fulfilment’ and on the other hand, limited employment opportunities spurred their decision to set-up their social enterprises. However, the findings also highlight that the participants held different interpretations about their entrepreneurial (social) identity, shaping, in the process, their social orientations. Despite perceiving their experiences as social entrepreneurs positively, contributing to their emotional wellbeing, the participants experienced challenges during the social entrepreneurial process, particularly a lack of and/or limited funding opportunities, all of which had a negative impact on balancing their strategic and operational objectives. This section, therefore, summarises the practical implications of this research, thereby providing guidance to policy makers and organisations involved in supporting social entrepreneurs aged 50+.

The findings demonstrate that a lack of resources and limited access to funding were the main barriers the participants faced. As such, instead of adopting a ‘one size fits all approach’, organisations that could potentially play a role in supporting social entrepreneurs aged 50+ should consider the diversity of their needs and orientations. A more tailored approach that would enable social entrepreneurs in this age group to gain access to practical as well as financial support should be considered. Organisations should be made aware that not all social entrepreneurs in this age group are growth-orientated. It was evident from the data that a number of participants chose to stay small in scale and, therefore, a recognition of the heterogeneity of their social orientations should be considered. Small-scale social entrepreneurs in this age group may require a more focused support, such as providing basic ‘how to guides’ on setting up a social enterprise, completing a grant proposal, and opening a bank account relevant to their legal structure. However, growth-orientated social entrepreneurs may require further support in accessing funding in order to scale their social enterprises. In addition, it is evident the participants lacked certain skills, such as management, sales and marketing skills and, therefore, more tailored training opportunities should be considered, all of which would build their competencies and skills, thereby enabling them to promote their social enterprise activity and to possibly grow and/or scale-up. ‘Later life’ social entrepreneurs could, therefore, benefit from more tailored support mechanisms that are relevant to their social orientations and the challenges they face.

A further key practical implication of this study is related to the role that policy makers and government agencies could play in supporting social entrepreneurs in ‘later life’. Although significant progress was
made on the policy level to promote the social enterprise sector, which has heightened its social and economic benefits, it is evident in this study that the participants experienced barriers to collaborating with government agencies and private sector organisations. Relevant policy frameworks should, therefore, promote collaboration between these sectors to provide social entrepreneurs in ‘later life’ with resources, knowledge and skills that could support their social enterprise activity. Government agencies could be particularly well-placed to facilitate their procurement processes and further their collaboration with social entrepreneurs aged 50+ in order to enhance their legitimacy and also provide them with opportunities to tender for public projects, which would ultimately support their activities and their beneficiaries. Furthermore, private organisations could actively engage with social entrepreneurs in this age group to aid their understanding of local social issues and make a positive contribution to local social challenges. Social entrepreneurs in this age group would also benefit from collaborating with private organisations to build their capacity, knowledge and access to resources. It is evident from the data that participants are addressing complex social needs and developing new approaches to social problems, thereby building collaboration with private sector organisations. These strategies could ultimately help them to further their social objectives.

It was also evident from the data that the UK government could play a greater role in fostering these cross-sector partnerships, as well as supporting social entrepreneurs in this age group. The data has revealed that not all social entrepreneurs are growth-orientated, and therefore, government policies and support mechanisms should be tailored to those who would require access to more financing opportunities to scale-up, and also to those who are in small in scale and would require more practical support. In addition, it was highlighted from the data that the participants were concerned about the viability of their social enterprises, and therefore ‘government tax incentives’, specifically for social enterprises, should be considered.

However, all participants did not ascribe to the objective views of ageing, instead they perceived their ‘older’ age as an opportunity to engage in social enterprise activities, utilising their skills and experiences. Hence, policy makers, including the UK government, should be made aware that categorising people as ‘older’ and ‘later life’ may be perceived negatively. The majority of participants had a negative perception toward the term ‘later life’ since they felt it was incompatible with their ‘younger’ age identity, as well as reinforcing a narrative that differentiates ‘older’ and ‘younger’ social entrepreneurs. As such, a more constructive narrative, characterising individuals based on their skills and experiences should be considered.

Furthermore, it was identified that some participants experienced challenges in accessing employment due to ‘perceived’ age discrimination, making them social entrepreneurs out of necessity rather than
through choice. Hence, both the UK government and employers could play a critical role in terms of understanding the diversity of their ageing workforce and create an ‘age’ friendly working environment that could enhance the participation of those aged 50+. Support mechanisms, such as access to resources, information, and guidance related to the retirement process should be made available in order to extend their participation. It was suggested by participants that the UK government could play a critical role in ‘incentivising employers’ to retain their ‘older’ workforce and utilise their invaluable skills and experiences. This suggests government policy-makers and employers could play an important role in designing tailored policies that meet the needs of this age group and the ways in which their expectations differ to their younger counterparts.

In addition, policy makers and practitioners should be made aware of the lack of identification with the language and discourse of social enterprise. The findings demonstrate this was largely driven by the lack of an agreed definition of social enterprise, shaping the way the participants identified with their entrepreneurial (social) identity and how they are perceived by others. This may suggest that barriers already exist in promoting the ‘work’ these social entrepreneurs ‘do on the ground’, and therefore, there is a need to create a narrative that defines clearly what social enterprises do and the degree of their formalisation. This may encourage public and private sector organisations to further their collaboration with the social enterprise sector, as well as encourage more people aged 50+ to become social entrepreneurs. It was evident by the data that the participants perceived their experience as social entrepreneurs positively, gaining a wide range of business skills as well as enriching their emotional wellbeing. Hence, this study has raised awareness and improved understanding about the benefits that can be gained during the social entrepreneurial process.

7.5 Limitations of the Research

As pointed out in Chapter Four, this qualitative study was undertaken by conducting twenty-eight in-depth interviews with LLSEs who have been funded through UnLtd core award programmes and seven interviews with AAA committee members on ‘valuing the contribution of older people’. The qualitative interviews brought significant insights into the ‘everyday lives’ of research participants, the factors they considered important in their decision to set up a social enterprise, the challenges they faced and how they might be supported. The data was then analysed using a thematic approach to identify and report emergent patterns within the data (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2006; Holloway and Todres, 2003; Ryan and Bernard, 2003).
The interpretive social constructionist approach adopted in this study contributes to knowledge by foregrounding the subjective views of research participants, providing an in-depth analysis of their perspectives and standpoints. As such, this study does not claim generalisability in statistical terms (e.g. Bryman and Bell, 2015; Saunders, et al., 2016) since the aim of this research is to delve deeper into the subjective views of participants. The exploratory nature of this study has made significant contributions to knowledge by generating rich insights about the participants’ experiences; however, this can be explored in future research with a larger sample comprising different groups of social entrepreneurs.

A further key aspect to be taken into account is that qualitative research is often built on the assumptions that the researcher and research participants are inter-subjectively created (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Hence, to some extent, my assumptions about the world, values and beliefs, prior entrepreneurial experience, motherhood, age, and my ethnicity may have influenced the interpretation of data. However, being part of the research process may be seen as an empirical strength as I was able ‘to dig deep’ and bring a high level of understanding and interpretation of the research participants’ ‘everyday’ lives. In addition, as highlighted in Section 4.5 (Chapter Four), I provided a transparent account of my interest in this research and my reflective strategies to interpret the data.

Finally, this study has been undertaken at the point when the research participants were undertaking their social enterprise activity to capture the nature of their lived experiences. Therefore, further insights could be developed by conducting a longitudinal study to evaluate changes in their perspectives and how this might influence their social orientations.

7.6 Future Research Directions

There are many possible new research directions identified by this research on LLSEs. However, there are two key potential strands that could be explored in the future.

Firstly, there is a clear need to further research on the positive outcomes of social entrepreneurship in ‘later life’. The findings of this study demonstrate the benefits gained during the social entrepreneurial process, resulting in the participants’ wellbeing and personal enrichment by gaining interpersonal and business skills. Further research is, therefore, needed to test these findings and investigate what further advantages could be attained.
Secondly, the findings of this research suggest that, building collaboration between sectors such as government agencies, private businesses and the UK government can promote the sustainability of social enterprises. Further research is, therefore, needed to examine how fostering a culture of collaboration between sectors would work in practice and what potential outcomes could be achieved.

7.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter ends my account of the research process and the main findings presented in this thesis. I have demonstrated in this chapter how by answering my research questions, this study makes theoretical and empirical contributions to the literature on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. I have also indicated the practical implications of my study on policy makers and organisations supporting LLSES. In addition, I have outlined some of the limitations of this research and concluded by identifying two main strands of research that could be further explored.

The significant contribution to knowledge of my thesis can therefore be summarised as follows:

- Factors that had influenced participants’ decision in setting up their social enterprise are made up of ‘pull’ factors such as need for achievement, downshifting, personal values, and passion, and by necessity factors due to ageism, redundancy, and dissatisfaction in the workplace. This suggests, whereas some became social entrepreneurs to fulfil an intrinsic need, others saw social entrepreneurship a necessity rather than choice, highlighting the external barriers to employment for those aged 50+.

- LLSEs should not be considered as a homogenous group; instead, they vary in their social orientations and the ways in which they interpret their entrepreneurial (social) identity. Although strategic social entrepreneurs, in this study, demonstrate the significant role played by adopting a ‘hybrid’ model to secure their long-term sustainability and further their social objectives, others saw income generation as incompatible with their social mission since they perceived their role to be primarily creating social value within their local community, wishing to remain small and local. However, two participants experienced a mindset shift half-way through the social entrepreneurial process, becoming more enterprising so they can achieve their social mission and further social impact.

- Participants did not prescribe to the objective views of ageing; instead, saw their age to signal their experience, skills, knowledge, and social networks they had accumulated over their lifetime careers, presenting an advantage to their social enterprise. Their perceptions about age identity also shaped the ways in which they viewed the retirement process as an
opportunity to contribute economically and socially rather than a cliff-edge event necessitating withdrawal from the labour market. However, the participants recognised that remaining or withdrawing from the labour market is dependent on health, income, and caring responsibilities. Hence, the UK government and employers should consider taking into account variations in ‘older’ people’s needs and personal circumstances.

- Participants are ambivalent towards their entrepreneurial (social) identity. Whilst some perceived themselves as social entrepreneurs, others saw the term as incompatible with their social mission. However, it was evident that the lack of an agreed definition of social enterprise contributed to there being a confusion among the community of social entrepreneurs about their identity. As such, some participants felt they had a double identity – that is social when collaborating with public sector agencies and business when cooperating with private businesses. Others, however contested the term ‘social entrepreneur’ since they are more concerned about social value creation rather than income generation.

- Participants gained significant benefits during the social entrepreneurial process such as business, management and social media skills and interpersonal skills, all of which enhanced their wellbeing. However, the findings also demonstrated, in-depth, the challenges faced by participants and how they might be supported. Lack of, or limited access to funding was perceived to be one of the most important challenges they faced. However, ‘sustainability’ was interpreted differently between participants, as whilst some spoke of the challenges they experienced in balancing their operational and strategic objectives, others spoke of the issues with balancing their social and for-profit motives. Nevertheless, gaining legitimacy for the ‘work they do on the ground’ was perceived to play a significant role in promoting the social enterprise sector. Hence, one way of supporting LLSEs is to cultivate an ecosystem of support, fostering collaboration between different sectors to address social needs more effectively. This was also perceived by participants to have a positive impact on legitimising the social enterprise sector. The role of policy makers and public sectors agencies in providing support mechanisms encompassing practical and financial support has also been seen by participants to play a significant role in developing their social enterprise and furthering their social objectives.
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Appendix 1

AAA Agenda: Fuller Purposeful Lives: Proposal or a Debate/Seminar/Conference/Regional Event)

(July 2015)

Background

- A third of the current population is over 50.
- There are now more people in the UK aged 60 and above than there are under 18.
- Life expectancy in the UK has reached its highest level on record for both males and females, 78.1 years at birth for males and 82.1 years at birth for females.
- In 2008, UK men at age 65 had a healthy life expectancy of 9.9 years, and women of 11.5 years.
- There is no longer a statutory retirement age.
- The State pension age is increasing.
- People in mid-life may have 20 years or more of working life before them.

Policy background

Fuller Working Lives - DWP – post Age of No Retirement (AONR)?

Purpose

The focus of the event would be to highlight the wealth of experience, skills and knowledge of the 50+ How to draw upon this to assist and revitalise businesses (especially SMEs)? Opportunities for how to support and advise businesses to retain and recruit 50+ How might we support and help people to seek and gain work?

Adult learning & training opportunities

Developing Enterprises

Volunteering/mentoring/utilising skills & experience

Format

Suggested speakers –

Key note – [...] Business Champion for Older Workers

[...] Head of Fuller Working Lives DWP, Ageing Society and State Pensions

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – London?

Local Authorities

AAA group members

Panel Question Time

Target Audience – invites

Local SMEs, Local Authorities – elected members & officers – (economic regeneration as well as leads on older people), Chamber of commerce, Local Enterprise Partnership, local social enterprise & voluntary sector interests in regeneration/employment, local 50 +
Appendix 2

Grouping of Participants: Social Entrepreneurs

(Data collection between August and December 2015)
## Appendix 2: Grouping of Participants: Social Entrepreneurs

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**Key:**

*Try It*: Awards up to £500 for those who have an idea they wish to develop and create social change. *Do It*: Awards up to £5,000 for those who have an idea and passionate about making it happen. *Build It*: For social entrepreneurs who wish to grow their social enterprise venture to a local or regional level. *Scale It*: For social entrepreneurs who wish to grow their social enterprise nationally or internationally. This also includes those who wish to raise external investment to scale.
Appendix 3

Recruitment Email

(Data collection between August and December 2015)
Appendix 3: Recruitment Email

Subject: Social Entrepreneurs in an Ageing Society

Dear [Name of the person],

My name is Zeineb Cox and I am currently undertaking a PhD research study at the University of Surrey relating to social entrepreneurs aged 50 and over. This study is undertaken in collaboration with UnLtd, a charity that supports social entrepreneurs in the UK. Hence, I have been given your contact details by the charity, as I believe you have been and/or are currently being supported by the charity. Hence, I am emailing you to invite you to participate in this study.

This study seeks to examine why people have become social entrepreneurs later in life, their experiences, orientations, circumstances and career paths, as well as the challenges they face. Your participation will only involve a short interview, which will last for approximately one hour and at a convenient time and place.

I am pleased to advise that the study has been reviewed and received a favourable ethical opinion from the University of Surrey Ethics Committee. Hence, I am planning to start my interviews between July/December 2015.

Should you wish to participate in this study, please let me know when it would be convenient to meet. Please note that all discussions and accounts undertaken during the interview will be kept confidential.

If you would like to discuss any aspects of this study or require any further information, please contact me at: zeineb.cox@surrey.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can reach me on 01483 683102.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for considering this email.

Kind regards,

Zeineb Cox - PhD Research Student/University of Surrey/Surrey Business School/Guildford Surrey GU2 7XH
Appendix 4

Participant Information Sheet

(Data collection between August and December 2015)
Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheet

‘Starting-up, Not Slowing Down’: Social Entrepreneurs in an Ageing Society
Participant Information Sheet (V3. 21/07/15)

Introduction
My name is Zeineb Cox and I am currently undertaking a PhD research study at the University of Surrey, UK. This study is undertaken in collaboration with UnLtd, a charity that supports social entrepreneurs in the UK. I am pleased to provide you with further information about the aims of this study and the extent of your involvement. Please take your time to read this information carefully. Should you wish to talk to others about this study, please feel free to do so.

Information about your participation:

What is the purpose of this study?
The aim of this study is to examine why people have become social entrepreneurs later in life, their experiences, orientations, circumstances and career paths, as well as the challenges they face. Social entrepreneurs are understood in this study as individuals, who hold specific social, environmental, and cultural goals to develop new and effective solutions to society’s pressing problems.

Why have I been invited to take part in this study?
I am undertaking this study in collaboration with UnLtd. Hence, I was able to obtain your contact details from the charity as I understand you have been and/or are currently being supported by the charity. I would like to invite you to take part in this study in order to gain an understanding of your experience as a social entrepreneur, your orientations, and the challenges you face.

Do I have to take part?
You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If you wish to withdraw at any stage during this study, you can do so without giving a reason. Please note that your relationship with UnLtd will not be affected as all accounts and discussions undertaken during the interview will be kept confidential.

In addition, all data collected up until the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed and will not be used in any of the findings and/or analysis.
What will my involvement require?

I would like to be able to conduct a one-to-one interview, which will take approximately one hour to complete and, with your permission, will be audio-recorded. If you agree to take part, we can arrange a convenient time and place to conduct the interview.

What will I have to do?

If you would like to take part, please email me at zeineb.cox@surrey.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can phone me on 01483 683102.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

Apart from volunteering your time to conduct the interview, there are no known disadvantages involved in taking part in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The study seeks to provide a better understanding of the role of ‘later life’ social entrepreneur in the UK. Hence, by taking part, you will be able to share your experiences, talk through your social orientations, daily social activities, and the challenges you face.

What happens when the research study stops?

The results of this study will be published in academic, conference, and practice papers. Unless you do not wish to receive a brief summary of key findings, I will be emailing all participants a copy for their information. Please note that personal data will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. In addition, research data will be stored securely at the University of Surrey for at least 10 years in line with their policy.

The brief summary of key findings will be available at the end of my research study due to be completed in September 2016.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint(s) or concern(s) about any aspects of the way you have been dealt with during the course of this study will be addressed. Please contact my principal supervisor, Prof. MariaLaura Di Domenico, Tel: 01483 686304 Email: m.didomenico@surrey.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can contact the Head of Business School: Prof. David Goss, Tel: 01483 683116 Email: d.goss@surrey.ac.uk.
Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. All personal data will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. In addition, all research participants will be allocated an alphanumerical code, which will be password protected and only known to the researcher. This is to ensure that the participants’ details will not be identifiable in any publications related to this study.

Contact details

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<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Co-supervisor(s)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Prof. MariaLaura Di Domenico</td>
<td>Prof. Mark Saunders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Surrey</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:m.didomenico@surrey.ac.uk">m.didomenico@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:mark.saunders@surrey.ac.uk">mark.saunders@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>Tel: 01483 686304</td>
<td>Tel: 01483 686731</td>
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<td>Surrey</td>
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<td>Stephen Miller</td>
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<td>GU2 7XH</td>
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<td>UnLtd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:zeineb.cox@surrey.ac.uk">zeineb.cox@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>123 Whitecross Street, Islington, London, EC1Y, 8JJ</td>
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<tr>
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Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by South East Doctoral Training Centre (SEDTC) at the University of Surrey and UnLtd, a charity that supports social entrepreneurs in the UK.

Who has reviewed the project?

This study has been reviewed and received a favourable ethical opinion from the University of Surrey Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet.
Appendix 5

Grouping of Participants: Age Action Alliance

(Data collection between August and December 2015)
## Appendix 5: Grouping of Participants – Age Action Alliance

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Appendix 6

Interview Guide: Social Entrepreneurs

(Data collection between August and December 2015)
Appendix 6: Interview Guide – Social Entrepreneurs

Version 1: April 2015

‘Starting-up, Not Slowing Down’: Social Entrepreneurs in an Ageing Society

Interview Guide

Participant Briefing:
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study and to be interviewed. I am here to hear your views about social entrepreneurship. Before we start, I would like to ascertain whether you have signed a copy of the Consent Form to confirm you are happy to take part in this study and give permission for me to use the audio-recorder. In accordance with ethical good practice, the interview will be anonymised. If you have any questions, or would like any further clarifications, now or later, please let me know or contact my principal supervisor: Prof. MariaLaura Di Domenico.

Although I have questions and general themes, I would like to explore, please feel free to expand on these and raise any relevant points or issues that may benefit the study. Please feel free to take the conversation in the direction you think is interesting.

Section A – Indicative Opening Questions (personal background and experience)

Background and Experience

- Please tell me a little bit about yourself
- What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- What did you do prior to starting your social enterprise?

Prompts: what was your role? How long have you done this for? What are the key skills that helped you doing your role?

- Have you had any prior involvement with other social organisations? If so, where? For how many years did you do this?

Prompts: how was your experience? What did you like and dislike?
Motives for being a social entrepreneurs and influences

- What made you want to be a social entrepreneur?
  
  Prompts: Are there any factors that influenced your decision to start a social enterprise? Are there any turning points in your life such as key events or experiences that have influenced this decision? Can you give an example?

- Why social enterprise?
  
  Prompts: what are the key reasons for you? What drew you to social enterprise?

- How did you realise there is a social need? What was the motivation for you?

- Why this social enterprise in particular? Why did you choose to address this particular issue?

- What are the key drivers for you to continue?
  
  Prompts: How do you see your venture developing? What are your next steps?

Section B – indicative questions on subjective experience as a social entrepreneur

I would like now to turn to your personal experience as a social entrepreneur:

Practical Experience: Daily activities and social intentions

- Is this your first experience in running a social enterprise?
  
  Prompts: if so, how would you describe it?

- Tell me about your own social enterprise

- What is the overall intentions of your social enterprise?
  
  Prompts: what is your goal? What directs your intentions? Vision for now and the future? The major value and principles of the social venture?

- Who are your customers and how do you go about engaging with them?

- What benefits do you provide your customers with?
  
  Prompts: give me examples of these

- What do you consider the most important outcomes for you?

- Do you think it is important to evaluate or measure the impact you create?

- Talk me through what you would do on a daily basis – how does your day unfold?

- How would you describe yourself?

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How they view themselves?

Prompts: do you perceive yourself a social entrepreneur? What is your personal definition of the social entrepreneur? What about social enterprise?

- What has changed for you since you started your social enterprise?
  Prompts: do you feel different? Do you behave different? What benefits do you derive personally from this?

Social entrepreneurial journey

- Talk me through your journey of becoming a social entrepreneur
  Prompts: how did you go about setting your social enterprise?

- How were you made aware that there is a social need to be addressed?
  Prompts: talk me through how you evaluated this opportunity – what did you do? Did you require or seek support?

- How did you go about putting the resources together to start your social enterprise?
  Prompts: did you need or seek any support? If so, what kind of support did you get? Who from? How did you go about getting the support you needed?

- Once the social enterprise is set up – how did you find the experience initially? How did you feel? What was the payoff for you?

- What do you enjoy the most about running the social enterprise now?
  Prompts: What do you enjoy the least?

- Are there any key issues you faced that you would like to talk about?
  Prompts: talk me through the nature of these issues? How did you overcome these?

- Reflecting back, what lessons have you learnt? What has changed for you? What would you have done differently?
  Prompts: can you please give me some examples of the lessons you learnt. Why do you say that?

- If you had the opportunity to describe your overall experience in few words, how would you describe it?

- What specific skills/experiences do you think you have brought in to this social enterprise?
  Prompts: give some examples

  - What has the social enterprise developed in your personally?
  Prompts: talk me through the personal or professional skills that you have developed
Section C: indicative questions on Challenges/ Opportunities

Challenges

- What type of challenges do you face nowadays?
  
  *Prompts:* please elaborate – do you have specific examples?

- What do you think the role of policy makers in addressing these challenges?

- What do you think of the support available for social entrepreneurs aged 50 and over?
  
  *Prompts:* What is not available?

- From your experience, has age any bearing on this?
  
  *Prompts:* if so, how? Talk me through this and give me some examples of how ageing can have an impact on being a social entrepreneur.

- What about your personal circumstances?
  
  *Prompts:* do you think these will influence your entrepreneurial intentions? Has age/health any bearings on running your social enterprise?

- How do you go about sustaining the social venture?
  
  *Prompts:* talk me through this and give me some examples – do you require any funding? If so, how do you go about obtaining this?

- What do you think of the role of the social sector in general?
  
  *Prompts:* does this create a competitive environment for you? How?

Views on ageing

- What do you think of the label 'later life' social entrepreneurs’?

- How do you think this is relevant to you?

- Do you think age, in general, has any bearings on running a social enterprise?
  
  *Prompts:* How, could you please elaborate?

- What do you think of public perceptions towards ageing?
  
  *Prompts:* how do you think they can influence entrepreneurial opportunities?

- Are there any specific issues faced by social entrepreneurs in later life that need to be considered?
  
  *Prompts:* what makes you say that - please give me some examples?
Opportunities

- In your view, what opportunities are available for those aged 50 and over?
  
  Prompts: how – can you give me some examples? What is not available? How can this be addressed?

- In your opinion, how do people aged 50 and over are able to contribute?
  
  Prompts: How, why do you say this? What sort of skills do you think they have and can be utilised?

- Why do you think people aged 50 and over want to contribute?
  
  Prompts: any specific reasons you can think about? What about supplementing income for retirement? What about their wellbeing?

- Are there any opportunities other social entrepreneurs should know about?
  
  Prompts: if so, please give me some examples. What more can be done?

- If you could give prospective social entrepreneurs some advice, what would these be?

Concluding Comments - Thank you for taking part and for volunteering your time.
Appendix 7

Interview Guide: AAA

(Data collection between August and December 2015)
Appendix 7: Interview Guide: AAA

Version 1: April 2015

‘Starting-up, Not Slowing Down’: Social Entrepreneurs in an Ageing Society

Interview Guide

Participant Briefing:
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study and to be interviewed. The purpose of this interview is to hear about your views and perspectives about the issues relating to the ageing society in the UK. Before we start, I would like to ascertain whether you have signed a copy of the participant consent form to confirm you are happy to take part in this study and give permission for me to use the audio-recorder. In accordance with ethical good practice, the interview will be anonymised. If you have any questions, or would like any further information, now or later, please let me know or contact my principal supervisor: Prof. Maria Laura Di Domenico. Although I have questions and general themes, I would like to explore, please feel free to expand on these and raise any relevant points or issues that may benefit the study. Please feel free to take the conversation in the direction you think is interesting.

Section A – indicative opening questions

Background and Experience

- Please tell me a little about yourself
- What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- What is your occupation? What is your role? And how long have you been involved with the Age Action Alliance/UnLtd?
- How did you become involved with the Age Action Alliance/UnLtd?

Prompts: what are the main reasons? What role do you think you can play?

- Have you had any prior involvement with other social organisations? If so, where? For how many years did you do this?

Prompts: How was your experience?
Role and intentions of the Age Action Alliance/UnLtd

- What exactly is the role of the Alliance/UnLtd?

  **Prompts:** What does the alliance/UnLtd want to achieve? How do you go about achieving this?

- What are the reasons that has led the alliance/UnLtd to be involved with people aged 50 and over?

  **Prompts:** Please elaborate – why are these reasons important for the alliance/UnLtd?

- How do you get engaged with people aged 50 and over?

  **Prompts:** please give me any specific examples of the type of engagements you have?

- Do you have specific programmes/agendas? Talk me through these.

Section B – indicative questions on ageing Society

Issues presented by the ageing society

I would like now to turn to the ageing society.

- What do you think are the key issues presented by the ageing society? What impact does the ageing society have?

  **Prompts:** Could you please elaborate – give me some specific examples

- How does this impact on those aged 50 and over?

  **Prompts:** what specific issues do you think people aged 50 and over face?

Role of policy makers/employers

- How can policy makers address these?

  **Prompts:** talk me through how do you think the role of the policy makers should unfold?

- How about the role of employers – what role do you think they should play?

- Which approaches do you think would help those aged 50 and over?

  **Prompts:** Why do you think this is important? Give me a specific example. What is needed to be done to achieve this?

- In your opinion, what kind of support do people aged 50 and over need?

  **Prompts:** Can you please elaborate? Why do you say that? Give me some examples please.

- How about public perceptions? Do you feel there is an issue with the way ageing is perceived?
Prompts: what do you think should be done?

Opportunities

- In your view, what opportunities are available for those aged 50 and over?

  Prompts: how – can you give me some examples? What is not available? How can this be addressed?

- In your opinion, how do people aged 50 and over are able to contribute?

  Prompts: How, why do you say this? What sort of skills do you think they have and can be utilised?

- Why do you think people aged 50 and over want to contribute?

  Prompts: any specific reasons you can think about? What about supplementing income for retirement? What about their wellbeing?

- Do you think their involvement should be extended?

  Prompts: why do you say that? How?

- What are the opportunities available for those aged 50 and over in different parts of the labour market?

  Prompts: can you give me specific examples.

Opportunities within the social economy

- What about opportunities within the social economy –do you have any views on this?

  Prompts: How does this help those aged 50 and over? Give me some specific examples

- What about opportunities in social entrepreneurship? How do you see this unfolding?

  Prompts: Please elaborate. What can be done to encourage people aged 50 and over to get involved in social enterprise?

Concluding Comments - Thank you for taking part and for volunteering your time.
Appendix 8

Interview Consent Form

(Data collection between August and December 2015)
Appendix 8: Interview Consent Form

I the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in the study on 'later life' social entrepreneurs.

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet provided (Version 3, 21/07/15).
  I have been given a full explanation by the researcher of the nature, purpose, location, and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.

- I agree to comply with any instruction given to me during the study and to co-operate fully with the researcher.

- I consent to my personal data, as outlined in the accompanying information sheet, being used for this study. I understand that all my personal data will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice. All data collected up until to the point of my withdrawal will be destroyed and not used in any of the findings or analysis.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participate in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

- I agree that an audio recording will be used during the interview.

- I agree to receive a brief summary of key findings for this study.

I hereby give my full consent to take part in this study.

Name of participant: ................................................
Signed: ....................................................................
Date: ........................................................................

Name of researcher:………………………………………………….
Signed:……………………………………………………………………..
Date:………………………………………………………………………..
Appendix 9

Ethical Approval

(21\textsuperscript{st} July 2015)
Appendix 9: Ethical Approval

Dear Mrs Cox

UEC ref: UEC/2015/056/FBEL

Study Title: ‘Starting up, Not Slowing Down’: Social Entrepreneurs in an Ageing Society

On behalf of the Ethics Committee, I am pleased to confirm a favourable ethical opinion for the above research on the basis described in the submitted protocol and supporting documentation.

Date of confirmation of ethical opinion: 21 July 2015

The final list of documents reviewed by the Committee is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover letter from researcher in response to queries from the UEC and RIGO, sent 15 Jul 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>21 Jul 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover letter from researcher in response to queries from the UEC and RIGO, sent 19 Jun 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>08 Jul 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1: Recruitment email for potential participants - tracked copy</td>
<td>Sub.</td>
<td>21 Jul 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet - tracked copy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 Jul 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3: Interview Consent Form - tracked copy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 Jul 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4: Risk Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sub. 21 Jul 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This opinion is given on the understanding that you will comply with the University's Ethical Principles & Procedures for Teaching and Research.

If the project includes distribution of a survey or questionnaire to members of the University community, researchers are asked to include a statement advising that the project has been reviewed by the University's Ethics Committee.

If you wish to make any amendments to your protocol please address your request to the Secretary of the Ethics Committee and attach any revised documentation.

The Committee will need to be notified of adverse reactions suffered by research participants, and if the study is terminated earlier than expected with reasons. Please be advised that the Ethics Committee is able to audit research to ensure that researchers are abiding by the University requirements and guidelines.

You are asked to note that a further submission to the Ethics Committee will be required in the event that the study is not completed within five years of the above date.

Please inform me when the research has been completed.

Yours sincerely

R. L. Green

Dr Sophie Wehrens

Research Integrity and Governance Officer, Research & Enterprise Support
Appendix 10

A Priori Themes Drawn from Literature Review

(Data Analysis from July 2015)
Appendix 10: A Priori Themes Drawn from Literature Review

1. AGEING SOCIETY

1.1 Opportunities presented by the ageing society
1.1.1 Economic benefits
   1.1.1.1 Opportunity for social economy (contribution of older people in social economy)
   1.1.1.2 Opportunity for labour workforce (benefits of skills and experience brought by older people to the workforce)
1.1.2 Social benefits (contribution of older people at community and family levels)
   1.1.3 Personal benefits (participation promotes wellbeing, social inclusion, and income in retirement)

1.2 Challenges presented by the ageing society
1.2.1 Fiscal pressures (increased demand on health and social care systems)
   1.2.1.1 Health Care
   1.2.1.2 Social Care
1.2.2 Pension pressures (high cost of pension systems)
1.2.3 Labour market
   1.2.3.1 Lack of employment opportunity
   1.2.3.2 Gaps in job market (loss of skills and experience as people approach retirement)

1.3 Retirement
1.3.1 Objective construction (public construction of retirement)
   1.3.1.1 Cliff-edge event (retirement is perceived as a life stage event where older people exit the workforce)
1.3.2 Subjective construction (self-perception of retirement)
   1.3.2.1 Reconfigure life choices (retirement as an opportunity to reshape life choices and career aspirations)
   1.3.2.2 Bridge employment (work for pay after retirement)
   1.3.2.3 Self-employment/entrepreneurship
1.3.3 Retirement transition (retirement transitioning phase)
   1.3.3.1 Retirement planning (planning for retirement influence life and career choices in retirement)
   1.3.3.2 Income (availability of income in retirement and its influence on career choices)

1.4 Role of employers and government
1.4.1 Role of government
   1.4.1.1 Extending working lives (role of government support in maintaining employment/ self-employment in later life through policies
1.4.2 Role of Employers
   1.4.2.1 Flexible working (provision of flexible working opportunities to manage the ageing workforce)
   1.4.2.2 Financial planning for retirement
1.4.2.3 Policy intervention (enforce policies to support older workers)

1.5 Age identity

1.5.1 Subjective construction (how ageing is subjectively perceived by participants)
   1.5.1.1. Age perceived as young (younger than their age)
   1.5.1.2 Age perceived as immaterial (ageing is immaterial)
   1.5.1.3 Age and lived experience (how ageing is experienced in everyday life)

1.5.2 Public construction (how ageing is perceived in public discourses)
   1.5.2.1 Decline and frailty (decline in cognitive ability and health)
   1.5.2.2 Economic dependency (fiscal implication on pension systems)
   1.5.2.3 Social dependency (fiscal implication on social and health care systems)

1.5.3 Role of age on entrepreneurial intentions (influence of age on entrepreneurial intentions)

1.5.4 Subjective perception of the term ‘later life’ (attitudes towards the term ‘later life’)
   1.5.4.1.1 Negative perception
   1.5.4.1.2 Positive perception
   1.5.4.1.3 Neutral perception

2. PARTICIPATION IN LATER LIFE

2.1 Barriers to participation
   2.1.1 Health (ill health and its influence on participation in the labour market)
   2.1.2 Age (age and its influence on participation in later life)
   2.1.3 Low level of energy (energy level and its influence on participation)
   2.1.4 Ageism (age discrimination in the workplace)
   2.1.5 Lack of employment opportunities (limited opportunities in the labour market)
   2.1.6 Caring responsibilities (informal care for family and/or friends can hinder participation in later life)
   2.1.7 Lack of education (those with low level of education have limited transferrable skills and limited employment opportunities)
   2.1.8 Lack of transferable skills (career background and its influence on participation)

2.2. Opportunities for participation
   2.2.1 Experience (experience of older people increase perceived desirability for starting a business)
   2.2.2 Skills (skills accumulated increase perceived desirability for starting a business)
   2.2.3 Supplement income in retirement (work or entrepreneurship a way of gaining an income in retirement)
3. MOTIVATION FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN LATER LIFE

3.1 push factors
   3.1.1 Ageism (the experience ageism in the workplace can be a push factor for entrepreneurship in later life)
   3.1.2 Redundancy (redundancy can be a push factor for entrepreneurship in later life)
   3.1.3 Labour market (lack of employment opportunities can be push factors for entrepreneurship in later life)

3.2 pull factors
   3.2.1 Independence (gaining independence can be desirable aspects of entrepreneurship in later life)
   3.2.2 Flexibility (gaining flexibility can be desirable aspects of entrepreneurship in later life)
   3.2.3 Income (gaining income can be desirable aspects of entrepreneurship in later life)
   3.2.4 Impart knowledge (impart knowledge/skills can be desirable aspects of entrepreneurship in later life)
   3.2.5 Give back (giving back to society can be desirable aspects of entrepreneurship in later life)
   3.2.6 Downshifting (downshifting as an opportunity to live simpler lives and escape materialism or work stress - can be desirable aspects of entrepreneurship in later life)
   3.2.7 Lifestyle (entrepreneurship as a way of supporting life style)

4. HYBRIDITY OF SOCIAL MODEL

4.1 Social value (creating social value as an intrinsic feature of social enterprise)
   4.1.1 Make a difference (make a difference to people’s lives through social inclusion)
   4.1.2 Do good in society (improve the livelihood of others and their wellbeing)

4.2 for-profit making activity
   4.2.1 Trading to generate income (gaining an income as a way of sustaining social model and scaling social impact)
   4.2.2 Social innovation (novel approaches to addressing social needs)

4.3 Blurred boundaries (boundaries between not-for profit and social enterprise are blurred)

4.4 Lack of agreed definition of social enterprise

4.5 Self-perception
   4.5.1 Self-perception of social entrepreneur (self-definition of the social entrepreneur)
   4.5.2 Self-perception of the term ‘social enterprise’ (how participants view the goal of social enterprise in general and their self-perception of the term)
5. ROLE OF EXPERIENCE ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS
   5.1 Social capital (social networks influence entrepreneurial intentions)
   5.2 Human capital (experience and skills influence entrepreneurial intentions)

6. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
   6.1 Personal development (personal growth including skills learnt and wellbeing gained during the entrepreneurial process)
   6.2 Social networks (access to social networks)

7. LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
   7.1 Inherent challenges
       7.1.1 Fear of failure (fear of failure as a barrier to entrepreneurship in later life)
       7.1.2. Insufficient business knowledge (lack of entrepreneurial and business skills as limitations)
       7.1.3 Education (low level of education can be a barrier to perceived desirability for entrepreneurship)
       7.1.4 Failing health (ill health can be a barrier to perceived desirability for entrepreneurship)
   7.2. Contextual challenges
       7.2.1 Sustainability (challenges related to the sustainability of the social model)
           7.2.1.1 Access to funding (lack of access to capital as a barrier to entrepreneurship in later life)
       7.2.2 Legitimacy (lack of gaining recognition and access and collaboration with other agencies)
       7.2.3 Scaling (scaling social impact to wider communities)

8. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURAL PROCESS
   8.1 opportunity recognition (spotting entrepreneurial opportunities to address a social need)
   8.2 opportunity evaluation (evaluating the social needs to be addressed and resources required)
   8.3 opportunity formalisation (building of the social model to address a specific social need)
   8.4 opportunity exploitation (exploiting the social model to address a specific social need)
   8.5 Scaling (scaling social impact to reach wider communities and individuals)

9. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS
   9.1 bricoleur (ability to make do with scarce resources)
9.2 change agent (creating systemic social change)
9.3 social engineer (replace ineffective existing social systems with new ones to address social problems)
9.4 social constructionist (address unmet social needs)
9.5 altruist (selfless concern for the wellbeing of others)
9.6 ethical behaviour (heightened sense of accountability towards beneficiaries served)
9.7 mission leader (recognise a social problem and manage and organise social enterprise to address social problem)
9.8 tolerance for ambiguity (ability to deal with uncertainty)
9.9 bold (willingness to get things done despite risk and scarcity of resources)
9.10 unity of purpose (committed to vision for social change)
9.11 visionary (concerned with practical implementation of vision)

10. SUPPORT MECHANISM FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS AGED 50 AND OVER

10.1 Support required
10.2 Support received

11. DAILY EXPERIENCE

11.1 Daily activity (how their day unfold)
11.2 Social orientation (social orientation and what value is created)
11.3 Vision (long-term goals to be realised)
11.4 Social innovation (innovative solutions and approaches to social problems)
11.5 Social mission (what do they do and why? Insights into internal objectives of the social enterprise)

12. SELF-PERCEPTION OF EXPERIENCE

12.1 Personal reward (self-satisfaction and others)
12.2 Income (income derived from the social enterprise activity)
Appendix 11
Repositioning/Absorbing and Collapsing of Codes
(Data Analysis from July 2015)
## Appendix 11: Repositioning/Absorbing and Collapsing of Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct from Coding Framework</th>
<th>New position</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social benefits</td>
<td>Economic benefits&gt;social benefits</td>
<td>Social benefits are linked to economic benefits. Contribution of older people in the economy promotes social benefits, which results in promoting economic benefits. <strong>Result: code and sub-codes social benefits absorbed into economic benefits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in perception about the role of older people</td>
<td>Age identity&gt; change in perception about the role of older people</td>
<td>The change in perception about age is linked to age identity and how individuals perceive their age. <strong>Result: code and sub-codes changes in perception absorbed into age identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in meaningful relationships</td>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>Maintaining social relationships optimise positive experiences and enhance wellbeing in older age. <strong>Result: Code merged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in life style</td>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>Engaging in leisure activities enhance wellbeing. <strong>Result: Code merged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive approach to addressing social needs</td>
<td>Clinical approach to addressing social needs</td>
<td>Reactive approach to addressing social needs is a result of clinical approaches. <strong>Result: code merged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of long term planning</td>
<td>Lack of joined up thinking</td>
<td>Lack of long term planning is interpreted as a way of not having a joined up thinking of addressing social needs. <strong>Result: code merged</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Construct from Coding Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct from Coding Framework</th>
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<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>labour market- lack of employment opportunity due to ageism or long term unemployment</td>
<td>Push factors&gt; labour market</td>
<td>Lack of employment opportunities and ageism are considered as possible results of push factors that influence the decision for becoming a social entrepreneur. <strong>Result:</strong> code absorbed into push factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to change</td>
<td>Lack of entrepreneurial culture&gt;resistance to change</td>
<td>Adapting to change is considered as a possible result of entrepreneurialism. <strong>Result:</strong> resistance to change absorbed into lack of entrepreneurialism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of innovation</td>
<td>Lack of entrepreneurial culture&gt;lack of innovation</td>
<td>Innovation is considered as a possible result of entrepreneurialism. <strong>Result:</strong> lack of innovation absorbed into lack of entrepreneurialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk averse</td>
<td>Lack of entrepreneurial culture&gt;risk averse</td>
<td>Risk taking is referred to as a way to be entrepreneurial. <strong>Result:</strong> risk averse is absorbed into lack of entrepreneurialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement as a powerful legacy</td>
<td>Cliff-edge event</td>
<td>Some individuals prescribe to the objective view of retirement and may perceive retirement as a cliff edge event. <strong>Result:</strong> powerful legacy merged with cliff-edge event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not ready to retire</td>
<td>Bridge back into employment&gt;not ready to retire</td>
<td>Change in perception about retirement has a direct link to older people seeking employment opportunities. <strong>Result:</strong> not ready to retire absorbed into bridge back into employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in perception about retirement</td>
<td>Bridge back into employment&gt;change in perception about retirement</td>
<td>Change in perception about retirement has a direct link to older people seeking employment opportunities <strong>Result:</strong> change in perception absorbed into bridge back into employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Transition</td>
<td>Role of Employers&gt;retirement transition</td>
<td>Interpretation on retirement transition can be linked to the role of employers in providing age appropriate support to their ageing workforce. <strong>Result:</strong> retirement transition repositioned under Role of employers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct from Coding Framework</th>
<th>New position</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decline and frailty</td>
<td>Age as an economic and social challenge</td>
<td>Older people considered as a social and economic challenge has a direct impact on the way they are perceived as frail and dependent on public resources. <strong>Result:</strong> <em>decline and frailty merged into age as an economic and social challenge</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgmental</td>
<td>Ageist attitudes</td>
<td>Ageism often involves prejudice and judgment on grounds of person’s age. <strong>Result:</strong> <em>judgmental merged with ageist attitudes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invisible to society</td>
<td>Loneliness&gt;invisible to society</td>
<td>Loneliness is considered as a possible result of being invisible. <strong>Result:</strong> <em>invisible to society absorbed into loneliness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to participation</td>
<td>Push factors&gt;barriers to participation – contextual</td>
<td>Barriers to economic participation are considered as push factors that influence people aged 50 and over seeking self-employment or entrepreneurship. <strong>Result:</strong> <em>barriers to participation – contextual absorbed into push factors</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers for participation</td>
<td>Pull factors&gt;drivers for participation</td>
<td>Maintaining a sense of purpose, gain an income and do the things we value are often considered as pull factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions. <strong>Result:</strong> <em>drivers for participation absorbed into pull factors</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sense of Purpose</td>
<td>Self-fulfilment</td>
<td>Interpretation of self-fulfilment can be found in seeking a purposeful life. <strong>Result:</strong> <em>sense of purpose merged into self-fulfilment</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-fulfilment</td>
<td>Self-fulfilment &gt; Downshifting</td>
<td>Self-fulfilment is a complex construct and can be sought in different ways. <strong>Result:</strong> <em>new second order construct under self-fulfilment</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-fulfilment&gt; Personal values</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-fulfilment&gt; Make a difference</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-fulfilment&gt; Control and independence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-fulfilment&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
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<tr>
<td>passion</td>
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<tr>
<td>self-fulfilment&gt;flexibility</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual growth</td>
<td>downshifting</td>
<td>Downshifting is considered as a behaviour in which individuals seek simpler lives and seek spiritual growth to escape materialism. <strong>Result: spiritual growth merged with downshifting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give back</td>
<td>hybridity of social model –for profit</td>
<td>Give back is directly linked to the way social enterprises make a profit to give back to society. <strong>Result: code repositioned under for-profit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lifestyle</td>
<td>code dropped</td>
<td>The data did not reveal that entrepreneurial intentions is directly linked to lifestyle – <strong>result: code dropped</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make a difference –hybridity of social model</td>
<td>code dropped</td>
<td>Making a difference was interpreted in the context of the participants’ desire for seeking self-fulfilment. <strong>Result: code dropped</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do good – hybridity of the social model</td>
<td>making a difference</td>
<td>Doing good in society is interpreted as a way of making a difference. <strong>Result: code merged into making a difference</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal development</td>
<td>human capital&gt;skills</td>
<td>The social orientation of the social enterprise is aimed at building human capital, which is often associated with building social, and skills capital. <strong>Result: code personal development renamed and repositioned under 2 constructs: social and skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>human capital&gt;social</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>build community resilience</td>
<td>build community resilience&gt;health and wellbeing</td>
<td>Building the resilience of community is linked to improving quality of life, tackling deprivation and social exclusion and creates social change through breaking barriers. <strong>Result: codes absorbed under community resilience with four core categories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>build community resilience&gt;build human capital</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>build community resilience&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackle deprivation and social exclusion</td>
<td>Build community resilience</td>
<td>The social orientation of the social enterprise is often multipurpose and is directly linked to helping those disadvantaged because of deprivation or being socially excluded because of a disability for example. <strong>Result: code merged into tackle deprivation and social exclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help disadvantaged</td>
<td>Tackle deprivation and social exclusion</td>
<td>Social orientation of social enterprise is often aimed at creating social change and hence improving people’s lives. <strong>Result: code merged into create social change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve people lives</td>
<td>Create social change</td>
<td>Social orientation of social enterprise is often aimed at creating social change and hence change people’s lives. <strong>Result: code merged into create social change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change lives</td>
<td>Create social change</td>
<td>Social orientation of social enterprise is often aimed at creating social change and hence change people’s lives. <strong>Result: code merged into create social change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty of the term social enterprise</td>
<td>Lack of definition</td>
<td>The novelty of the term social enterprise has a direct link to competing conceptualisations of the term and its lack of definition. <strong>Result: novelty of the term merged into lack of definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make money</td>
<td>Mercenary</td>
<td>Interpretation of mercenary is linked to gaining an income in order to address social needs. <strong>Result: make money merged into mercenary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>Role model</td>
<td>The interpretation of inspiration is linked to being a role model and inspire those disadvantaged or in need. <strong>Result: inspirational merged into role model</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate young people</td>
<td>A teacher</td>
<td>Being a teacher is interpreted in terms of the role of social entrepreneur to educate those disadvantaged and provide guidance. <strong>Result: code educate young people merged into a teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture and encourage</td>
<td>A teacher</td>
<td>The role of the social entrepreneur is interpreted as a way of nurturing and encouraging those in need or disadvantaged and help them to achieve outcomes. <strong>Result: code nurture and encourage merged into teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering</td>
<td>A teacher</td>
<td>Role of the social entrepreneur is to educate and empower those disadvantaged or in need to achieve outcomes. <strong>Result: code empowering merged into teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A job</td>
<td>A role</td>
<td>Fulfilling a job is often as a role individuals undertake. <strong>Result: a job merged into a role</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>Role of social networks on entrepreneurial intentions appearing across all participants and referred to as a way of using professional or family networks to build the social enterprise. <strong>Result: social capital merged into experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human capital</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Role of experience on entrepreneurial intentions appearing across all participants and referred to as a way of using transferable skills and work experience to build the social enterprise. <strong>Result: human capital merged into experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Expertise is a direct result of experience. <strong>Result: expertise merged into experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferable skills</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Gaining transferable skills is a direct result of experience. <strong>Result: transferable skills is merged into experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementarity of skills</td>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>Complementarity of skills is interpreted by the participants as a way of complementing their skills with individuals through their social networks. <strong>Result: code repositioned under social networks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legitimacy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legitimacy&gt;</td>
<td>Legitimacy is complex and experienced in various ways by the participants. <strong>Result:</strong> new constructs created under legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of engagement from public sector organisations</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>lack of recognition from government agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding from the general public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>lack of understanding from businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy&gt; bidding for public contracts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TAX and PAYE</strong></td>
<td>Inherent challenges</td>
<td>Tax and PAYE is expressed by the participants as an inherent challenge, referring to a lack of understanding of processes involved with these. <strong>Result:</strong> TAX and PAYE repositioned under inherent challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of tailored support</strong></td>
<td>Legitimacy</td>
<td>Tailored support for social entrepreneurs is linked to issue of legitimacy. <strong>Result:</strong> code lack of tailored support merged into legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multitasking – one man band</strong></td>
<td>Balancing operational and strategic objectives</td>
<td>Issue of balancing operational and strategic objectives are a direct result of operating as a one man or woman band and multitasking. <strong>Result:</strong> code multitasking merged into balancing operational and strategic objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating a narrative</strong></td>
<td>Evidencing and evaluating social impact</td>
<td>Issues of evidencing social impact is a direct result of the inability to create a narrative that tells the story of how the social impact is created. <strong>Result:</strong> code create a narrative merged into evidencing and evaluating social impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market social value</td>
<td>Evidencing and evaluating social impact</td>
<td>Market social value has a direct link to evaluating and evidencing social impact. <strong>Result: code merged into evidencing and evaluating social impact</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural barriers</td>
<td>Cultural and geographical barriers</td>
<td>Cultural barriers are linked with geographical barriers. <strong>Result: code created to articulate cultural and geographical barriers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Sustainability &gt; relevance</td>
<td>Sustainability is linked to staying relevant and continue addressing social needs. <strong>Result: relevance is absorbed into sustainability</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social entrepreneurial opportunities – scaling</td>
<td>Scaling social impact</td>
<td>Scaling is interpreted as a challenge by participants. This is the result of lack of funding. However, it is also dependent on the social orientation of the individual. <strong>Result: social entrepreneurial opportunities-scaling is repositioned under contextual challenges-scaling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Selflessness</td>
<td>Empathy is interpreted in the ability to understand share the feeling of others. Hence, it has a direct link to being selfless. <strong>Result: code empathy merged with selflessness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help others</td>
<td>Selflessness</td>
<td>Helping others is a direct link of selflessness. <strong>Result: help others merged with selflessness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selflessness</td>
<td>Altruist</td>
<td>Altruism is interpreted as having concerns for the welfare of others. <strong>Result: code selflessness merged into altruist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt to change</td>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity</td>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity is interpreted as the ability of adapting to change and having tolerance for uncertainty. <strong>Result: adapt to change merged into tolerance for ambiguity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make hard choices</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Being bold is being to make choices in adverse conditions. <strong>Result: code merged into bold</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>React adaptively to barriers</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Reacting to barriers is often linked with being bold. <strong>Result: code merged into bold</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alertness to opportunity</td>
<td>Opportunity recognition</td>
<td>Opportunity recognition in entrepreneurship is directly linked with alertness to opportunity. <strong>Result: code merged into opportunity recognition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Ethical behaviour</td>
<td>Being accountable is directly linked to conducting business in ethical manner. <strong>result: code merged into ethical behaviour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the right thing</td>
<td>Ethical behaviour</td>
<td>Doing the right thing is linked to ethical behaviour. <strong>Result: code merged into ethical behaviour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial acumen</td>
<td>Do good while making money</td>
<td>Commercial acumen of social entrepreneurs is directly linked to creating an income to do good. <strong>Result: code merged into do good while making money</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create value</td>
<td>Code dropped</td>
<td>Social value creation is spoken in the context of the social hybridity of the social model. <strong>Result: code dropped</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn a living and make money</td>
<td>Do good while making money</td>
<td>Codes had similar meanings. Code merged into do good while make money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial mindset</td>
<td>Business then social</td>
<td>Having an entrepreneurial mindset was interpreted by the participants as a way of being enterprising and run the social venture as a business to fulfil the social mission. <strong>Result: code merged into business then social</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support required</td>
<td>Support required&gt;skills&lt;br&gt;Support required&gt;government support&lt;br&gt;Support required&gt;operational support</td>
<td>Support participants require is multipurpose and is related to 1/ gaps in their skills. 2/support from government, 3/operational support. <strong>Result: codes repositioned to reflect the three areas.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges presented by the ageing society</td>
<td>Fiscal pressures on health and social care services&lt;br&gt;Demographic changes&lt;br&gt;Pension pressures&lt;br&gt;Demographic changes</td>
<td>Demographic changes resulted in an ageing workforce and increase in the number of people approaching retirement. This has resulted in fiscal pressures such as health and social care demands and increase in pension expenditures. <strong>Result: new second order construct under demographic changes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageing workforce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of government leadership</td>
<td>Lack of entrepreneurial culture</td>
<td>Leadership is considered as a possible result of entrepreneurialism. <strong>Result: code lack of government leadership merged into lack of entrepreneurial culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical approach to addressing social needs</td>
<td>Austerity measures &gt; Clinical approach to addressing social needs</td>
<td>Clinical approach to addressing social needs is a possible result of austerity measures. <strong>Result: clinical approach absorbed into austerity measures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive approach</td>
<td>Clinical approach to addressing social needs</td>
<td>Clinical approach to addressing social needs is linked to taking a reactive approach rather than proactive. <strong>Result: reactive approach merged with clinical approach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big society agenda</td>
<td>Marketisation of services</td>
<td>Big society agenda has a direct link to the marketization of public services. <strong>Result: code merged into marketization of services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Localism agenda</td>
<td>Marketization of services</td>
<td>Localism agenda is interpreted as a way of giving local communities their own responsibilities for care. <strong>Result: code merged into marketization of services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalisation and choice</td>
<td>Marketization of services</td>
<td>Personalisation and choice is directly linked to giving local communities their own responsibilities for care. <strong>Result: code merged into marketization of services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of employers and government policy</td>
<td>Age friendly society &gt; Flexible working &gt; Age friendly society &gt; Retirement transition &gt; Age Friendly Society &gt; Extending working lives &gt; Age Friendly society &gt; Multigenerational</td>
<td>Creating an age friendly society is complex and is interpreted in various ways. It involves creating an age friendly workplace, enhancing the social and economic participation of older people whilst recognising variation in health, social, and family needs. <strong>Result: code age friendly society repositioned as a category with sub-codes under friendly society</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring responsibility</td>
<td>Flexible working</td>
<td>Caring responsibility is interpreted in the context of being able to work flexibly to care for family. <strong>Result: caring responsibility merged with flexible working</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work life balance</td>
<td>Flexible working</td>
<td>Work life balance is interpreted in the context of being able to work flexibly to achieve a balance between career and family care. <strong>Result: code merged into flexible working</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Government</td>
<td>Manage the ageing workforce</td>
<td>Managing the ageing workforce is interpreted in the context of both employers and government addressing the needs of older workers. <strong>Result: managing the ageing workforce became a category with 2 sub-categories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Policy</td>
<td>Role of government</td>
<td>Policy is interpreted in the context of the central government role in creating policies that influence the creation of an age friendly society. <strong>Result: Code repositioned under role of government</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age identity – subjective construction</td>
<td>Age identity&gt;</td>
<td>Age identity is complex and interpreted in various ways. This was particularly in relation to how the participants felt younger than their age and associated age with work experience and life experience. In addition, participants recognised some of the health issues associated with older age. <strong>Result: new order construct under age identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Younger age identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age identity&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of life experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age identity&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age identity&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life experiences</td>
<td>Resilience&gt;life experiences</td>
<td>Resilience is a result of life experiences. <strong>Result: life experiences absorbed into resilience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Skills is a result of experience. <strong>Result: skills is merged with experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuable resource</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Valuable resource is a result of experience. <strong>Result: valuable resource is merged into experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Collection of life experiences</td>
<td>Wisdom is a result of life experiences. <strong>Result: wisdom is absorbed into collection of life experiences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective perception of term later life</td>
<td>Age identity&gt; Term later life</td>
<td>The way participants perceive their age is linked to the way they interpret the term ‘later life. <strong>Result: subjective perception of the term later life absorbed under age identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive perception – term later life</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>The way the term was perceived as positive was associated with experience. <strong>Result: code absorbed into experience.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in later life - Barrier to participation</td>
<td>Code dropped</td>
<td>The barrier to participation is dropped as this was spoken in the context of the participants’ experience of ageism and redundancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in later life Opportunity for participation</td>
<td>Code Dropped</td>
<td>Code dropped as similar concepts have emerged in relation to opportunity presented by ageing society and when participants spoke of their age associating this with experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with existing systems</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction in the workplace</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction in the workplace has a direct link with dissatisfaction with existing systems. <strong>Result: code merged into dissatisfaction in the workplace</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impart knowledge</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Imparting knowledge has a direct link with experience. <strong>Result Code merged into experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use transferable skills</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Transferable skills have direct links with experience. <strong>Result: code merged into experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build human capital</td>
<td>Social value&gt;build human capital Social value&gt;build social capital Social value&gt;create social change</td>
<td>Three overarching sub-themes emerged under social value: build human capital, build social capital, and create social change. <strong>Result: codes repositioned, merged and/or dropped to reflect three overarching themes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear social mission</td>
<td>Social value</td>
<td>Having a clear social mission is linked to creating social value. <strong>Result: code merged into social value</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>For profit making activity</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Four overarching themes are constructed: put back into society, sustain social value, social innovation, and sustainable environment. Result: codes repositioned, merged and/or dropped to reflect these themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager vs social entrepreneur</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blurred boundaries of social enterprise have a direct link to blurred boundaries between the role of manager and social entrepreneur. Result: code repositioned under blurred boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-perception of social entrepreneur</td>
<td></td>
<td>Three overarching themes emerged: those who associate with the term and perceive themselves as social entrepreneurs and those who refuse to use the term, those who regard this as a label, and those who regard the social entrepreneur as born not made. Result: codes repositioned, merged and/or dropped to reflect these themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social capital is interpreted by participants in various ways. However, professional networks including family support and complementarity of skills are constructs that appear across all participants. Result: constructs created under social networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct from Coding Framework</td>
<td>New position</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complementarity of skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of social entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Subjective experience</td>
<td>The benefits participants derive were spoken in the context of their subjective experience. <strong>Result: category merged into subjective experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of social entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>The limitations of social entrepreneurship were expressed by participants as a challenge. <strong>result: code renamed challenges</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social entrepreneurial process</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>The social entrepreneurial process was expressed by the participants in the context of sustainability. Participants explained that opportunity identification, exploitation, evaluation, and formalisation are all dependent on access to funding and relevance. <strong>Result: code merged into sustainability</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily experience</td>
<td>Code dropped</td>
<td>The accounts of the participants about their daily activity, social orientations, and how they address social needs was evidenced throughout the themes emerging from data. <strong>Result: to avoid duplication code is dropped</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 12

Coding Book

(Data Analysis from July 2015)
Appendix 12: Coding Book

Key: Blue colour: a priori themes, Green colour: emergent themes

1. AGEING SOCIETY

1.1 Opportunities presented by the ageing society
   1.1.1 Economic benefits
      1.1.1.1 Opportunity for social economy
      1.1.1.2 Volunteering
      1.1.1.3 Opportunity for labour workforce
   1.1.2 Social benefits
      1.1.2.1 Community
      1.1.2.2 Family level
   1.1.3 Personal benefits
      1.1.3.1 Wellbeing
      1.1.3.2 Social inclusion
      1.1.3.3 Income in retirement
   1.1.4 Changes in perception about the role of older people
      1.1.4.1 Redefinition of the role of older people in society
      1.1.4.2 Change in perception of being old
   1.1.5 Investment in meaningful relationships
   1.1.6 Change in life style
   1.1.7 Quality of life

1.2 Challenges presented by the ageing society

   1.2.1 Fiscal pressures
      1.2.1.1 Health Care
      1.2.1.2 Social Care
   1.2.2 Pension pressures: high cost of pension systems
      1.2.2.1 Labour market
      1.2.2.2 Lack of employment opportunity
      1.2.2.3 Gaps in job market
1.2.3 Demographic changes
1.2.4 Ageing workforce
1.2.5 Lack of entrepreneurial culture
1.2.6 Rural and urban imbalance
1.2.7 Big society agenda
   1.2.7.1 Marketisation of services
   1.2.7.2 Localism agenda
   1.2.7.3 Personalisation and choice
1.2.8 Lack of government leadership
1.2.9 Austerity measures
1.2.10 Clinical approach to addressing social needs
1.2.11 Lack of joined up thinking /coordination
1.2.12 Reactive approach to addressing social needs
1.2.13 Resistance to change
1.2.14 Lack of innovation
1.2.15 Risk averse
1.2.16 Short-term planning

1.3 Retirement
   1.3.1 Objective construction
      1.3.1.1 Cliff-edge event
      1.3.1.2 Powerful legacy
   1.3.2 Subjective construction
      1.3.2.1 Reconfigure life choices
      1.3.2.2 Bridge employment
      1.3.2.3 Self-employment/entrepreneurship
      1.3.2.4 Change in perception of retirement
      1.3.2.5 Not ready to retire
   1.3.3 Retirement transition
      1.3.3.1 Retirement planning
      1.3.3.2 Income

1.4 Role of employers and government
   1.4.1 Role of government

313
1.4.1.1 Extending working lives
   1.4.1.1.1 Issues with extending working lives
      1.4.1.1.1 Lack of understanding of diverse needs of employees – no-one best-fit approach

1.4.2 Role of Employers
   1.4.2.1 Flexible working – provision of flexible working opportunities to manage the ageing workforce
      1.4.2.1.1 Staff engagement
      1.4.2.1.2 Work life balance
      1.4.2.1.3 Resources
      1.4.2.1.4 Caring responsibility
   1.4.2.2 Financial planning
   1.4.2.3 Power of attorney
   1.4.2.4 Managing the ageing workforce
      1.4.2.4.1 Age friendly society
         1.4.2.4.1.1 Reduce cost
         1.4.2.4.1.2 Multi-generational workforce
   1.4.2.5 Role of policy
      1.4.2.5.1 Influencing
      1.4.2.5.2 Enabling
      1.4.2.5.3 Incentivising
      1.4.2.5.4 Drive change

1.5 Age identity
   1.5.1 Subjective construction
      1.5.1.1 Age perceived as young
      1.5.1.2 Age perceived as immaterial
      1.5.1.3 Age and experience
      1.5.1.4 Feel own age
      1.5.1.5 Resilience
      1.5.1.6 Collection of life experiences
      1.5.1.7 Confidence
      1.5.1.8 Wisdom
      1.5.1.9 Skills
      1.5.1.10 valuable resource
1.5.1.11 Independence
  1.5.1.11.1 Financial
  1.5.1.11.2 Personal
1.5.1.12 Health problems
  1.5.1.12.1 Lack of energy
  1.5.1.12.2 Memory loss
1.5.2 Public construction of ageing
  1.5.2.1 Decline and frailty
  1.5.2.2 Economic dependency
  1.5.2.3 Social dependency
  1.5.2.4 Valorisation of youth
  1.5.2.5 Disconnect between generations
  1.5.2.6 Invisible to society
  1.5.2.7 Judgmental
  1.5.2.8 The Other
  1.5.2.9 Ageist attitudes
  1.5.2.10 Loneliness
1.5.3 Role of age on entrepreneurial intentions
1.5.4 Subjective perception of the term ‘later life’
  1.5.4.1 Negative perception
    1.5.4.1.1 A label
    1.5.4.1.2 A perception
  1.5.4.2 Positive perception
  1.5.4.3 Neutral perception
1.5.5 Gender and age

2. PARTICIPATION IN LATER LIFE

  2.1 Barriers to participation – inherent and contextual
    2.1.1 Health
    2.1.2 Age
    2.1.3 Low level of energy
2.1.4 Ageism
2.1.5 Lack of employment opportunities
2.1.6 Caring responsibilities
2.1.7 Lack of education
2.1.8 Lack of transferable skills

2.2. Opportunities for participation
2.2.1 Experience
2.2.2 Skills
2.2.3 Supplement income in retirement
2.2.4 Volunteering
2.2.5 Community involvement

2.3 Drivers for participation
2.3.1 Sense of purpose
2.3.2 Income /necessity
2.3.3 Do things we value
2.3.4 Create change

3. MOTIVATION FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN LATER LIFE

3.1 Push factors
3.1.1 Ageism
3.1.2 Redundancy
3.1.3 Labour market
3.1.4 Dissatisfaction in the workplace
3.1.5 Dissatisfaction with existing systems
3.1.6 Gain income

3.2 Pull factors
3.2.1 Independence
3.2.2 Flexibility
3.2.3 Income
3.2.4 Impart knowledge
3.2.5 Give back
3.2.6 Downshifting
3.2.7 Lifestyle
3.2.8 Control
3.2.9 Use transferable skills
3.2.10 Affected by personally
3.2.11 A sense of purpose
3.2.12 Inspired
3.2.13 Passion
3.2.14 Self-fulfilment
  3.2.14.1 Do things we value
  3.2.14.2 Actualise potential
  3.2.14.3 Dissatisfaction with emotions
  3.2.14.4 Give back
  3.2.14.5 Make a difference
  3.2.14.6 Spiritual growth
3.2.15 personal values
  3.2.15.1 Challenge social injustice
  3.2.15.2 Create social change

4. HYBRIDITY OF SOCIAL MODEL

4.1 Social value
  4.1.1 Make a difference
  4.1.2 Do good in society
  4.1.3 Build community resilience
    4.1.3.1 Build human capital
      4.1.3.1.1 Personal development
        4.1.3.1.1.1 Empowerment
        4.1.3.1.1.2 Self-confidence
        4.1.3.1.1.3 Personal choice
        4.1.3.1.1.4 Self-reliance
        4.1.3.1.1.5 Social skills
4.1.3.2 Skills bank
  4.1.3.2.1 Employability
  4.1.3.2.2 Mentoring
  4.1.3.2.3 Signposting
  4.1.3.2.4 Training
  4.1.3.2.5 Upskilling

4.1.4 Enhance quality of life
4.1.5 Break reoffending cycle
4.1.6 Create social change
4.1.7 Break barriers
4.1.8 Challenge social systems
4.1.9 Set new standards
4.1.10 Tackle deprivation
4.1.11 Tackle social exclusion
4.1.12 Tackle social injustice
4.1.13 Provide respite
4.1.14 Help disadvantaged
4.1.15 Improve people’s lives
4.1.16 Change lives
4.1.17 Improve health outcomes
  4.1.17.1 Improve outcome of care
  4.1.17.2 Wellbeing
4.1.18 provide continuity

4.2 for-profit making activity
  4.2.1 Trading to generate income
  4.2.2 Social innovation
  4.2.3 Tailor made approach to delivering services
  4.2.4 put back into society
  4.2.5 Sustain social value
  4.2.6 Sustainable environment
  4.2.7 Lower cost solutions
    4.2.7.1 Solutions to industries
4.2.7.2 Solutions to government agencies

4.2.8 Clear social mission

4.2.9 Enhance academic research

4.3 Blurred boundaries

4.3.1 Social enterprise vs charities

4.3.2 Social enterprise vs community projects

4.3.3 Social entrepreneur vs business entrepreneur

4.4 Lack of definition of social enterprise

4.4.1 Novelty of the term

4.5 Self-perception

4.5.1 Self-perception of social entrepreneur

4.5.1.1 Manager vs social entrepreneur

4.5.1.2 Community worker

4.5.1.3 A job

4.5.1.4 A label

4.5.1.5 A mum

4.5.1.6 A role

4.5.1.7 Don’t know the term

4.5.1.8 Wear two hats

4.5.1.9 Not a social entrepreneur

4.5.1.10 Political entrepreneur

4.5.1.11 Born not made

4.5.1.12 I am a social entrepreneur

4.5.1.13 Just a man

4.5.1.14 Ordinary person

4.5.1.15 Mercenary

4.5.1.16 No personal reward

4.5.1.17 People person

4.5.1.18 Outcome focused

4.5.1.19 Role model

4.5.1.20 A teacher

4.5.1.21 Empowering
4.5.1.22 Conduit of ideas
4.5.1.23 Educate young people
4.5.1.24 Inspirational
4.5.1.25 Nurture and encourage

4.5.2 Self-perception of the term ‘social enterprise’
4.5.2.1 Social then business
4.5.2.2 Business then social
   4.5.2.2.1 Self-sustaining

5. ROLE OF EXPERIENCE ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS

5.1 Social capital
   5.1.1 Social networks

5.2 Human capital
   5.2.1 Prior experience – work experience accumulated over the life course seen as a benefit to the social enterprise activity
   5.2.2 Expertise
   5.2.3 Transferable skills
   5.2.4 Complementary of skills

6. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

6.1 personal development
   6.1.1 Business skills
   6.1.2 Interpersonal skills

7. LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

7.1 Inherent challenges
   7.1.1 Fear of failure
   7.1.2 Insufficient business knowledge
      7.1.2.1 Sales and business development
      7.1.2.2 Pricing
      7.1.2.3 Financial accounting
      7.1.2.4 IT skills
7.1.3 Education
    7.1.3.1 Outdated qualifications

7.1.4 Failing health

7.2. Contextual challenges

    7.2.1 Sustainability
        7.2.1.1 Access to funding
        7.2.1.2 Funding criteria
        7.2.1.3 CIC legal framework
        7.2.1.4 Uncoordinated funding
        7.2.1.5 Scaling social impact

    7.2.2 Legitimacy
        7.2.2.1 Lack of engagement from public sector organisations
            7.2.2.2 General public
                7.2.2.2.1 Negativity
                7.2.2.2.2 Cynicism
            7.2.2.3 Not being heard by government agencies
            7.2.2.4 Lack of understanding from private sector organisations
            7.2.2.5 Procurement / bidding for government contracts
            7.2.2.6 Tax and PAYE
            7.2.2.7 Red tape
                7.2.2.7.1 Overregulation
            7.2.2.8 Lack of tailored support

7.3 Organisational challenges

    7.3.1 Multitasking
        7.3.1.1 One man/woman band

    7.3.2 Balance operational and strategic objectives

    7.3.3 Balance social mission with for profit making activity

    7.3.4 Cultural barriers

    7.3.5 Engaging with beneficiaries

    7.3.6 Evidencing and evaluating social impact

    7.3.7 Market social value
7.3.8 Gender and social enterprise
7.3.9 Disadvantaged because of geographical location
7.3.10 lack of personal income
7.3.11. Lack of resources
7.3.11.1 Staffing
7.3.12 Dealing with uncertainty
7.3.13 Creating a narrative

8. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS
8.1 Opportunity Recognition - spotting entrepreneurial opportunities to address a social need
8.2 Opportunity Evaluation – evaluating the social needs to be addressed and resources
8.3 Opportunity Formalisation - building of the social model to address a social need
8.4 Opportunity Exploitation – exploiting the social model to address a specific social need
8.5 Scaling social impact to reach wider communities and individuals
8.5.1 Dependent on social orientation
8.5.1.1 Stay local
8.5.1.2 Create a brand
8.5.1.3 Employability and training
8.5.1.4 Franchising
8.5.1.5 Make an income
8.5.1.6 Scale national/geographical
8.5.1.7 Scale to other sectors
8.6 Relevance

9. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS
9.1 Bricoleur (ability to make do with scarce resources)
9.2 Change agent (creating systemic social change)
9.3 Social engineer (replace ineffective existing social systems with new ones to address social problems)
9.4 Social constructionist (address unmet social needs)
9.5 Altruist (selfless concern for the wellbeing of others)
9.6 Ethical behaviour (heightened sense of accountability towards beneficiaries served)
9.7 Mission leader (recognise a social problem and manage and organise social enterprise to address social problem)
9.8 Tolerance for ambiguity (ability to deal with uncertainty)
9.9 Bold (willingness to get things done despite risk and scarcity of resources)
9.10 Unity of purpose (committed to vision for social change)
9.11 Visionary (concerned with practical implementation of vision)
9.12 Creativity
9.13 Enthusiasm
9.14 Passion
9.15 Heroic qualities
9.16 Alertness to opportunities
9.17 Innovator
9.18 Empathy
9.19 Help others
9.20 Selflessness
9.21 Ability to challenge
9.22 Accept mistakes
9.23 Adapt to change
9.24 Learn from mistakes
9.25 Decision making
9.26 Make hard choices
9.27 React adaptively to barriers
9.28 Self-belief
9.29 Self-confidence
9.30 Do the right thing
9.31 Missionary
9.32 Commercial acumen
9.33 Do good whilst make money
9.34 Create value
9.35 Earn a living and make money
9.36 Entrepreneurial mindset
9.37 Give hope
9.38 Income as secondary

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10. SUPPORT MECHANISM FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS AGED 50 AND OVER

10.1 Support required

10.1.1 Risk management
10.1.2 Incentives – tax relief
10.1.3 Business networks
10.1.4 Business mentoring
10.1.5 Government support
   10.1.5.1 Minister for small business
   10.1.5.2 Collaboration
   10.1.5.3 Government led training for start-ups
   10.1.5.4 Financing/funding
10.1.6 Sponsorship
10.1.7 Collaboration from government agencies
10.1.8 Consideration to arts
10.1.9 Promoting what social entrepreneurs are doing on the ground
10.1.10 Regional guidance
10.1.11 Operational
   10.1.11.1 Apprentices
   10.1.11.2 Employees
   10.1.11.3 Volunteers
   10.1.11.4 Practical support
   10.1.11.5 Generic grant forms
10.1.12 Skills
   10.1.12.1 Accountancy
   10.1.12.2 PAYE
   10.1.12.3 IT
   10.1.12.4 Marketing
   10.1.12.5 Sales
   10.1.12.6 Social media
10.2. Support received
   10.2.1 Business support
   10.2.2 Mentoring
   10.2.3 Funding
   10.2.4 Grants
   10.2.5 Awards
   10.2.6 Donations

11. SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE
   11.1 Personal reward
   11.2 Income
   11.3 Leap of faith
   11.4 Challenging
      11.4.1 Financially challenging
      11.4.2 Physically challenging
      11.4.3 Uncertainty
      11.4.4 A roller coaster
      11.4.5 Anxious
      11.4.6 Emotionally engaging
      11.4.7 Reputational risk
   11.5 Lifelong learning
      11.5.1 Learning pursuit
   11.6 No learning
   11.7 Personal enrichment
      11.7.1 Self-development
         11.7.1.1 Assertiveness
         11.7.1.2 Compassion
         11.7.1.3 Self-confidence
         11.7.1.4 Gaining a perspective
         11.7.1.5 Learn to adapt to change
         11.7.1.6 Spiritual growth
11.7.2 Skills development
   11.7.2.1 Business and management skills
   11.7.2.2 Marketing and social media skills
   11.7.2.3 Communication skills
   11.7.2.4 Delegation skills
   11.7.2.5 Leadership skills

11.8 Networking

11.9 Sector specific knowledge

11.10 Practical skills
   11.10.1 Technical skills
   11.10.2 Risk

11.11 Personal satisfaction
   11.11.1 Sense of achievement
   11.11.2 Sense of purpose
   11.11.3 Challenge oneself
   11.11.4 Energising
   11.11.5 Feel good factor
   11.11.6 Fulfilled
   11.11.7 In control
   11.11.8 Rewarding
   11.11.9 Self-pride

11.12 Understand how to evaluate and evidence social impact

11.13 Grant application

11.14 Funding procedures
References


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