Reviewer’s report

Title: Social Firms as a means of vocational recovery for people with mental illness: a UK survey.

Version: 1 Date: 13 May 2013

Reviewer: Julie Henderson

Reviewer's report:

The paper is clearly written but there are some minor essential revisions required prior to publication.

The literature review is comprehensive and methods are clearly outlined and ample evidence is provided of how the sample was obtained. Some of the material about sample numbers could be included in the methods section but this is up to the discretion of the authors.

The results section is currently organised around the tables which means that similar data is presented in different ways at different times. I would pull the data about proportion of people with mental illness via diagnostic category together so that proportion of businesses and proportion of employees are discussed together. The second set of numbers is perhaps, more telling than the first set. Some reorganisation for this section for flow would help.

Finally, more could be made in the discussion of the comparative role of social firms and social enterprises in providing recovery based services. In many ways recovery as a concept is somewhat underdeveloped and taken-for-granted in this paper. How could it be related to involvement in management etc.? I guess I am looking for a more critical commentary of the relative role of the types of businesses and the extent to which each have a capacity to support recovery and provide an opportunity for employment.

A personal bug bear is people starting sentences with numbers however, I will leave this to the discretion of the authors and editors.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests