



Shuttle Knit Opening Statement

Joint Committee on Key Issues Affecting the Traveller Community

Committee Room 1, Leinster House, Kildare St. Dublin.

10 December 2019

Dr Sheila Cannon, Shuttle Knit Board Member and Assistant Professor in Social Entrepreneurship at Trinity College Dublin, Trinity Business School, cannonsh@tcd.ie

Anne Shelly-Lacey, Manager, Shuttle Knit CLG, shuttleknit@gmail.com

Social enterprises as employment initiatives to support the Traveller Community

Shuttle Knit Ltd, founded in 2001 by the Wicklow Traveller Group and based in Wicklow Town, is an example of how social enterprise can address issues affecting the Traveller Community: unemployment, community development, skill development, further education, literacy, social inclusion, and mental health.

Social enterprise has been part of European social policy since the mid-1990s. In Ireland, the Department of Rural and Community Development has recently launched a National Policy on Social Enterprise, July 2019.

Shuttle Knit provides supportive and life-enhancing work opportunities to an under-employed group, which has direct and longer-term positive impacts.

The main challenge for Shuttle Knit is achieving financial sustainability, and even scaling, to be able to offer career progression and development to the staff.