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Innovation Unit suggests that public services can learn from John Lewis to better engage professionals and the public in their public services.

The Innovation Unit today published an independent think piece suggesting that co-operatives and mutuals can help to transform public services. In the face of the fiscal crisis, some public service leaders are drawing inspiration from Easyjet. The Innovation Unit argue that public services could instead learn from John Lewis and give staff and citizens greater rights to shape decisions in public services.

John Craig, Partner at the Innovation Unit and one of the authors says, "people will only take more responsibility for their own health, learning and carbon footprint if they are given greater rights to shape public services' work. If not, while public services are improving, the risk is that they remain something done *to* the public rather than *with* the public."

"In a climate of economic uncertainty and funding fears, this report compiles telling evidence that the way to transform services is to empower staff and users" comments Ed Mayo, Secretary General of Co-operatives UK. "The co-operative model is enjoying a new heyday of public trust and business success and, as the emerging trend towards co-operative schools show, developed with care, it is a positive, additional option for public service improvement."

The paper suggests how public services might seek to unlock the potential of co-operative and mutual approaches. These suggestions include:

- Extending the 'right-to-request' to services beyond the health system, enabling staff to create social enterprises, including co-operatives and mutuals.
- Opening up governance design to staff and citizens by creating greater openness about the governance structure of organisations like Foundation Trusts.
- Developing a community right-to-request, enabling groups of citizens to request changes in governance that give them a greater voice in services they use.

Notes to Editors:

- The Innovation Unit is an independent social enterprise with a strong track record built up over eight years of supporting innovation in the third sector, education and children's services, and local government. The Unit is entirely independent from government. We want to see public services that deliver significantly better outcomes for lower costs. Our job is to enable leaders in public services to create innovation that is disciplined, radical, scalable and sustainable.
- The think piece is written by John Craig, Matthew Horne and Prof. Denis Mongon.
- For further information, please call 0207 259 1232.
- Find the report at <http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk>.