



FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKSHOPS AT THE
WIC VCS CONFERENCE – 18th NOVEMBER 2008

BUSINESS SUPPORT WORKSHOP

(Co-facilitated by Mark Herriott & Helen Gray)

Training was high on the agenda for most of the group and the following points were agreed to be significant to their organisations:

- Training for trustees very important, but with the trainer actually going to the organisation as part of the management meeting – a captive audience! – with social enterprise being highlighted as an important factor.
- Linking/signposting to other organisations who can provide necessary expertise in training provision, ie. First Aid etc. in order to achieve required numbers for training to take place.
- It was agreed that a change of culture was necessary amongst the small VCS groups with regard to the importance of training but that the cost of training was always a problem when an organisation had no paid staff and no budget as such.

- Plenty of notice also required for training dates in order that participants can arrange time off from their 'day' jobs.

General business support comments included the following:

- Funding advice very important and always being sought – for both large and small organisations and for small and large sums of money.
- Preference to talking to a person rather than just accessing a website, and it must be remembered that not all organisations have access to computers etc., especially those in the rural communities, so dissemination of information needed to come through a variety of media.

Some points for possible development:

- WIC/The Voice to advertise jobs/positions in the VCS in order to cut costs for organisations. Some payment could be agreed upon for this service.
- With the proposed change in lottery funding – both grant and loan provision – support would be needed to be given to the VCS in order to respond to that change.
- Visual case studies/results of those VCS organisations that were successful in gaining funding to be produced in order to give other organisations ideas, lateral thinking etc.

The two points that were fed back to the Conference delegates were the need for:

- One-to-one business support for organisations – including training, funding advice and change management.
- Maximising networking to deliver joined up communications – including advertising VCS jobs and visual case studies of successful funding bids.

COMPACT WORKSHOP

Main points raised in discussions:

- a. The need to raise awareness of the COMPACT.
- b. Have COMPACT Champions in each district and set them targets.
- c. Have event linked to National COMPACT Week 1st – 8th November 2009.
- d. Develop web page for Worcestershire COMPACT and look at having discussion pages.
- e. Produce case studies showing where COMPACT has had positive impact.
- f. Do not be afraid to report on where COMPACT has not solved problems.
- g. Develop a 'catchy' strap line (as COMPACT not very 'user friendly').
- h. Carry out survey – ask organisations “What’s in COMPACT for them?”

- i. Look at developing District COMPACTs which 'feed' from County COMPACT but which might be more 'locally based' and involve local LSPs.
- j. Develop Action Plans for local COMPACTs, link to work of Champions and review activity through Performance Management.
- k. Change Dispute Resolution to Mediation/Support Process – seems less threatening.
- l. Support Independent Mediators to address any issues/conflicts.
- m. Is there a role for Buddies? – someone who has experience of working within COMPACT supporting organisations who have a query/problem/concern before anyone needs deeper mediation.

2 Main Points

- Raise awareness – through a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i and j.
- Develop mediation/support process – linked to l and m.

WIC/VCS Conference 18th Nov 2008
Volunteering Workshop Notes

VOLUNTEERING WORKSHOP

“What are the value of volunteers to your organisation?”

Workshop leader: Kate Walton - Chair WIC Volunteering Hub katew@pershorevolunteers.org

“What do you/your organisation does to value your volunteers?”

Feedback:

- One way is to ensure they are adequately supported
- At Homestart they have social activities: theatre outings, cheese and wine evenings; also training activities
- Ensure they have contact details of a member of staff where they can call any time after a home visit to discuss any issues.

“What do you do if there is a higher number of paid staff to lower number of volunteers-how do you work it?”

Feedback:

- Volunteers take on more general roles
- Make volunteers feel part of the team by including them in the staff training days
- It was felt that of great importance is to train staff across the organisation to work with and support volunteers; this helps braking barriers.
- Some organisations call their volunteers unpaid staff and they ensure that volunteers are part of all staff training.
- It is very important for the volunteers to have role descriptions from the beginning; that way they know what is expected of them.

- We talked about wording: why is it important to call it “role descriptions” as opposed to “job description”. It is not simply semantics but it has legal implications.
- New trend with the credit crunch - younger people will look more and more at volunteering as way of getting back into employment if they have been made redundant because of the current economical circumstances/credit crunch.

Valuing your volunteers = Supporting your volunteers = Knowing your volunteers

- If you know your volunteers you can pick up on stuff that’s going on in their life and ensure that you can adequately support them in their role.
- We talked then about the importance of signposting between the statutory sector and the volunteer sector, for example how can the prevention agenda be linked to and delivered with support from the voluntary sector.

“What kind of activities do you do to recognise volunteer’s value?”:

- Newsletters
- Tea parties/social activities
- AGM combined with social
- Celebration events for young people across the county to get national awards
- Press releases: success stories, tell your story to the outside world
- Being visible: stalls at events, leaflets, etc
- Face painting-raising awareness events
- Recognising individual volunteers for outstanding contribution over 5/10/20/25 years of service, Queen’s award. We felt that this needs treated with lots of consideration, it can be divisive. Volunteer Coordinators have a huge role to play in “educating” funders who try to quantify volunteering and look at numbers only. Volunteering is much

more than hours of volunteering or numbers, it is about the success stories and the impact that volunteering has on the individual and the impact that the volunteer has on the society.

In Conclusion:

Valuing Volunteers is about:

- making the volunteers feel part of the organisation
- looking beyond monetary value and looking at the success stories to measure impact
- use the success story of the impact of volunteers on the organisation/client/society as marketing tool to spread the word about the benefits of volunteering to the individual and to the society.

REPRESENTATION WORKSHOP

(Co-facilitated by Richard Quallington – Community First, and Jim Smith – WAVOCC)

The workshop took the following form:

- **Representation Role Play**
- **Feedback from Role Play asking:**
 - What this felt like for you as a representative
 - What would have made the meeting go better

- What would have helped with the role
- **Discussion in Smaller Groups asking:**
 - What is the Added Value of VCS Representatives (from both Statutory and Voluntary perspective)
 - What are the perceived difficulties in VCS representation (from both Statutory and Voluntary perspective)
- **Support Mechanisms and Tools for effective Representation including:**
 - Induction
 - Representatives Feedback Form – include how information will be cascaded:

Representation Role Play

- Participants were asked to take on a role and a position that would normally be outside of their own representative experience. Their feedback included:

What this felt like for you as a representative

- The Chair made too many decisions
- The Chair did not know it was one representative's first meeting
- There were difficulties in knowing the individuals, their role and their agendas
- In representing a sector it is difficult to display diversity
- A County Council representative (who was given a VCS role) stated, 'I needed to think carefully, it was useful to be placed in this role as a VCS Representative.'
- That it is difficult to Chair partnership work with all of the agendas on display
- It highlighted how it would feel as a single VCS representative at Partnership Level

- That VCS representation works well on the 'Children's and Young People Partnership' – this is due to good partnership relationships and allows a common message to become embedded

What would have made the meeting go better?

- To be clearer about why we are there as a representative
- To have a common agreement
- Clearer about a VCS Representatives roles and responsibilities
- A mechanism to report back to our sector
- Consultation of the sector
- A context of where money has been historically spent
- To know exactly why they were at a meeting

Discussion in Smaller Groups asking:

What is the Added Value of VCS Representatives (from both Statutory and Voluntary perspective)

- Diversity of groups
- Our best practise
- Independence
- How quickly we act
- Wide range of experience
- Freedom of voice of the VCS
- Efficiency through working together
- Objectivity versus perception

What are the perceived difficulties in VCS representation (from both Statutory and Voluntary perspective)

- Loss of the big picture – interest in only your own groups issues
- Showing a shared voice
- Statutory responsibility
- Mixed agendas of the VCS and the Statutory Sector
- Different decision makers
- Very tight targets on decisions and trustees are not involved in this
- Are we looked at as awkward?
- Loosing our identity
- Size of VCS/diversity and difficulty in having one voice

Support Mechanisms and Tools for effective Representation

Points discussed in terms of representatives' tools:

- To ensure plain English and cut out jargon
- For the VCS Hub to communicate the value of the VCS across the Partnership as a whole
- A jargon buster for VCS representatives
- A VCS jargon buster for Statutory Partners
- To use the communication routes we have
- Admin support to help them report back

Signposting service workshop

ORGANISATION	KEY CONTACT	TITLE	TELEPHONE NO	AREA COVERED	HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR SERVICE WORKING WITH SIGNPOSTING	EXPECTATIONS	WHAT CAN YOUR ORGANISATION OFFER SIGNPOSTING
Age Concern	Beverley Hiden	Wellcheck & Foot care Co-ordinator	01386 422700	South Wychavon	Cross-referring between FS & AC	To get referrals for Wellcheck clients and help with benefits	Complete signposting forms when doing Wellcheck
British Red Cross	Sonia Spurr		01905 450400	County wide	Currently make home visits incl. assessments. The service could refer either directly or through social services	Partnership working and communications	Assessment, access to all Red Cross Services
Carers Careline	Jane Deane	Carers Service Manager	01527 66177	Redditch			
DIAL	Chris Romberg		01743 280070				

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DIAL	Cathy Merriman	Manager	01905 27790	S Worcs	Disability advice, benefits advice for disabled people and carers	Referral of clients	Form completion, benefit assessment
REDI Centre	Nina Ali		01527 68583	Redditch			
Rooftop Housing Group	Maurice Mohan	Head of Supported Housing	01386 420800	Wychavon South			
Royal British Legion	Annette Summers		01905 621051	Worcestershire (old county boundries)	Receiving referrals for immediate needs - funds available to all service and ex-service and dependents	Spare capacity available within org to provide assistance	Cross referral of clients between orgs

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Sandycoft Centre	Nina Ali		01527 595135	Redditch	Works with disadvantaged groups with low qualifications	To be able to have contact details of agencies in local areas	Get many people with severe mental issues
Worcester City Neighbourhood Watch	Peter Chance		01905 22675	Worcester City	330+ co-ordinators visit members in their homes	Feedback on referrals	Help with home visits
Worcestershire Assoc for Blind	Jenny Gage	Chief Office	01905 723245	Worcestershire	In contact with 3000 visually impaired people. Open to discussion about future engagement opportunity	Partnership. Sharing of statistics	Signposting into our services and being 'signposters'
Worcestershire PCT	Sue Home	PALS	0800 917 7919	Worcestershire	Referrals		Resolve concerns and

Signposting service workshop

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							queries, give info re NHS services
Worcs Volunteer Centre	Sally Ellison	Chief Officer	01905 24721	Worcs City & surrounding area	Spreading the word to other organisations		
Worcs Volunteer Centre	Ann Havas				Referring clients for fire safety checks		Help with admin
Worcs Volunteer Centre	Sharon Wright	Gardenin g & Shopping Co- ordinator			Gardening service for the elderly or disabled		