

Skills for Justice

Voluntary Sector Ambassador Project – stage 2 – draft report

Objective 1; Link to the Cross-SSC voluntary sector ambassador project to promote understanding and engagement with all relevant SSC's

- *Enhanced voluntary sector engagement with Skills for Justice and other Sector Skills Council's*

The Voluntary Sector is represented at a strategic level on the Skills for Justice Board, through SOVA and Victim, Survivors and Witnesses. At a regional level across the UK there is strong voluntary sector representation on the cross sector England, Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland groups, which steer the work of the organisation.

The work of the voluntary sector is most significant to the Justice sector in relation to community Justice (Work with offenders and their families, young people, victims and survivors of crime and community safety) and the Skills for Justice Community Justice Occupational Committee has therefore incorporated a range of voluntary sector representatives. Through all of these fora, we have sought to better understand and meet the needs of the voluntary sector and to communicate about the services we offer them.

Specifically over the past 18 months there have been the following;

- In the north of England SfJ sits on the Voluntary Sector Forum and has established contact through the LSC compact.
- In the south west, the Public Sector Alliance group are about to commence a piece of work which will look at voluntary sector engagement. The SfJ Workforce Development Advisor (WDA) in that region, in conjunction with Public services Alliance, will be working with the director of the SW forum who, have commissioned Plymouth University, to undertake a workforce development needs analysis and develop a strategy, to move this along. This will provide SSCs with a framework for action and the work completed on the ambassador project will feed into this. In the west midlands, the SfJ WDA has secured LSC funds for a project to deliver level 3 NVQs and A1 Assessor Awards to VCS substance misuse workers.
- The Skills for Justice WDA in Wales has recently become a member of the Welsh arm of the voluntary sector Workforce Development Hub Ongoing access to funds supported by DELLS (Department of Education and Lifelong Learning and Skills) have for the third year running through the Skills Development Fund with a project with VS that enables VS managers to gain a ILM Introductory & Certificate in Team Leading . Skills for Justice continues as a member of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). This membership will help us to work more closely with voluntary organisations in Wales, enable us to access the latest information, and keep up-to-date with activities on new programmes such as, Investing in Volunteers. This is a new quality assurance programme for volunteers, involving organisations wanting to improve the way they involve volunteers and to raise the standard of volunteering across the UK. The WDA in Wales has recently been co-opted as a Board Member to WCVA
- A Voluntary Sector Forum has been established by SfJ in Scotland. The group meets quarterly to share learning resources. Group with

representatives include Victim Support Scotland, Women's Aid, Includem, Sacro and Apex along with public sector representatives. The Scottish team are also represented on the Skills for Business Network Voluntary Sector Forum and attend meetings quarterly with other SSCs; Skills for Health, Lifelong Learning UK, Scottish Social Services Council, SCVO.

- Regional and National Employer Forums are run across the UK. These forums identify common workforce issues and seek to find and implement joint solutions through an agreed action plan. The forums are also a valuable resource in terms of feeding into our Sector Skills Agreement. There is good representation from across the voluntary sector, demonstrating that the issues are the same whether the workforce is paid or volunteers. It also provides a good opportunity for VCS and statutory organisations to network and work in partnership.

- *Active participation in cross sector VCS steering group and working parties*
The Ambassador attended VSA meetings in London. Sue Hunter, our Standards, Qualifications and Frameworks Manager, attended three meetings (one of which she hosted at Skills for Justice in Sheffield).

In London, a cross sector working party of VCS agencies working in the justice sector was set up to look at joint workforce issues. This was initially well attended and supported by the Hub. However when the Hub link person went on maternity leave and was not replaced, the membership of the group dwindled and eventually folded. A piece of work with the remaining group member is ongoing with the hope that the other organisations may be enticed back to participate in a piece of joint work at a later stage.

In Scotland the WDAs have set up a Voluntary Sector Forum which meets quarterly and facilitates a Shared Learning Resources Group with representatives from Victim Support Scotland, Women's Aid, Includem, Sacros and Apex along with public sector representatives.

Objective 2; Engage with voluntary sector events across the UK to increase knowledge of available SSC products and services

- *Promote the use of NOS and related products including Capability Builder and gain feedback for the review of capability builder*

All WDAs as part of their core function promote the use of NOS and NOS related products.

NOS workshops for forum members have been identified as being desirable in ERF action plans and consideration is being given to how best to carry this forward in the regions.

Skills for Justice have committed to developing a competency framework for use in the Voluntary sector within Justice which will be hosted on our website. The tool is currently under development and should be available by the summer. In addition to this the police Integrated Competency Framework (developed and maintained by Skills for Justice) includes all roles in policing which are filled by volunteers.

Our work with the Legal Services Commission and Legal Advice Services has included the development of a toolkit to promote, and aid implementation of, the variety of uses of NOS. This toolkit will be reproduced during 2007 in a generic form that will then be promoted to all voluntary sector organisations within our footprint.

In Northern Ireland Skills for Justice have continued to consult and work closely with the Community Justice assessment centre, who are successfully supporting candidates from a number of voluntary organisations through awards in work with offending behaviour, and work with victims survivors and witnesses of crime.

The ESF project in Scotland includes 23 voluntary sector partners - Women's Aid, Rape Crisis, SACRO, APEX Scotland and Includem - delivering SVQs for 110 candidates.

In London, the apprenticeship programme includes a number of VCS organisations in the substance misuse field. This is a Home Office project, managed by SfJ intended to encourage young people to work in this part of the sector.

Objective 3; Providing sector specific input to the development of resources and national occupational standards

- *To identify specific resources required by voluntary sector organisations in Scotland, and to identify organisations to be involved in the review of the Youth Justice and resettlement NOS in 2006*

The Community Justice Occupational Committee has sought feedback from the voluntary sector on every stage of the development of the Youth Justice and the Resettlement standards, and the steering group for this work has included representation from Youth Inclusion and Crime Concern. In Northern Ireland there has been a workshop, and a series of individual consultations about these standards, and a consultation event in Wales and in Scotland to ensure that the needs of voluntary sector organisations are met.

We recently consulted on the NOS for Governance and Inspection. Victim Support and NACRO were invited to participate and agreed to advise their members of this opportunity to take part.

- *Identify opportunities for collaborative working*

In Northern Ireland Skills for Justice has commenced project management of a research project, in partnership with NICVA and a number of other SSC's. Funding for this work has been provided by the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) the output will be a skills needs analysis for the Voluntary and Community sector, from which data on the Justice related work of the voluntary sector can be drawn.

Regional Employer forums and our Community Justice Occupational Committee provide the main opportunities for identifying areas of joint work. An offshoot of the London Drug and Alcohol Workforce group has resulted in a joint bid for Training Strategy Implementation funding involving 6 small VCS organisations.

Objective 4 Raise awareness of NOS that apply to V&C sector within SfJ units

- *Increased awareness of V & C work within all Skills for Justice's industry sectors, regions and Home Countries.*

Occupational committees and country groups have been doing this, particularly the CJOC. Items have been submitted for our internal briefing paper circulated to staff

across the UK. The e-brief is a newsletter, produced fortnightly and sent to all of our contacts throughout the justice sector. Our quarterly publication (The Standard) is also circulated to all of our 5,000 contacts throughout the justice sector. The SfJ website is updated at least once a fortnight and our website records show that it is heavily used. Within all of these communication methods there is always a percentage of the content that is relevant to the voluntary sector

All of our CJ, Legal Advice, Governance, Common standards, Witness Care, Caseworker and Managing Justice Sector Services standards are relevant to the voluntary sector, and we have had VS representation at every stage from developing them to approving them and implementing them.

A lot of the drug and alcohol survey and promotion of MA's has also been with the Voluntary sector.

We do not know the exact extent of our engagement with the VCS and need to conduct further research into this area through an audit of individual strand engagement within regions.

Objective 5; Ensure the SSA takes full account of voluntary and community skills(paid and unpaid), skills issues and management of volunteers alongside our responsibilities for skills concerned with providing voluntary and community services and share emerging best practice with the SfBN

- *Ensure Voluntary and Community Sector workforce related skills are included in regional and national plans signed off as part of the SSA process*

We are focussing on the needs of the voluntary sector as a key part of the solutions for our Sector Skills Agreement and exploring the varying demands of this aspect of our footprint during the action planning stage. The members of the regional, country and occupational forums and groups which include representatives from the VCS have been rigorously consulted throughout the whole process.

Multi-agency working and Management and Leadership have been highlighted as key requirements across the Justice sector and we are currently identifying a range of solutions in these areas. All of the solutions under consideration will be available to the voluntary sector organisations and will be promoted to them.

Objective 6; To promote and sell the benefits of the standards to our volunteers, host organisations and the voluntary and community workforce employers

- *Highlight and promote the value of training for the voluntary sector*

SfJ Website contains case studies / success stories regarding the work we have done with VCS around training and qualifications, the pilot for the Continuing Development Awards (CDA) for example. These are qualifications based on a selection of National Occupational Standards (NOS), designed to reflect the needs of those working in specific areas of the justice sector or other occupational areas that are involved in improving the lives of young substance misusers.

In London, Positive Futures, a national social inclusion programme using sport and leisure activities to engage with disadvantaged and socially marginalised young adults identified 6 Positive Futures projects to participate in the pilot scheme. Each project puts up 2 candidates and a candidate assessor.

In Northern Ireland, A group of 11 volunteers who help young people with behavioural problems and women who are victims of domestic violence have completed a City and Guilds Continuing Development Award (CDA) in Mentoring or Victims, Survivors and Witnesses. The course allowed the candidate to complete modules in their specialist areas such as mentoring, protecting individuals from abuse, work with vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and working with children and young people in secure environments.

Regionally based WDAs regularly respond to request for contact from VCS organisations within our sector. It is a key function of the advisors to promote the uses and benefits of NOS.

Objective 7: Developing capacity within Skills for Justice to identify and address cross sector issues

- *Enable capacity building through development of Ambassador's role*

More work clearly needs to be undertaken in terms of promoting our work before we can start to meet the needs of the VCS. The role should be further developed and a joint approach to engagement, drawing upon good practice, should be adopted. A minimum level of engagement, giving direction to WDAs is currently being drafted and will be submitted to our VCS members for agreement.

The ambassador role has changed hands several times during the life of the project due to capacity issues and although unavoidable, this has not been helpful in achieving the aims of the action plan.

Public Service Alliances and our broader engagement with Skills for Health and Care provide opportunity to identify collaborative issues.

Objective 8: Raising awareness of cross sector work programmes and actively promoting support and participation

- *Increased awareness of VCS related NOS within SfJ and the health sector and identification of VCS related skills issues or concerns*

SfJ regularly produces and circulates internal and external electronic briefing documents and a range of other publications which are designed to apply across the sector. Articles highlighting our VCS projects and ongoing engagement have been produced. The circulation list is extensive.

Our marketing and communication department regularly produces case studies, placed on our website, which feature individual success stories, many of which come from the VCS. We continue to look out for opportunities to add to these. Our VCS contacts have been encouraged to participate at all stages of the SSA and in all of our NOS development projects.

Our Leadership Programme Manager, Apprenticeships Manager, our lead Qualifications Adviser and the Standards, Qualifications and Frameworks Manager all work on cross-sector issues and projects (both cross justice and cross SSC). Some of our new Development Awards are being developed in collaboration with Skills for Health. In all of this work we take every opportunity to encourage the participation of the voluntary sector. We held two forums for LLUK in the Justice sector in relation to teacher/trainer qualifications and the input and attendance from the voluntary sector was significant.

Objective 9; Providing sector specific input to the development of resources and national occupational standards scoping the needs of the Justice sector in relation to cross sector issues

- *Recording and reporting back on issues / concerns re NOS to inform future revision and development*

At meetings with stakeholders, and regional /country groups, staff take the opportunity to identify existing intelligence and identify any gaps which can be fed back to SfJ research team, VCS project team, Ambassadors, etc.

We have developed a NOS Calendar and a consultation section on our website which identifies consultation opportunities. Although the calendar does not make specific reference to VCS inclusion, all of our contacts are made aware of and actively encouraged to participate.

- *Providing input to the development of a research strategy and LMI function*

Skills for Justice has obtained funding from DEL in NI for a survey of 1,000 voluntary and community sector organisations in Northern Ireland, to be carried out by NICVA.

The study is funded by the Department of Employment and Learning, and will enable the skills needs and workforce development issues of these organisations to be analysed. The study will also breakdown the data collected by Sector Skills Council (SSC), e.g. Care and Development, Lifelong Learning, Justice etc. in a way that has not previously been possible.

Conclusion

Skills for Justice has welcomed the opportunity to focus more closely on the work that it does within the VCS and highlight the level of our engagement with this important but often forgotten part of our sector. We believe that we have made significant progress in terms of our voluntary sector engagement over the last two years and are putting in place a number of further measures which will provide information, support and solutions to the voluntary sector.