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inter-ACTION

RCVDA
**Leading
the Way**

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF RCVDA

Where do you get your information from?

Below are a number of websites which offer information which you or your organisation may find useful.



Redcar & Cleveland's
Families Guide
www.redcarclelandcytrust.org.uk/familiesguide



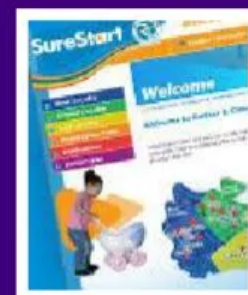
RCVDA's own website
www.rcvda.org.uk



Redcar & Cleveland's Museum
website
www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/museums



Tuned in website aimed at 13 – 19
year olds
www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/tunedin



Surestart website
www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/surestart



Hidden Harm – the effect of parental drug and alcohol use on children (e.learning course)

It is estimated that there are 1.5 million children of problem drug and alcohol users in the UK. (ACMD 2006).

This course is designed for anyone who works with children, young people and their families. It aims to raise awareness of the issues affecting the children of problem substance users. **It helps the learner to spot the signs of harm and identify appropriate windows of opportunity to break the cycle and safeguard the child.** The course comes with an on-line assessment and certificate on achieving a satisfactory pass mark.

Duration: Approximately 2 hours. The length of time taken depends entirely on how quickly you can study and absorb the material. You can proceed as quickly or slowly as you like, and there is no limit on how long you can take to do the course.

Target Audience: This course is suitable for anyone who works with children, young people and their families.

Entry Requirements: Staff must have completed the on-line course - basic awareness of child abuse and neglect - either foundation or core level and work (or volunteer) within the Redcar & Cleveland area or Middlesbrough area. An application form for this course can be downloaded from the RCVDA website www.rcvda.org.uk.

CPS Community Involvement Panels

Community Involvement Panels are one way in which the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) seeks to work with the local community to ensure they are delivering the best possible service. They are establishing panels in each of the CPS Areas in the North East – Cleveland, County Durham and Northumbria. They are looking for people from across the community to work with them at a strategic level, helping them to develop their policies, practices and procedures.

The Panel will provide a community perspective and act as a consultative forum in relation to:

- The development of CPS Area Business Plans, as well as the North East Group (regional) Business Plan
- National consultations of CPS policy
- The development of the Community Prosecutor approach
- Victim and witness issues
- Local delivery of the National Single Equality Scheme
- Other areas of CPS business and policy on a local, regional and national level.

The Panel will provide a platform for community members to raise strategic issues related to CPS business with senior CPS management. They will not discuss individual cases.

Panel members are expected to attend meetings and any training, and to participate in discussions in a constructive manner as a “critical friend” to the CPS. Panel members are also expected to inform their communities of the work of the CPS. The Panels will meet three to four times a year with occasional extra training days. One of these meetings will bring together Panels from each of the three Areas. Meetings will take place during normal office hours. Reasonable travel expenses will be paid, and lunch and refreshments provided.

For more information and a nomination form, please contact:

Caroline Airs, Tel: 0191 260 4275 email caroline.air@cps.gsi.gov.uk Closing date for nominations: 30th April 2010.

NHS Direct

Elaine Jackson, Clinical Team Leader at NHS Direct and Outreach Worker for the Northeast Region is currently attending forums and groups in order to give the public an opportunity to better understand the services provided by NHS Direct.

One of the services is a confidential telephone advice line service - available 24 hours a day every day of the year.

When she attends groups she delivers a short presentation which explains what happens when you call the service, who you will speak to and what sort of questions you will be asked. They like people to interact and ask questions so it is quite informal. Also provided are free items such as pens, magnets and keyrings etc which have the contact details for NHS Direct, the telephone line and the website (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk).

Elaine is free 1 day per week to attend venues so if you would like to book a session please either email her at:- elaine.jackson@nhsdirect.nhs.uk or phone 0191 2381184.



RESOURCES FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Below is a number of new and recent resources to help members of governing bodies. Although some of these are intended specifically for charity trustees, they are nearly all applicable to all governing bodies regardless of whether they are or are not charities. All are free of charge as downloads.

Being a trustee, an Easy Read version of the Charity Commission's CC3 *The essential trustee*, was produced in partnership with Mencap for charity trustees who have a learning disability www.charitycommission.gov.uk/library/guidance/cc3_easy.pdf (PDF only).

Governing for children: A beginner's guide to governance in the children, young people and families' voluntary sector is intended for small organisations in these sectors. It includes a section on involving children and young people in governance. From Children England via tinyurl.com/d69lm3.

Faith in good governance, from the Charity Commission's faith and social cohesion unit, includes legal information, good practice and case studies specifically for charities established with a religious purpose whose main focus is religious worship and related activities. It is at <http://tinyurl.com/y8bxye4>.

Councillors' guide to a council's role as charity trustee, jointly published by the Local Government Association and the Charity Commission, summarises the responsibilities of a local authority where it is a corporate charity trustee. The guide is at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/council.pdf.

CC3 *The essential trustee* and CC10 *Hallmarks of an effective charity* were updated in February 2010 to include a new good practice recommendation for all charities on environmental responsibility and sustainability www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc3.asp, www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc10.asp.

Codes of conduct for trustees includes case studies and sample codes of conduct, which are intended to help governing body members work well together, avoid board problems and deal with them when they arise. From Charity Trustee Networks at www.trusteenet.org.uk/resources/2099.

Conflicts in your charity explains when the Charity Commission will and will not get involved in a dispute within a charity, and what the trustees can do on their own or with a mediator or other external assistance. Via tinyurl.com/yb2zotz.

Balancing risk: A guide for trustees and management in charities and social enterprises on making major decisions involving risk, produced by Triodos Bank and Sayer Vincent Auditors, provides a useful introduction to risk management in general, and in particular managing financial risk. Free via tinyurl.com/ydog9kg.

Source: Sandy Adirondack Legal Update, www.sandy-a.co.uk



Thriving Third Sector

The Cabinet Office has recently produced a user guide for the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, simply named **Thriving Third Sector**. The survey, conducted last year, is the primary source of data for our local area agreement target 'Thriving Third Sector' and the analysis of the responses provide a useful insight into the perceptions of registered charities on how they view a broad range of issues.

Our local target is measured by a single question within the survey: '**Taking everything into account, overall, how do the statutory bodies in your local area influence your organisation's success?**' (Q23). Interestingly, Redcar & Cleveland was in the top three highest response rates for the survey nationally. The guide is primarily for the use of local authorities and local strategic partnerships and provides ideas on how they can improve the environment for third sector organisations, but crucially, the analysis of the relationship between how organisations answered the indicator question (above) and how they answered other questions highlights important issues for the third sector about cross sector relationships.

Five Key Areas for improving relationships

The guide suggests that any action for improvement is best informed by a combination of the national analysis and local intelligence. Listed to the right is the analysis of other questions and their correlation to the indicator question in order of their strength. These are referred to in the guide as the Nine Key Drivers.

The guide goes on to outline five key areas for improving relationships based on the analysis of the data.

Key action area 1: **Strengthening partnership working**. This is clearly a necessity for any concerted approach, and relates to all nine key drivers.

Key action area 2: **Improving communication and influence**. This highlights in particular the top driver, whether respondents felt they could influence decisions affecting their organisation. In practice this is likely to be closely connected with consultation (the fifth strongest issue) and feeling valued (third strongest).

Key action area 3: **Bringing hidden contact alive**. This refers particularly to the second strongest issue – whether organisations felt they had any direct contact with public bodies.

Key action area 4: **Supporting the whole sector, especially smaller groups**. Support (of all kinds) was the fourth strongest issue, and may also relate to grants (seventh).

Key action area 5: **Improving the funding relationship and economic dimension**. Perhaps surprisingly, funding shows up below the other key drivers of the public sector–third sector relationship, but along with other financial issues it makes up the remaining three.

The national survey will be repeated during 2010.

Nine Key Drivers

- 1st **INFLUENCE** Ability to influence local decisions
- 2nd **CONTACT** Current direct dealings with any local statutory body
- 3rd **VALUED** Local statutory bodies value the work of your organisation
- 4th **SUPPORTED** Satisfaction with support available in your local area
- 5th **ACT ON OPINIONS AND CONSULTATION** Local statutory bodies act upon your organisation's opinions and/or responses to consultation
- 6th **RESPECT INDEPENDENCE** Local statutory bodies respect your organisation's independence
- 7th **GRANT AND CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS** Satisfaction with local statutory grant funding/contract bidding arrangements
- 8th **FUNDING STATUS** Local grant funding (several questions combined)
- 9th **FINANCIAL GUIDANCE** Help, advice and support provided when applying for grants or bidding for contracts



Being Realistic in tough times

Trustees are required to make a realistic assessment of their charity's solvency, whenever they issue accounts under the Sorp (Statement of Recommended Practice).

The Financial Reporting Council has recently issued detailed guidance on this topic, reminding boards of all their responsibilities. The Charity Commission has also suggested similar topics in less detail in their *Big Board Talk*. The guidance explains why this is a particular issue right now.

"The current economic outlook appears to be less depressed than this time last year. However; significant economic risks remain ... past experience shows that insolvencies have increased after the technical end of recessions as companies run out of working capital. Such conditions mean that the next 12 months are likely to be particularly difficult for directors, trustees and management."

So what sort of thing should trustees be thinking about, and how should they go about formally assessing whether or not their charity is a going concern? Trustees should consider:

- **Forecasts and budgets:** trustees should prepare a budget, trading or operating estimate, cashflow forecast or other equivalent analysis covering such periods as they consider appropriate. These should identify the significance of restricted funds.
- **Borrowing facilities:** trustees should consider documentation about borrowing to ensure that all critical terms and conditions are identified so that the risks to continued financing compliance can be assessed.
- **Medium and long-term plans:** trustees of larger organisations generally assess further periods beyond formal budgets and forecasts by way of medium or long-term plans that give an indication in general terms of how the organisation will fare.
- **Products, services, fundraising and markets:** trustees should assess whether services, products and fundraising propositions are compatible with their wider market projections in terms of market position, quality and expected life. For many this will require a good understanding of government policies and the related uncertainties, especially in an election year.
- **Timing of cashflows:** trustees should assess whether their financial plans indicate an adequate matching of projected cash inflows with projected cash outflows.
- **Contingent liabilities:** trustees should consider the charity's exposure to contingent liabilities, including clawbacks and pension payments.
- **Financial and operational risk management:** there are many types of financial and operational risks facing a charity and trustees should identify which risks are most significant to their charity. In related guidance for audit committees, the FRC point out that risks arise as organisations change their business models to manage the effects of a significant recession. Such changes often involve modifying the terms of trade, including arrangements with pension funds. Trustees need to understand the implications of these changes.
- **Sensitivity analysis and stress testing:** sensitivity analysis should be prepared to enable an understanding to be gained of the critical assumptions that underlie the budgets and forecasts, and if necessary trustees should stress-test the assumptions.

The guidance referred to above specifically relates to the going concern assessment made to support the (Sorp based) accounts, so it also reminds trustees that the assessment should be:

- made at the date that the trustees approve the accounts
- documented in sufficient detail to explain the basis of the trustees' conclusion
- adopted by the board

Source: Governance March 2010



DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The next VOICES FOR VOLUNTEERS forum meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th May 9.30 am to 12.00 noon. The venue will be in Redcar & Cleveland - to be advised when we have an idea of the interest. The topic for this months forum is **PRESS & PUBLICITY** and we have a senior editor from the Evening Gazette coming along to talk about "The Art of writing an eye catching story" in order to draw attention to the work of your organisation. There will also be an opportunity for a question and answer session. Details will be sent out to members of the Forum soon. For more information about our VOICES FOR VOLUNTEERS network please contact Trish 01642 440571 trish@rcvda.org.uk

'Fit' notes not sick notes

From **6 April 2010**, sick notes saying an employee is not fit for work will be replaced with computer-generated fit notes saying the person is either not fit for work, or "may be fit for work taking account of the following advice". A third option, certifying that the employee is fit for work, is not being included, because of widespread concern that GPs would not know enough about particular jobs to know whether the employee is fit to do them.

The purpose of the fit note is to facilitate a return to work, by listing options such as a phased return to work, changes in duties and/or hours, or workplace adaptations, and by encouraging discussion between the GP and employee and between the employee and employer. Proposals for a longer list of options, including an option that the employer refer to the employee to an occupational health consultant, have not been included in the final regulations.

Employers will need to carefully consider recommendations made by the GP, especially where the employee is or could be legally disabled under the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** and could therefore bring a claim against the employer for failure to make reasonable adjustments. Ultimately it is the employer in consultation with the employee who makes the decision about whether to follow the GP's advice. If a change or adaptation to enable the employee to return to work is not possible, the employee remains not fit for work until the end of the fit note period, or until a suitable change or adaptation is possible.

If a change or adaptation is agreed, it should be for a clear period and should be kept under review (not "until you feel able to do more" but "for three weeks [or whatever] and then we will review it").

During the first six months of a health condition, the maximum period for a fit note is three months. After the first six months, the fit note can be for "any clinically appropriate period".

The Department for Work and Pensions' guidance, *Statement of fitness for work: A guide for employers*, with a summary of the rules, case studies and frequently asked questions, is at www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/fitnote-employer-guide.pdf.

Guidance for employees is at www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/fit-note-employee-guide.pdf.

The **Social Security (Medical Evidence) and Statutory Sick Pay (Medical Evidence) Regulations 2010** are at www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi_20100137_en_1.

Equality Bill becomes law

The Equality Bill has passed all its parliamentary stages and been sent for Royal Assent in the pre-dissolution 'wash-up' of proposed legislation that would otherwise have been lost now that the general election has been called.

As the Equality Act 2010, its main provisions will come into force from October 2010.

The provisions of the Act are:

1. Introducing a new public sector duty to consider reducing socioeconomic inequalities (in force from April 2011)
2. Putting a new integrated Equality Duty on public bodies (in force from April 2011)
3. Using public procurement to improve equality
4. Banning age discrimination outside the workplace (in force from 2012)
5. Requiring gender pay and employment equality publishing
6. Extending the scope to use positive action
7. Strengthening the powers of employment tribunals
8. Protecting carers from discrimination
9. Clarifying the protection for breastfeeding mothers
10. Banning discrimination in private members' clubs
11. Strengthening protection from discrimination for disabled people
12. Protecting people from dual discrimination - direct discrimination because of a combination of two protected characteristics (in force from April 2011)

If employers have failed to meet the requirements of provision 5 (above) by 2013, it is expected that gender pay transparency regulations for the private and voluntary & community sectors will be introduced then.

Source: NAVCA



Public think small charities are least wasteful and closest to beneficiaries

Source: Third Sector, 12 April 2010

Size matters: Charities and reputation
(Respondents could select statement for more than one size of charity)

	Small Annual income under £1m	Medium Annual income £1m to £10m	Large Annual income over £10m
They are usually quite professional in their approach	24%	54%	62%
They are often wasteful in how they spend money	6%	17%	51%
They are generally trustworthy organisations	55%	47%	41%
They are good at understanding the needs of the people they exist to help	65%	44%	35%
They are usually friendly organisations	70%	39%	20%
They are usually a bit amateurish in their approach	45%	5%	2%

Base: 1,000 adults 16+, Britain Source: *Charity Awareness Monitor*, Nov 09, NFPsynergy

Survey finds larger charities are considered more professional but less careful with money

Large charities are seen as more wasteful and having a poorer understanding of their beneficiaries than small ones, according to a new poll. Research organisation nfpSynergy surveyed 1,000 people last November. Fifty-one per cent of those polled said the statement "they are often wasteful in how they spend money" applied to charities with annual incomes of more than £10m. Only 6 per cent said the statement was true for charities with incomes of less than £1m a year.

Sixty-five per cent of respondents said they believed small charities were good at understanding the needs of their beneficiaries; 35 per cent said the same of large charities.

Rebecca Molyneux, a researcher at nfpSynergy, said: "A small, local charity may be well placed to harness the goodwill of a loyal hardcore of donors, like some plucky voluntary David against the charitable Goliaths. "These figures could allow large and small charities to play to perceived reputational strengths and address or downplay apparent weaknesses."

Cath Lee, Chief Executive of the Small Charities Coalition, said the findings were confusing. She said she would expect people who thought large organisations were more professional would also think they were less wasteful.

"A charity doesn't need a swanky office to be professional," she said. "And most small charities don't have the time or money to address public perceptions of them."

Sixty-two per cent of respondents thought the chief executives of small charities were usually volunteers, but only 1 per cent thought this was true of chief executives of large charities. Sixty-five per cent said they thought large charities usually paid their chief executives about £100,000 per year.

Almost two-thirds, 62 per cent, said they were just as likely to trust small charities as large ones. And 34 per cent said they were more likely to trust small charities than large ones.

Almost a quarter of those polled, 23 per cent, said they would prefer to give money to a charity working in their nearest town.



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The information in the Interaction is published in good faith but RCVDA accepts no responsibility for any inaccuracy in the items.

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