



Annual Report

April 2007 - March 2008

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Background

*The core aim of the Unit is to **support and promote the development of the voluntary sector social services workforce** by working with and for service provider employers in the sector.*

The Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit is coming to the end of the first three years of Scottish Government funding and has been awarded funding to pursue its aim for a further three years. During 2007-8 the Unit has continued to be very active in its work with and on behalf of voluntary sector social services. We have appreciated the help of a supportive committee and host organisation and the participation of stakeholders in achieving our targets. The targets towards which we have worked during 2007-8 are:

- A well-informed voluntary social service sector, supported by the unit to optimise opportunities and resources in relation to development of the workforce
- An improved picture of the voluntary sector social service workforce
- A sector in which employers communicate and collaborate to develop the workforce
- A sector that feels represented at national level in relation to the development of the workforce

This report focuses on the achievements of the year in terms of these broad target areas. These targets are clearly linked with the original objectives set out for the unit, as identified in the 2007-8 workplan (Appendix 2). Appendix 1 sets out Executive Committee membership and staff composition.

1.0 A well-informed voluntary social service sector

Prompt, responsive and intelligent service

High quality info provided via several mediums. Info regularly updated...

[views from anonymous respondent's to the Workforce Unit's Review Questionnaire]

One of the Unit's key objectives is to gather, collate and disseminate relevant information on workforce matters and to issue updates and bulletins to employers. A variety of information is produced.

Key achievements include:

- Quarterly newsletter (4 this year, including a conference edition) with mailing list of 992
- E-bulletins (3 this year) to 984 people
- Newsflashes (21 this year, keeping the sector up-to-date with current information, policy and events) to 984 people
- Website (approximately 8,000 hits during the year, predominantly from Scotland and other parts of the UK; named by workshop delegates at SCA conference as one of the most useful UK social service websites)
- Summaries and Briefings on

- Safer recruitment
- CMDS (Core Minimum Dataset)
- E-learning
- Key Capabilities (now superseded by website)
- Skills for Scotland (currently draft)
- Guidance documents including:
 - Navigating the Funding Streams 3
 - Workforce Planning Toolkit, produced in 2006-7, but continuing to be used and disseminated
- Articles for publication – four Care Appointments articles, three of which were on our conference themes and which appeared in issues leading up to our conference in November 2007
 - The Importance of Recruitment
 - The FAQs of Registration
 - Retaining the Social Service Workforce you need and want
 - Scotland's voluntary sector social service workforce (draft; to be published in the next issue)

The Unit also continues to act as a central point of contact for enquiries from employers on workforce issues. We have answered far more enquiries than the ones that we have recorded in our enquiries folder. This is an area where evidence of outcome achievement could be improved.

2.0 An improved picture of the voluntary sector social services workforce

The Unit has worked closely with SSSC and the Scottish Government to improve the ability of the sector to gain accurate information about the workforce. Our Information and Policy Officer has been a member of the Government's Workforce Intelligence group and the Unit has actively promoted the use of CMDS (core minimum dataset) among employers. We have also developed a Memorandum of Understanding with SSSC, in its role as Sector Skills Council, as a way of optimising collaboration and the sharing of information. The Unit also collates all available workforce information and has recently produced a report on the state of the voluntary sector social service workforce. We do not have the resources within the unit to keep a completely up-to-date database of the voluntary sector, but we have sought to improve available knowledge through four pieces of research, as well as a small organisations project. These were:

- The Voluntary Sector Adult Residential Care Workforce in Urban and Rural Scotland (commissioned from GEN consulting)
- Voluntary Sector Social Service Organisations Staff Turnover (commissioned from GEN consulting)
- Small organisations month April 2007 – a report on 8 small voluntary organisations
- Scoping support networks for the sector (commissioned from Rock Solid; research in progress)
- An analysis of applicants for VSDF 2007 (Voluntary Sector Development Fund)

The Unit has also contributed significantly to a survey of the Care at Home workforce, collaborating with Scottish Care at Home on this project, and to Scottish Care's survey of the Adult Residential Care workforce.

3.0 A sector in which employers communicate and collaborate to develop the workforce

- *As usual, well spent time. Good to network and hear what's going on.*

(Event evaluation response, anon)

One of the Unit's most successful achievements during 2007 was our first national Conference: 'Workforce Development Matters' held at Stirling Management Centre on 8th November. This covered the themes of recruitment, registration and retention, and has received very positive reviews and evaluation from the 120+ delegates who attended. It was not only informative but also a great opportunity for formal group discussions and informal networking. The Unit's Workforce Development Network has continued to thrive, with quarterly meetings held in Aberdeen and either Glasgow or Edinburgh. A group of stakeholders has recently worked with Unit staff to develop student placement guidance for voluntary sector employers which will be available in the near future. The Unit has also worked with all of the Learning Networks in developing and promoting collaboration in the sector. 17 'Funding for Training' roadshows and events have been held to assist employers in optimising available funding. A small organisations month in April / May 2007 enabled a sample of organisations to communicate their views and concerns to us, and enabled us to find out about their workforce.

4.0 A sector that feels represented at national level in relation to development of the workforce

The Workforce Unit is well-placed to gain and represent the views of voluntary sector social service organisations, or to ensure that there is representation of their views at national level. Staff have been members of the Changing Lives Workforce Development group and the Workforce Intelligence and Recruitment and Retention sub-groups alongside other voluntary sector representatives. We have also participated in and ensured representation at SCQF groups, the SCVO Workforce Hub, the VSDF Advisory group and many other national groups and consultations. A full list of Unit representation is included in the Workplan (Appendix 2).

5.0 Looking Forward

As the Unit enters its fourth year a new strategy has been developed which is more outcome focused, whilst continuing to emphasise the areas of work that have proved most helpful to the sector. Some specific areas of future work were identified in the Unit's Review, presented to the Scottish Government as evidence for future funding. These include:

- Increase the Unit's role in relation to research and data collection to improve knowledge and understanding of the sector
- Expand the dissemination of examples of good practice in relation to workforce development, recruitment and retention, workforce planning, creative uses of funding.
- Improve support in relation to the workforce development aspects of:
 - commissioning, contracting and tendering
 - supervision, mentoring and leadership
 - credit rating in-house training, and producing customised awards
 - recruitment and retention
- Increase the amount of partnership and collaborative work of the Unit.

Four revised outcomes have been identified for future work. These are:

- Improve the ability of voluntary sector social services employers to engage with the national workforce development agenda
- Work collaboratively to improve the knowledge and picture we have of the voluntary sector social services workforce
- Add value to the national workforce development agenda through optimising the Unit's role in supporting specific voluntary sector contributions
- Improve the contribution made by voluntary sector social services organisations to the national agenda, through an advocacy and representation role

The Unit goes forward with a new Director and Information and Communications Officer, a revision of roles giving the Development and Policy Officer a more distinctive development role, a reviewed strategy and, very importantly, three years funding to enable sound planning based upon reliable resources. In a changing political landscape where the voluntary sector continues to be valued but often insufficiently resourced and informed, the need for the Unit is greater than ever.

Appendix I
Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit Executive Committee
Members and staff (as at 01/03/06)

Executive Committee

Cathy Fallon (Loretto Housing) –Chair
Celia Carson (SCVO)
Annie Gunner (CCPS)
Nigel Henderson (Penumbra)
Christine McGarvey (representing ARC Association for Real Change)
Donald Mackinnon (Key Housing)
David McLean (Alpha Project) – retired December 2007
Sandy Mathers (AVSTN – Aberdeen Voluntary Sector Training Network)
Billy Renfrew (Scottish Executive)
Niall Smith (Caithness Voluntary Group)
Addie Stevenson (Aberlour)
Edith Wellwood (SSSC)

Staff members

Janet Miller (Director)
Neil Macleod (Information Officer)
Caroline Sturgeon (Development Officer)
Laura Connelly (Administrative Assistant)

Appendix 2 – Workplan 2007-8

Appendix 3 – Workforce News Issue, Workforce Unit Ebulletin Issue and Newflash

Appendix 5 – Summary Workforce Unit Budget and Expenditure to 31 March 2008