



Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit

Strategy 2008-2011

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Introduction

Since 2005 the Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit has worked to achieve its aim of promoting and supporting employers in the learning and development of their workforce. This has taken place within a changing political and policy context which now requires a re-examination of our vision.

The Scottish Government's approach has changed to a focus on the single purpose of creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through sustainable economic growth. Underpinning this purpose are five strategic objectives – to make Scotland wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger, and greener. These are in turn supported by fifteen national outcomes which describe in more detail what the Government wants to achieve over a ten year period. Whilst none of the national outcomes specifically mentions social services, the Scottish Government identify ten of them as requiring the contribution of a competent, confident and valued social services workforce for delivery.

There is a radical new relationship between central and local government, set out in the concordat between Scottish Government and CoSLA and the single outcome agreements with individual local authorities. Centralist allocation of ring-fenced funding has gone, replaced by these single outcome agreements. Community Planning partnerships are intended to have a key role in both the drafting and delivery of the single outcome agreements. It is as yet too early to be sure about the impact of these new arrangements on social services generally, and on the social services workforce in particular.

There is a renewed emphasis on the importance of the voluntary sector in supporting public service reform and the gathering momentum of the public procurement agenda.

The Government's skills strategy, Skills for Scotland, establishes the priorities for training skills and qualifications levels within both the existing and future workforce in Scotland. Our sector skills agency, Skills for Care and Development, has produced a report setting out the key findings and agreed solutions to the skills gaps identified in the sector in Scotland as a result of the Sector Skills Agreement process.

The review of social work services in Scotland, 'Changing Lives' has resulted in five Change Programmes, underpinned by a research and development strategy. The key aspiration of Changing Lives is to improve outcomes for individuals and communities through:

- building the capacity to deliver personalised services

and

- developing a confident, competent and valued workforce.

The National Strategy for the Development of the Social Services Workforce, published in 2005, is still current, being part way through the five year implementation plan.

Throughout these national strategic programmes there is a high emphasis placed on collaborative and partnership working across national, regional, local and sectoral boundaries.

Our three year strategy and annual work plans will set out how we can contribute to the delivery of a competent, confident and valued voluntary sector social services workforce within the current and emerging political and sectoral landscapes.

Our renewed vision has two essential elements:

- To enable the voluntary sector to collaborate in the promotion and implementation of learning and development for induction, registration, CPD, PRTL (Post-registration Training and Learning) and lifelong learning
- To assist voluntary sector employers to participate in the wider workforce development agenda, for example through Learning Networks, our Memorandum of Understanding with the SSSC, Changing Lives Work Groups and IRISS, the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services .

In the review of the Workforce Unit which took place during 2007, the achievements of the Unit were recognised, whilst emphasising that in the future a more outcome-based strategy is required, with some way of assessing the extent to which outcomes have been achieved. The following strategy translates our vision into four outcomes and indicates the products, indicators and timescales for the achievement of outcomes.

Outcome	Product	Indicators	Outcome Evaluation	Date
<p>1. Improve the ability of voluntary sector social services employers to engage with the national workforce development agenda</p>	<p>Information: Quarterly Newsletter; E-bulletins – at least 4 a year Regular newsflashes, usually weekly Policy summaries; briefings; context papers; journal articles; contributions to the voluntary sector literature</p> <p>Events: Roadshows; workshops; network events; seminars; CPD opportunities; annual conference</p>	<p>Employers feel better informed and are engaging more knowledgeably and confidently with the national workforce development agenda.</p>	<p>Impact of information assessed via six monthly telephone questionnaire to a sample of stakeholders, including a significant number of representatives of SMEs</p> <p>Mailing list has increased by at least 10% annually</p> <p>Impact of Events assessed through analysis of evaluation forms completed after each event</p>	<p>Annually in March</p> <p>Following events; also report produced for quarterly Executive Committee meetings Consultations and input as required</p>

	<p>Communications: Request and support: contributions to consultations and participation in national working groups; optimise links with providers and training fora</p> <p>SME Strategy: A strategy is implemented to ensure that small organisations are able to engage with the national workforce agenda</p>	<p>Employers in small organisations feel involved and knowledgeable</p>	<p>The number and quality of responses to consultations has improved; the voluntary sector is represented on national, regional and local groups who are better informed because of the work of the workforce unit</p> <p>The number of small organisations served by the unit increases by at least 10% per annum and they express satisfaction with the Unit's contribution in telephone questionnaire responses</p>	<p>SME strategy reviewed annually</p>
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<p>2. Work collaboratively to improve the knowledge and picture we have of the voluntary sector social services workforce</p>	<p>Participate in Scottish Government Workforce Information Group</p> <p>Work collaboratively within research strategy developed for 'Changing Lives' to provide pictures of different parts of the voluntary sector workforce, via MoUs and collaborative agreements e.g with SSSC, Scottish Care and Scottish Care at Home</p> <p>Produce an annual briefing on the state of the voluntary sector social services workforce in Scotland</p>	<p>Workforce Unit staff are working in collaboration with other relevant bodies and as a result there is an improving picture of the voluntary sector social services workforce in the context of the whole social service workforce</p>	<p>Feedback is sought via short e-questionnaire to the relevant groups, on the value of the contribution made by the Workforce Unit.</p> <p>Research products and annual briefing provide improved picture of the workforce.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Review research strategy and programme annually</p> <p>Research reports as completed; annual briefing</p>
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<p>3. Add value to the national workforce development agenda through optimising the Unit's role in supporting specific voluntary sector contributions</p>	<p>Collect and disseminate examples of voluntary sector workforce development practice that meet national outcomes – this could be done partly via the Learning Networks web-based project</p> <p>Produce an evolving Compendium of Workforce Development topics that are requested by voluntary sector employers to include e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an introduction to workforce development; - guidance on developing policies e.g. learning and development policy; student placement policy etc. - qualifications guidance - involving service users and carers in staff 	<p>The distinct value of the voluntary sector is recognised, acknowledged and shared in terms of: innovative approaches to learning and development; policy guidance; inclusion of service users and carers etc</p>	<p>Include questions about usefulness of web-based resources and Workforce Development Compendium in six monthly telephone questionnaire</p>	<p>Six monthly questionnaire</p> <p>Compendium on-going; at least one new section quarterly</p>
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	<p>learning and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workforce development practice examples that are of particular relevance to the voluntary sector <p>Work collaboratively with Learning Networks to engage the voluntary sector fully in their outcomes</p> <p>Work with other voluntary sector bodies, nationally and internationally to promote the needs and contribution of voluntary sector social services e.g. SCVO Workforce Hub; ACOSVO; CVSs; attend relevant conferences and events that promote this</p>	<p>Voluntary sector employers are enabled by the Workforce Unit to optimise their participation in Learning Networks</p> <p>Employers are enabled to place their work in a national and international voluntary sector context</p>	<p>Unit staff advocate for voluntary sector at Boards and Workforce groups of Learning Networks; Learning Network services and events are publicised by the Unit; employers' views sought via six monthly questionnaire</p> <p>Questions incorporated into 6 monthly questionnaire; events etc. attended by Unit staff and their outcomes are documented</p>	<p>Six monthly review</p> <p>Attend events as required; six monthly questionnaire</p>
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	Engage with voluntary sector Chief Executives and Leaders to learn about and promote the specific strategic workforce development needs of voluntary sector social services	Voluntary sector Chief Executives and leaders have had the opportunity to discuss their workforce issues with the Unit and have a view about how these may be taken forward constructively	Unit staff meet with at least 3 Chief Executives or equivalent every month; document and assess outcomes of these meetings.	Ongoing and annual report on progress to Executive Committee
4. Improve the contribution made by voluntary sector social services organisations to the national agenda, through an advocacy and representation role	<p>Represent and advocate for voluntary sector social service interests on the following groups and/or ensure that there is positive voluntary sector representation and advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing Lives Workforce Group - Workforce Intelligence Group - Recruitment and Retention Group - Learning Network Boards and Committees 	Employers feel that issues they raise are represented at the appropriate national fora and that they have feedback about the outcomes	A quarterly bulletin is provided of advocacy and representation by the Unit and its representatives. The outcomes achieved, in progress or outstanding are documented.	Quarterly bulletin

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- VSDF and other funding fora- SCVO Workforce Hub- SSSA Voluntary Sector Forum- SIESWE Change Academy- Via MoU with SSSC <p>Provide feedback to stakeholders about these groups, the issues tackled, the actions taken, and the implications for the voluntary sector.</p>			
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