

National Skills Strategy for the Voluntary Sector

Key points summary

The voluntary sector, like any other sector, needs a skilled workforce in order to thrive and provide quality services, particularly in the face of rising demands about what it can and should deliver. A National Skills Strategy for the Voluntary Sector is a crucial tool for supporting a skilled workforce.

Vision

For the voluntary sector to have:

- training based on good evidence of skills needs
- good quality programmes linked to standards where possible
- user-led methods of learning that are flexible and affordable
- funding for skills development included in the core costs of service contracts
- access to creative partnerships between organisations to help resources go further.

For providers of skills programmes to:

- work together to pool learning and expertise
- make use of good intelligence on workforce needs and best practice standards
- co-ordinate effective flexible delivery mechanisms in partnership with other organisations

Skills priorities 2011 to 2014

We have identified four priority areas that require investment and skills development so that charities and social enterprises can meet the challenges and demands of the sector in the next three years. The four priority areas are:

- governance and leadership
- skills for business
- managing volunteers
- measuring effectiveness and impact

Delivery principles

Learning programmes should be:

- planned on the basis of labour market intelligence
- linked to best practice and quality standards
- user-led, flexible and affordable
- aimed at building the capacity of the sector in key strategic areas.

Top 20 Skills gaps in the four priority areas, by size of organisation (%)¹

Skills	Micro	Small	Medium/ Large	All
Governance and leadership				
Strategic use of IT	26	30	23	27
Strategic planning and forward thinking	23	24	25	23
Leadership	18	22	27	20
HR/personnel	15	19	17	16
Managing paid staff	14	16	19	16
Skills for business				
Fundraising	26	26	19	25
Marketing	22	22	18	22
Communications	19	22	26	21
Negotiation and influencing	17	21	20	19
Finance	20	18	13	18
Project management	4	17	17	15
Working in partnership with other orgs	14	16	14	19
Procurement/contract management	11	14	11	12
Managing volunteers				
Volunteer management	15	13	10	14
Measuring effectiveness and impact				
Monitoring and evaluation	17	23	19	14

¹ UK Workforce Hub Skills Survey 2007 of charities, community and voluntary groups