



A Framework for a
Voluntary Sector
National Skills Strategy
2011 - 2014

Consultation Paper

1. Why do we need a national skills strategy for the voluntary sector?

People who work, paid and unpaid, in charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations make a huge contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of communities. To help the sector meet the challenges of the coming period, the government's Office for Civil Society has pledged support for the role of the sector in delivering the Big Society by:

- making it easier to run a charity, social enterprise or voluntary organisation
- getting more resources into the sector: strengthening its independence and resilience
- making it easier for sector organisations to work with the state.

To respond positively to these new opportunities, the voluntary sector will need to attract and retain volunteers and staff and equip them with the right skills for the task. Changes in government policy and practice will mean new demands on the capacity of staff and volunteers. Voluntary sector organisations need staff and volunteers with the right skills, in the right numbers to make a difference to the people and communities they serve.

Employers, funders and staff all invest time and money in skills development. As public spending gets tighter, we need to make sure that whatever funds are devoted to building skills are properly targeted, that delivery is planned on the basis of good information, linked to wider quality systems where appropriate, and evaluated openly so that we all can see measurable evidence of the difference that skills make to the capacity of charities and social enterprises.

Skills - Third Sector is the strategic body for skills development in charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations. We hold valuable research, known as labour market intelligence, which gives us the evidence of the development needs of staff, volunteers and trustees. Based on our knowledge, and from discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, we are setting out a strategic framework for consultation to deliver the skills priorities that we believe will create the greatest positive impact on the sector's capacity.

2. 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 large and small 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

A national strategy will draw together the skills and knowledge of training providers, Skills - Third Sector and sector leaders to work together in planning and delivery to avoid duplication, and free up more to spend on delivering learning. It would also mobilise new channels of learning and support for learning via networking and information technology, which would give learners better access to good quality provision.

The framework for the skills strategy is based on the principle of 'smart investment' in 'supportive architecture' called for in a recent voluntary sector joint manifesto.¹

3. The case for skills

For information about the context that the sector will be operating in during the next three years, see *The voluntary sector skills landscape: Why the voluntary sector needs skilled people and the challenges of the next three years*, available from www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk

Our economic recovery and long-term prosperity requires people who are not only highly skilled but who have the right skills, appropriate to the changing economy. Skilled people are the building blocks of successful businesses, especially businesses built on sophisticated services or complex processes.² A one percent point increase in training is associated with an increase of productivity which is worth around £6 billion a year to the UK economy.³

Around three in ten voluntary sector employers (29%) said that they had staff who they considered didn't have the right skills to do their jobs well.⁴ Recent research shows that 24% of people who manage volunteers identify skills gaps in their volunteers, who are a vital part of the voluntary sector's workforce.⁵

4. Skills in tough times

During tough economic times organisations tend to cut back on external training costs, irrespective of sector.⁶

- Despite increased demand for their services, only 16% of voluntary organisations have increased their training and development budget over the past 12 months, while 39% have reduced their training budget.
- Over half (51%) of voluntary organisations expect their training and development budget to decrease over the coming 12 months, while only 9% of organisations expect to increase their training budget.⁷

¹ The Time is Now: a manifesto for the Community Alliance, Social Enterprise Coalition and ACEVO

² Skills for Growth: The national skills strategy, Business Investment and Skills, 2009

³ Skills for Growth: The national skills strategy, Business Investment and Skills, 2009

⁴ UK Workforce Hub Voluntary Sector Skills Survey 2007

⁵ Valuing Volunteer Management: A report of a study into volunteer management and skills commissioned by Skills - Third Sector from the Institute of Volunteering Research (IVR) 2010 (forthcoming)

⁶ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development *Learning and Talent Development Annual Survey Report 2010*

⁷ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development *Learning and Talent Development Annual Survey Report 2010*

We also know that many all organisations, including voluntary sector organisations, are responding to cuts in budgets by finding ways of training staff in-house.

- The most popular forms of training are in-house development programmes (56%), coaching by line managers (51%), and on-the-job training (30%).
- Coaching takes place in eight out of ten (82%) organisations but only 36% of organisations have a system to evaluate their coaching.
- Learning and Training departments are reducing their reliance on external suppliers, moving towards in-house provision and making more redundancies.⁸

5. Priority skills areas

Based on labour market intelligence we have identified four priority areas that require investment and skills development so that charities and social enterprises can meet the challenges facing the sector in the next three years. The four priority areas are:

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

See Appendix section 3 for the background information on these priority areas.

6. Supporting delivery on the skills priority areas

During the consultation we want to map who is developing expertise in these four priority areas. We want to talk to organisations both large and small. We want to look at formal and informal learning. What have we learned from development programmes so far? How can we work together so that learners have access to flexible, local learning? How can we develop capacity and skills within the sector? Where are the good examples of coaching, mentoring and other forms of skills sharing?

We want to ensure that knowledge developed through learning programmes is made widely accessible. So we will use the consultation to analyse how we can provide ways for voluntary organisations to share good practice. We will also explore how we can support methods of monitoring and evaluating work-based learning, linked to the best available knowledge and standards, so we know what is working well.

During the consultation we want to find out:

- Your experience of addressing the priorities we have identified.
- Your views on the pros and cons of the vision and delivery principles we are setting out.
- Where are the examples of good practice in learning, both accredited and informal.
- What needs to change for the sector to have cost-effective, user-led skills development.

⁸ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development *Learning and Talent Development Annual Survey Report 2010*

7. Why you should get involved

A National Skills Strategy for the Voluntary Sector has to be built on what the people who work, manage and volunteer in charities and social enterprises really need. We want to hear from the **staff, volunteers** and **trustees** of voluntary sector organisations so that we can:

- Take your recommendations for supporting voluntary sector skills back to government.
- Present your views to the organisations that fund training programmes for our sector.
- Take your views to the training providers who build the skills in our sector.
- Shape our future plans for supporting skills based on what you tell us you need.
- Share experience and expertise in peer learning and collaborative approaches to skills.

We want to make sure that the recommendations in this paper and that come out of the consultation are practical and deliverable, so we need input from **funders, training providers** and **policymakers** too. We will be actively engaging them in this consultation.

8. The consultation process

The consultation will be Compact compliant and run from July to October 2010. To include:

- An online consultation open to everyone at www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/research_policy/skills_strategy_consultation
- A series of nine regional roundtable events by invitation or application only. Email round.table@skills-thirdsector.org.uk to apply.
- A series of discussions and meetings with key stakeholders and policymakers.

Full details of the consultation are at www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk

9. At the end of the consultation

We will produce a national skills strategy that makes recommendations to key stakeholders about how we will work together to support developing and delivering skills in the priority areas, based on evidence about what is working well for the sector. The stakeholders are:

- National and regional government bodies and departments with responsibility for supporting and investing in a thriving voluntary sector.
- Organisations that invest in and fund voluntary sector organisations.
- Organisations that provide training for voluntary sector organisations.
- The infrastructure organisations that provide advice and support to frontline and community-based organisations.
- Voluntary sector organisations.

10. Conclusion

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 represents the foresight needed to bring about the kind of workforce required for a professional and thriving sector and is a crucial tool for supporting a skilled workforce.

*"We aren't very good at acknowledging and valuing the skills we are developing, and translating that into language that a future employer might recognise."*⁹

Be a part of it. Make your views count. Join the consultation. www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk

⁹ Participant at the Guardian / Skills - Third Sector roundtable debate published April 2010 at www.guardianpublic.co.uk/third-sector-roundtable - full details of participants available from the link

Appendix

1. Context: Skills and the voluntary sector

What do we mean by skills?

When we talk about skills we mean the practical abilities and knowledge that people need to do their jobs well and make a difference to people and their communities.

What do we mean by the voluntary sector?

When we refer to voluntary sector organisations we mean charities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international NGOs, voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises, community interest companies and co-operatives. And we mean organisations both large and small working internationally, nationally, regionally and/or locally. These organisations are driven by values that benefit people and their communities. They principally reinvest any surpluses to further their social, environmental, welfare or cultural objectives.

Skills - Third Sector strives to support organisations that are not for profit and who are in need of real skills enhancement - overwhelmingly these are voluntary and community sector and not for profit enterprises of all sorts. These are the organisations that are included in our vision and purpose and so are included in this strategy.

Number of voluntary sector organisations

- In 2007/08 there were 171,000 general charities in England.¹⁰
- There are 35,590 social enterprises employing 238,940 staff¹¹
- NCVO estimate there were 600,000 informal community organisations in the UK in 2007/08.¹²

Value of the voluntary sector

- The total income of general charities in the UK was £33 billion in 2006/07, a 40% (£9 billion) increase since 2000/01.¹³
- The other voluntary sector organisations that are not registered charities had an income of £46 million in 2007. ¹⁴

¹⁰ UK Civil Society Almanac 2009, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

¹¹ UK Civil Society Almanac 2010, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

¹² UK Civil Society Almanac 2009, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

¹³ UK Civil Society Almanac 2009, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

¹⁴ UK Civil Society Almanac 2010, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Who works in the voluntary sector?

The voluntary sector's workforce is made up of both paid staff and people who volunteer their time. Based on a total UK workforce of 29.5 million (as of the end of 2009), the voluntary sector workforce including social enterprises accounts for 2.9% of all employees - about one in every 35 employees¹⁵ and there are an estimated 14 million plus volunteers and trustees.¹⁶

Volunteers are central to the voluntary sector, 78% of charities are staffed entirely by volunteers. The voluntary sector also has a higher proportion of part-time workers (one in four) than other sectors. It employs more women (68%) than the public and private sectors and has many more disabled people (one in five) than either the public or private sectors.¹⁷

Between 1999 and 2008 the voluntary sector workforce increased by 124,000 employees. In comparison, the public and private sectors' workforces increased by 1.3 million and 1 million employees respectively. As a percentage, the voluntary sector has experienced a higher rate of increase (23%) than the private sector (7%) and the public sector (18%).¹⁸

There are strong indications that there will be increasing demands on the services provided by voluntary sector organisations despite the recession.

Research into the voluntary sector's workforce

Skills – Third Sector is the national reference point for research on the voluntary sector and its workforce, known as labour market intelligence. We commission voluntary sector partners and academic institutions to research the skills trends and priorities for voluntary sector organisations. We also pull together, in partnership with researchers, data collected by other organisations that tells us more about the voluntary sector workforce and its development needs.

We work with other organisations to ensure that this labour market intelligence is understood and used in their work plans. And we are making the labour market intelligence we hold more widely available so that skills initiatives can be effectively planned and targeted.

We believe that skills development and training programmes should be planned and delivered after looking at the labour market intelligence so that they are based on what the sector needs.

New standards for the sector

National Occupational Standards have been developed to cover most jobs in all sectors of the economy. They represent a broad consensus developed and agreed by employers on the skills standards that someone in a particular role should have to be able to do their job competently.

"The National Occupational Standards for Volunteer Management is my bible. They are a really useful tool and its very useful for me to take them to the Chief Executive and to the trustees and say: 'these are the national standards and this is the way we should be working'." Female manager of volunteers for 18 months¹⁹

¹⁵ UK Civil Society Almanac 2010, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

¹⁶ Workforce chapter, UK Civil Society Almanac 2010, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

¹⁷ Workforce chapter, UK Civil Society Almanac 2010, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

¹⁸ Workforce chapter, UK Civil Society Almanac 2010, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

¹⁹ Valuing Volunteer Management: A report of a study into volunteer management and skills commissioned by Skills - Third Sector from the Institute of Volunteering Research (IVR) 2010 (forthcoming)

Skills - Third Sector has worked with voluntary sector employers, trustees and volunteers to produce standards for jobs that are found predominantly, but not exclusively, in voluntary sector organisations. These are Fundraising, Volunteer Management, Development Work, Campaigning and Trusteeship and we are developing standards for monitoring and evaluation. Sector Skills Councils have developed standards for other roles in voluntary organisations such as Community Work and Social Business and Enterprise.

Standards can be used in recruiting and appraising staff, and to develop formal qualifications. We are working closely with other skills bodies to integrate our standards into their qualifications so that training for these critical voluntary sector roles becomes more widely available.

Now we have specific standards for the sector, we want to see them used more widely in learning and as a basis for quality delivery - both those that we've developed and those developed by Sector Skills Councils and their employers.

Changes to qualifications

The way that formal qualifications are planned and delivered is changing as a result of the UK vocational reform programme, known as the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), is implemented. This should be good news for the sector and for the staff, volunteers and apprentices who want to gain a qualification. It will provide the means by which organisations and people can put together training packages that are tailored to their individual needs by picking small 'units' of training that are accredited. It is possible to tailor training to someone's particular role in an organisation. For example, someone who does youth work and fundraising in an organisation can follow training paths that build the number of accredited units in both those areas, rather than following two separate pre-described courses. This should go a long way to meeting the demand from the voluntary sector for good quality, flexible, accredited training.

Skills – Third Sector works closely with other skills bodies to integrate our new standards into their qualifications. This means that training for these critical roles will become more widely available.

We are aware of the challenges to training providers of delivering flexible, affordable learning. It is important that the sector and training providers work together to find solutions that meet the needs of learners and the charities and social enterprises in which they work and volunteer.

How are skills developed?

Skills are developed in a range of ways including formal training courses and informal exchanges. The sector is also a significant provider of learning and consumer of its own learning provision, which is often more affordable than other training and gives organisations good networking opportunities.²⁰ Other organisations that provide training to not for profit organisations include colleges, universities and private organisations.

Volunteering also plays a very important part in building skills in the sector – both for volunteers and for staff through schemes such as employer supported volunteering.

Just under three quarters of voluntary sector organisations have training policies and assess the needs of their staff and almost two thirds have training budgets for staff and volunteers. However, the majority of this is spent on short courses which often have no external quality standards or

²⁰ UK Workforce Hub Skills Survey 2007 of charities, community and voluntary groups

certification for learners. And one-third of employers said that they couldn't find suitable internal or external training to support the skills gaps in their organisation.²¹

Charities and social enterprises need flexible, locally-based skills learning and development that can be accredited. Training providers need to offer different learning models and make better use of e-learning to deliver flexible, affordable training.

How are skills funded?

The vast majority of funding for informal skills development comes from the core budgets of organisations, supported by wider development programmes from national funding and umbrella organisations.

The responsibility for planning and funding formal learning for anyone not learning in a university is currently shared across three organisations.

- The Young People's Learning Agency funds learning for people aged 16 to 19.
- The Skills Funding Agency funds learning for people over 19.
- The National Apprenticeship Service funds apprenticeships for people aged 16 to 25.

Most trusts and grants only fund work that directly benefits people and their communities or supports activities such as the arts and animal welfare. There are a few that recognise the value of investing in developing skills for staff, volunteers and trustees, some of which are listed at www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk. We want more funders to recognise the value of a skilled workforce and the benefits of funding the core costs of developing skills, alongside funding frontline projects and delivering services. This is a key part of the vision we are setting out.

"Our skills about understanding the full costs of what we are doing when it comes to delivering public services is the problem – and that is where some of our under-investment in developing people lies." ²²

2. Our 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.

Here we set out examples of delivery frameworks based on principles of flexible, accredited, user-led training based on what the sector wants. They are at different stages of development. One model is in development, one is being delivered now.

During the consultation we are looking for more examples of delivery of learning based on these principles and ideas for how we could work in partnership to extend their impact.

²¹ UK Workforce Hub Skills Survey 2007 of charities, community and voluntary groups

²² Participant at the Guardian / Skills - Third Sector roundtable debate published April 2010 at www.guardianpublic.co.uk/third-sector-roundtable - full details of participants available from the link

Skills for business

In development: A partnership of skills standards, an awarding body and delivery partner

Skills - Third Sector, SFEDI Awards and The Social Investment Business are developing a model for delivering business skills to both frontline and infrastructure organisations.

The partners

The business skills delivery model we are developing relies on an awarding organisation and a delivery partner coming together within a national strategy and context.

Skills - Third Sector is leading on the national skills strategy and holds the labour market intelligence on what skills the sector needs. We have also developed the national standards for fundraisers.

SFEDI Awards is the awarding organisation for enterprise. It develops and provides qualifications that are designed to enable both those who wish to start and grow their own business and the business support professionals who work with them. Its qualifications are developed from the work undertaken by SFEDI Ltd (UK Sector Skills Body for Enterprise).

The Social Investment Business provides a combination of investment finance and business support to help voluntary sector organisations to grow and develop. It is a SFEDI Centre of Excellence for Business Support, providing assessment against SFEDI Awards' qualifications and delivering business skills programmes.

Using labour market intelligence and national standards

As well as providing the national framework and fundraising standards, Skills - Third Sector can contextualise the national business enterprise standards that SFEDI Ltd has so that they are directly relevant to voluntary sector organisations.

Accreditation

Through a qualifications-based approach, it will be possible to accredit both frontline practitioners and business support staff/advisors. SFEDI Awards has already established a national system of accreditation for business advisors based on National Occupational Standards. Moreover, the partnership structure will mean that we are able to draw on SFEDI Awards status as an awarding organisation to offer nationally recognised qualifications as the foundation for accreditation.

Flexible delivery models

Skills - Third Sector, SFEDI Awards and The Social Investment Business are considering two possible models for how business skills could be delivered through our particular partnership. SFEDI Awards, SFEDI Ltd and Skills – Third Sector, as the awarding body and holders of national skills standards, are essential ingredients of a national model. As part of its role as a practical delivery agent, The Social Investment Business is in a position to lead on the national roll-out of the way that business skills are delivered, developing effective partnerships of training providers based on franchising, licensing or some other form of affiliation.

This national skills strategy consultation process will feed into how we formulate our plans and define the detail of a model for delivering accredited, standards-based business skills.

Managing volunteers

Being delivered: Capacitybuilders volunteer management programme

Capacitybuilders' Volunteer Management Programme uses National Occupational Standards to define a programme of training for people who manage volunteers that is delivered locally and which learners can choose to accredit. The organisations that deliver the skills packages (units of training) within the Volunteer Management Programme all have a proven record of effectively delivering training based on National Occupational Standards and demonstrating the difference that standards-based training makes.

The partners

Capacitybuilders developed the Volunteer Management Programme and provide bursaries to fund learners. Skills – Third Sector worked with a wide range of employers, trustees and volunteers with extensive experience in volunteer management to develop the National Occupational Standards for volunteer managers.

Capacitybuilders invited organisations to tender for delivering skills packages within the Volunteer Management Programme and Skills – Third Sector won one of the contracts. We have now commissioned five training providers to deliver skills packages across the south and east of England. Three other contract holders are working with approved training providers to deliver standards-based skills packages in other regions.

Using labour market intelligence and national standards

The Capacitybuilders Volunteer Management Programme was a response to the recommendations set out in the 2008 Commission on the Future of Volunteering.

For Capacitybuilders it was essential that the Volunteer Management Programme was based on National Occupational Standards as they felt this was the best way of making sure that the learning was relevant to the people who manage volunteers. Using National Occupational Standards means that skills development packages are focused and appropriate to the things that learners need to know as a volunteer manager.

Accreditation

The particular skills package Skills – Third Sector is delivering within the Volunteer Management Programme is a level 3 (equivalent to A levels) Award in Volunteer Management. We worked with the awarding bodies Lantra and the Institute of Leadership and Management to develop the Award in Volunteer Management.

Flexible delivery models

Learners have a choice of skills packages they can follow within the Volunteer Management Programme. Skills packages are then delivered by approved regional partners, meaning that learners should be able to find someone close to where they live or work to provide the training.

3. 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

Governance and leadership

As the debate continues about the role and expansion of civil society, of which voluntary sector organisations are a key part, the importance of good governance and the skills to underpin it are critical to the future success of the Big Society programme. New forms of organisation and partnership working make significant demands on governance, which need to evolve in response to these demands. Recent examples include the Health Trusts and Leisure Trusts which previously had public sector governance structures and are now reformed under social enterprise models that require their leaders and governors to develop new skills in collaborative and participatory working.

Specific skills are needed for people to work in strategic partnerships if they are to achieve the best outcomes and make a difference to people and their communities. These include strategic planning and leaderships skills that emphasise people working together to govern.

“There is very little career development for people who aspire to be leaders – who are already demonstrating that they have potential for leadership.”²³

Evidence shows the following:

- There are changes to the ways in which charities work in partnership and to the governance structures of organisations, due to factors such as mergers and funding contingent on partnership working.²⁴
- One in ten voluntary organisations said that they had difficulties in filling trustee vacancies.²⁵
- In the voluntary and community sector, the four main skills gaps are in **performance management** (84%); **people management** (79%); **coaching and mentoring** (72%) and managing change. Three of these reported gaps are larger in comparison with the public and private sector (those in bold).²⁶

²³ Participant at the Guardian / Skills - Third Sector roundtable debate published April 2010 at www.guardianpublic.co.uk/third-sector-roundtable - full details of participants available from the link

²⁴ National Council of Voluntary Organisations *Charity Forecast* Quarter 1 2010

²⁵ Workforce chapter, UK Civil Society Almanac 2010, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

²⁶ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development *Learning and Talent Development* Annual Survey Report 2010

Our recommendation is for:

- A skills development model, based on our key delivery principles, that will align skills to the principles for good governance in the Code of Governance of Voluntary Organisations, and linked to our Trustee standards where appropriate.
- An integrated system of qualifications for leadership and management delivered across the sectors where a smart unit on skills for governance is an option open to all.

Skills for business

Charities and social enterprises are expected to be more entrepreneurial, develop new ways of capitalising their organisations and set up new organisational and legal models which expand the range of the sector. There is also a proliferation of mergers and consortia arrangements which require even the smallest members of a consortium to understand the finance skills and systems of larger organisations.

The National Third Sector Commissioning programme, delivered by a partnership of national organisations, is in its final year and the evaluation of its impact provide useful lessons. Recommendations from that programme will feed into the national skills strategy.

"We should be arguing the point that by buying this service it will save you 'x' amount of money, but it will also deliver a better service and that is why we are better. And that is one of our biggest challenges."²⁷

The evidence shows that:

- The voluntary sector is delivering more public service contacts than ever before, and so skills to help organisations procure and manage public sector contracts are increasingly important.
- Grant funding is becoming harder to obtain amid increasing competition and the economic downturn is affecting funding. Organisations need to be able to draw on a range of funding streams and fundraising methods to sustain their activities.
- The economic downturn in the UK is having a negative effect on the confidence of managers in the voluntary sector. In some cases this has already resulted in redundancies and additional pressures on existing staff.²⁸

Our recommendation is for:

- A network of accredited business support that increases the reach, relevance and effectiveness of skilled advice to the sector.
- Management learning to be based on the same curriculum as business advice, to equip leaders and managers for contracting and enterprise.

²⁷ Participant at the Guardian / Skills - Third Sector roundtable debate published April 2010 at www.guardianpublic.co.uk/third-sector-roundtable - full details of participants available from the link

²⁸ National Council of Voluntary Organisations *Charity Forecast* Quarter 1 2010

Managing volunteers

Volunteering is at the heart of voluntary sector organisations. We are focusing on developing the skills of the people who manage volunteers. Investing in volunteer managers is the best way to raise the skills and opportunities for all volunteers in the voluntary sector.

The 2008 Commission on the Future of Volunteering's *Manifesto for Change* called for investment to support people who manage volunteers and reduce barriers to volunteering. It led to the current £3 million skills programme for people who manage volunteers, funded by Capacitybuilders. This is the first national standards-based skills programme and provides a great opportunity to learn about the potential quality, impact and reach of skills programmes based on standards.

*"If we were better at accrediting people at what they were doing when they're volunteering that would help hugely."*²⁹

Evidence shows that:

- Organisations are placing a greater reliance on volunteers, part-time staff and trustees to deliver services. However there are often insufficient resources to effectively place, manage and support volunteers.³⁰
- Recruiting volunteers will become more difficult due to increasing competition from the public sector. There are already almost 100 different volunteering roles across the NHS and an estimated 200,000 volunteers working in NHS Trusts across England.³¹ Finding a way to ascertain the skills needs of volunteers will benefit other sector skills councils as well as voluntary sector organisations.
- The introduction of measures such as the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) vetting and barring scheme has had an impact on managing and recruiting volunteers.
- The government has recognised the importance of volunteering for unemployed people and is investing substantial funding to: "create over 40,000 opportunities for people to learn new skills and give back to communities through volunteering."³²

Our recommendation is for:

- Increased investment and support for the skills needs of people who manage volunteers, in line with the *Manifesto for Change*.
- Flexible network-based methods of delivering qualifications and units in volunteer management, based on National Occupational Standards.

²⁹ Participant at the Guardian / Skills - Third Sector roundtable debate published April 2010 at www.guardianpublic.co.uk/third-sector-roundtable - full details of participants available from the link

³⁰ Capacitybuilders *Survey of local third sector support providers: the impact of the economic downturn* (Parts 1 and 2) July and November 2009

³¹ The figure of 200,000 volunteers working in the NHS was collated using figures obtained from volunteer services based at local NHS Trusts. (Volunteering England Press Release 14 March 2006)

³² National Council of Voluntary Organisations *Charity Forecast* Quarter 1 2010

Measuring effectiveness and impact

Measuring impact and effectiveness is a requirement of public and statutory funding and some sources of trust and voluntary income too. It forms the cornerstone of effective voluntary sector marketing, fundraising and communications strategies. And it is a very important way for organisations to measure and improve the impact of their services.

The Charities Evaluation Service has researched how far evaluation skills have penetrated into the sector and found that more needs to be done to develop skills and integrate evaluation into service delivery and commissioning.³³ Often these skills are brought into the sector in the form of expert consultants and not enough skills are being built within voluntary sector organisations.

The Measuring Outcomes for Public Service Users (MOPSU) project developed the Adult Social Care Toolkit (ASCOT), which allows organisations that are delivering social care to measure quality of life outcomes such as dignity, personal cleanliness, good nutrition and social interaction from the users' perspective. It will allow commissioners to contract adult social care services from organisations that provide better value for money, through more accurate analysis of outcomes.³⁴

We are developing national standards that set out what needs to be done for organisations to effectively monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their organisations and the services they provide. These are being compiled from all the available National Occupational Standards that include skills that are relevant to monitoring and evaluation.

“As the third sector takes on more public services, it is important to show commissioners how the sector can offer something extra – such as advocacy and campaigning skills.”³⁵

Evidence shows that:

- Organisations are expected to provide more evidence about the impact of their work, and to operate with increased transparency.³⁶

Our recommendation is for:

- Evaluation expertise to be developed and retained within the sector.
- Skills programmes that draw on the wealth of monitoring evidence produced by the sector and increase its validity.

³³ 'Developing Monitoring and Evaluation in the Third Sector' 2006

³⁴ Measuring Outcomes for Public Service Users, ONS and NCVO, June 2010

³⁵ Participant at the Guardian / Skills - Third Sector roundtable debate published April 2010 at www.guardianpublic.co.uk/third-sector-roundtable - full details of participants available from the links

³⁶ National Council of Voluntary Organisations *Charity Forecast* Quarter 1 2010

Top 20 Skills gaps in the four priority areas, by size of organisation (%)³⁷

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

³⁷ UK Workforce Hub Skills Survey 2007 of charities, community and voluntary groups