



NCVO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Paid sources of HR support and advice include:

- Consultants
- Employment lawyers
- External HR companies
- In-house HR staff
- Membership organisations
- Other voluntary organisations

Consultants

If you have a specific project that you need to undertake, then using an HR consultant may be the right approach for you.

Examples of projects might be:

- Developing a new pay and benefits structure
- Reviewing and updating your employment policies
- Undertaking a diversity audit
- Designing and delivering training for your organisation
- Undertaking a specific investigation
- Drafting a staff handbook

You may want to develop a longer-term relationship with a consultant, so that they become more familiar with your organisation and you can contact them on 'ad hoc' HR advice when you need it.

This can be cheaper than engaging an employment lawyer, and may be more cost-effective for smaller organisations than engaging an employee to provide HR advice.

A consultant may provide specialist advice in one area. For example, if you have someone on long-term sick leave, you may consult an occupational health consultant.

NCVO Offers consultancy services in a wide range of areas – visit www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/consultancy for more information.

To find consultants who are experienced in the voluntary and community sector, you can review the NCVO Directory of Approved Consultants (updated annually), which is free to all NCVO members.

If you do not have a copy, you can order one AT www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications. All consultants in the Directory have successfully undergone NCVO's approval process, having been assessed against five standards:

- operational standards;
- contract capability;
- delivery process;
- delivery and output evaluation; and continuous improvement.

As part of the approval process, NCVO takes up reference checks on the consultants.

Employment lawyers

Employment lawyers can be used for specific legal problems, such as:

- Dealing with an employment tribunal claim
- Advice on dealing with specific employee relations problems
- Advice on updating your policies and practices to comply with changing employment law.

Employment lawyers should be able to give you written advice on specific legal problems that may face you. However, employment lawyers are normally the most expensive of all your options, so it is best to only use them for specific legal matters, such as an employment tribunal claim or dispute.

To find a suitable employment lawyer, you could ask your contacts or your local Council for Voluntary Service for recommendations.

As with other consultants, you may wish to select a firm of employment lawyers with whom you can develop a long-term relationship.

External HR companies

External HR companies specialise in providing outsourced employment services for organisations. Most provide a range of employment support, such as an employment law helpline, employment tribunal services, briefings and assistance with new policies and legislative changes.

You could try the following organisations:

HR Services Partnership www.hrservicespartnership.co.uk.

Peninsula www.peninsula-uk.com

Ceridian Centrefile: see below

Cloud 11: see below

Croner HR: www.croner.co.uk

BusinessHR: www.businesshr.net

HRBullets: www.hrbullets.co.uk

XpertHR: www.XpertHR.co.uk

These organisations have a variety of services at different fee levels. NCVO members can access a range of outsourced HR services, offering all organisations, particularly those lacking a dedicated HR resource, cost-effective solutions to help manage their employees.

Ceridian Centrefile offer a range of professional services to match your organisation's needs, from basic advice through to more comprehensive HR solutions, ensuring that your organisation is legally compliant.

The following services are available:

- Help and advice on ensuring you have the right systems and processes in place to manage your employees
- Ad hoc telephone advice and support via a 'Business Support Helpline' on issues such as health and safety or VAT
- Provision of a range of standard forms, policies and guidelines for HR functions
- To discuss your HR needs in more detail, and to find out more, contact Ceridian Centrefile on telephone 0800 068 1781 or email ncvo@ceridian.com.

Cloud 11 work with 3rd sector organisations in the Yorkshire and Humber area.

Their main service is HR Outsourcing for SME organisations where they act as HR Manager/Director for organisations that are not yet of the size where they would have internal resource.

Cloud 11 can put together policies and procedures, run ethical and diversity-friendly recruitment campaigns, introduce appraisal processes etc, as well as advising the boards & trustees on people issues e.g. reward and development.

Cloud 11 offers a 10% discount on services to third sector organisations. Visit www.cloud11hr.com for more information, or email martin@cloud11hr.com.

In-house HR staff

If you have reached a size where you wish to consider employing specifically to provide HR expertise (you may have, for example, up to 100 staff), you will need to consider the skills you require.

One option is to engage someone on a full-time basis who is able to undertake general HR activities such as:

- Issuing employment contracts
- Liaising with payroll
- Keeping staff records
- Dealing with sickness absence and absence records
- Recruitment administration including placing advertisements
- Supporting managers in the interviewing process
- Administering the termination of employment.

If you would like more senior assistance, but have a limited budget, you could consider engaging a more senior individual on a part-time basis.

They might be able to:

- Provide support and advice on workforce planning*
- Provide advice and information on employee relations situations
- Handle recruitment for your organisation
- Advise on pay and benefits matters
- Advise on good employment practices that encourage diversity
- Deliver training courses
- Supervise an HR administrator.

* Planning *how* to best use the skills of your workforce, even if you only have 1 or 2 paid staff and maybe a few volunteers, is essential in helping your organisation achieve its mission and goals.

Employing an HR specialist can be best value for money if your organisation is of a size where the individual will be fully employed. If not, outsourcing your HR support to a firm or to a consultant may still be more cost-effective.

An HR specialist can help you forward plan your organisation's needs. This means your recruitment and retention – getting the right skills into your organisation, and keeping them. They can help identify how you reward your workforce eg relatively generous annual leave entitlement, flexible working or job-sharing. They can help plan the training and development of your workforce - helping and supporting your workforce to develop different skills either within their current role or skills that will take them to another role, is a important way of keeping people motivated and valued.

They can also help you to manage performance as being able to evaluate and measure how your staff are performing is about managing people well, supporting staff and identifying any skills gaps.

If you want to advertise for HR staff, you could try the specialist publications *People Management* and *Personnel Today*. Both publications carry job advertisements. You can contact the recruitment advertising team at People Management on 020 7880 6234 or email recruitment@peoplemanagement.co.uk.

For advertising in Personnel Today, call the Advertising Manager on 020 8652 8103 or email louise.rees@rbi.co.uk.

Membership organisations

The Work Foundation

The Work Foundation, formerly called the Industrial Society, provides a variety of membership options. As a corporate member, your organisation could access services which include the following:

- Employment law helpline
- Knowledge resource (on line) and library

- Best practice guidelines and policy support
- Email alerts
- Discounted employment law seminars.

For further information, go to the Work Foundation's website at www.theworkfoundation.com or call 0870 165 6700.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

If you are a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, you can download a variety of documents from their website at www.cipd.co.uk. In addition, you can use the CIPD legal advice line. There is an annual fee for membership of the CIPD. For information about joining, please go to their website.

CharitySkills

CharitySkills is a not-for-profit organisation providing a range of resources for voluntary sector organisations. These include seminars, help lines and training. There is a charge for membership. Full members of CharitySkills can also have access to the CS/Croner Business Support helpline, which includes an employment helpline.

See the CharitySkills' website at www.charityskills.org or contact them by post at PO Box 43520, London SW15 1WZ.

Other voluntary organisations

A small number of voluntary organisations may provide HR support to other organisations. Contact your local CVS (Council for Voluntary Services) to find out about any such services in your area.