



## NCVO Workforce Development

### Voluntary sector career case study

Andrew van Doorn  
Research and Policy Officer  
National Homeless Alliance

#### The job

- Looking at policy and research from a national or legislative perspective
- Working directly with organisations
- Researching policy within the context of the law and best practice
- Analysing Government policy and showing how it will impact the sector
- Attending government forums
- Managing volunteers
- Visiting local organisations

#### Andrew says:

“I find the contact with the service users most satisfying. I have always been interested in fighting for the underdog.

“It is also satisfying to be part of a process that tries to demystify homelessness to the general public.”

#### The challenges

“There is a lot to keep up to date with and this can be very challenging at times as changes happen all the time and it is important to prioritise what is and what is not important to us.

“Because of the lack of funding and thus understaffing you have to be multi-skilled and be able to do many things at the same time.”

#### Skills needed

- IT skills, particularly for research and data analysis
- Willingness to learn from other people: I found that most skills come from doing the work hands on
- Good interpersonal skills
- Time management: it's also important to find time to relax and unwind

#### Andrew's CV

- Degree in Government and Sociology
- Volunteer and later project worker at Colchester Emergency Night Shelter
- Sabbatical Student Union Officer:
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO): Survey and Information Assistant, later Officer, in the Research Team
- Research and Policy Officer, National Homeless Alliance

#### The final say

“You'll need a commitment and passion for what you do. A genuine interest in the particular areas is crucial because often these organisations are under-resourced and the work can be stressful. On the other hand it is fun!!