



Free sources of human resources support and advice for your organisation

Free sources of HR support and advice include:

- The Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)
- Business Link
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- Councils for Voluntary service (CVSs)
- The Cranfield Trust
- The Department for Trade and Industry (Dti)
- The Equality Commissions
- Equality Direct
- The Health and Safety Executive
- NCVO
- PEACe
- ProHelp
- Trade Union Congress (TUC)
- Unison Health and Safety website
- UK Workforce Hub
- VolResource
- Working Families
- Your own networks
- Your trustees

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)

Acas is Government funded, and aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations.

It provides up-to-date information, independent advice, high quality training and works with employers and employees to solve problems and improve performance. It produces a large number of publications on various aspects of managing people, including guides on discipline, absence, redundancy and performance appraisal. Most of the publications can be downloaded free from the Acas website at www.acas.org.uk.

Acas sometimes provides free places on its training courses for very small organisations. Call 08457 47 47 47, textphone 08456 06 16 00 or visit the website for more details.

The Race and Equality Advisory Service (REAS) is a part of Acas. This service provides strategy and advice so that employers can develop and implement policies and practices for racial equality in their workforce.

Business Link

The Government website Business Link has some useful information on employment. Go to www.businesslink.gov.uk and click on 'Employing People'.

You could also visit the Business Link for London website, www.businesslink4london.com.

Whether or not you are based in London, you can register on the website free and then access fact sheets on a range of human resources matters.

Business Link for London also offers a free Business Healthcheck service to organisations in London with up to 250 employees. This is an independent review of your organisation, the aim of which is to give you new insight into your business, provide constructive feedback, highlight areas for improvement and generate action plans.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

The CIPD is the professional body for those involved in the management and development of people.

Some of its website is accessible only to its members, but there is much information that can be accessed free.

Visit the website at www.cipd.co.uk or call the CIPD on 020 8612 6200.

Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs)

There are currently around 300 Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs) in the UK. Their national body is NAVCA, National Association for Voluntary and Community Action.

Your local CVS should also be able to help you. They may have example employment policies that you could adapt for your organisation. Some CVSs also give employment advice to member voluntary organisations, and some provide a payroll service, although there is usually a fee for this service.

If you do not know the contact details of your local CVS, you can look in your local telephone directory or visit the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Services website at www.navca.org.uk.

The website also has some model policies and procedures, which you could customise for your own organisation.

The Cranfield Trust

The Cranfield Trust offers free consultancy projects to charities involved in addressing issues of poverty, disability or social exclusion and uses a register of over 600 volunteers from the commercial sector who act as free consultants. Most of the Trust's 200 annual projects fall into the following areas:

- Business or strategic planning
- Marketing advice or marketing planning
- Human resources issues
- Financial management or planning
- IT reviews and strategies

Call the Cranfield Trust on 01794 830 338 or email admin@cranfieldtrust.org. The Cranfield Trust also has a free specialist internet-based human resources advice service, HRNet, which allows member charities to post questions on human resource issues to a panel of Trust volunteers with specialist HR knowledge.

There are no restrictions on the kinds of charities that can use this service. Members can share information and ideas on employment questions with other members. and as questions and answers are received, they are categorised and stored on the website so that an information resource is built up that can be referred to by members at any time.

Contact the HRNet administrator if you would like to join: call 01794 830 338 or email hrnet@cranfieldtrust.org.

The Department of Trade and Industry (Dti)

The DTI employment website, www.dti.gov.uk/er has an employment section, with several useful guides for employers on a variety of employment matters. The website is particularly useful for straightforward guidance on existing and new employment law.

It includes, for example, information on the Working Time Regulations, the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations (TUPE), fair and unfair dismissal, and legislation on rights for parents.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission

For information and advice about racial, gender or disability equality, contact:

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
W: www.ehrc.org.uk

Equality Direct

Equality Direct is an England-wide advice service for businesses, offering telephone advice about equality issues. Contact Equality Direct on telephone 0845 600 3444.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

HSE's role is to help the Health and Safety Commission ensure that risks to people's health and safety from work activities are properly controlled.

The Health and Safety Executive provides information to employers about complying with the law. It has a large number of free publications, including a publication to assist you in drafting a health and safety policy.

For further information, go to the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk or call the helpline on 08701 545 500.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

NCVO has several free services that Workforce Development currently manage:

- Online support via www.ncvo-vol.org.uk, an online best practice resource for the voluntary and community sector. Information is updated regularly and includes fact sheets on employment matters.
- NCVO's HR Bank, which contains example HR policies and job descriptions. These documents have been donated by voluntary and community organisations to share good practice and so that organisations don't have to 'reinvent the wheel' each time they want to develop a policy. For details, visit www.ncvo-vol.org.uk.
- NCVO has produced the *Good Guide to Employment: Managing People in Voluntary and Community Organisations*, priced £25 (£17.50 for NCVO members). This Guide has chapters on each stage of employing people, such as how to recruit your first member of staff, staff appraisals and dealing with grievances/disciplinary situations. It includes several sample documents and case studies. Free sample templates and factsheets can be downloaded at www.ncvo-vol.org.uk. The Guide can be purchased online at this address also.
- NCVO Workforce Development's Employment Practice Network is a place for sharing specific HR and Employment Practice queries with other members (there are over 1200), and there are also free events to attend. Join for free at www.ncvo-vol.org.uk.

PEACe at London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC)

If your organisation is based in London, you could use PEACe at the London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC). You can look at several documents free on the PEACe website at www.lvsc.org.uk/Templates/information.asp?NodeID=90165. PEACe also has a free telephone helpline available on Wednesday or Friday on 020 7700 8147. You can also email PEACe at peace@lvsc.org.uk. If you would like support on particular projects from PEACe, there is a charge. Call the above helpline for further information.

Trades Union Congress (TUC)

Trade unions can be a valuable source of help in the workplace. Unions can help attract and retain a high quality workforce through improved conditions, staff participation and communication and training opportunities. Unions provide advice on

individual and collective employment rights, and can help with guidelines for volunteer and paid workers.

They have access to model policies and guidelines on a range of issues like stress, bullying, redundancy, relocation, whistle blowing and diversity.

They can also provide assistance in many areas, with expertise in pensions, health and safety, employment law, HR and pay issues.

Unions provide access to education and training advice and courses, leading to vocational and professional qualifications.

There are over 6,500 union learning representatives in the UK, trained to assist their members to receive relevant training and unions have an important role in developing basic skills in the workplace.

The main unions for the voluntary and community sector are UNISON, T&G, Amicus and the GMB. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) also provides information about UK trade unions. Visit www.tuc.org.uk for more details.

Unison Health and Safety website

The trade union Unison has a dedicated website for employers in the community and voluntary sector at www.unison.org.uk/voluntary/index.asp

Working Families

Working Families is a campaigning charity that supports and informs working parents and carers. It also works with employers to encourage them to reap the business benefits of helping their employees balance their work and home lives.

The Working Families website has a number of useful fact sheets which may help you to draft policies on all types of parental leave, as well as flexible working and other 'family friendly' policies.

There is a specific section for voluntary sector employers. Visit www.workingfamilies.org.uk or call 020 7253 7243.

Further ideas

If you have further ideas about good sources of HR support, we would like to hear from you!

Please contact Emma Allford, Employment Practice Project Officer at NCVO Workforce Development, by emailing Emma.allford@ncvo-vol.org.uk stating 'HR support' in the subject line of your email.