



NCVO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Good employment practice case study

Collaboration on HR: Carr-Gomm and Alcohol Recovery Project (ARP) Organisations

These two organisations share a common goal of improving the lives of vulnerable people and enabling them to take an active part in their communities.

Carr-Gomm is an award-winning charity offering a range of housing and support services to 3,000 people each year across England. Many of the people who use Carr-Gomm services have a learning disability, mental ill-health, or a physical disability. Most experience poverty and would otherwise be homeless. Service users are encouraged to work towards their own personal goals, and lead a better quality of life.

ARP is a dynamic and innovative organisation working to assist people in London affected by alcohol problems and related issues such as drug problems, housing and mental health issues.

Project

The provision of HR services is part of a five-year contract for Carr-Gomm to provide central services to ARP staff from its national office in London. As well as HR services the contract replaces ARP's in-house services for finance, IT and property maintenance services.

The HR service is designed to operate as an in-house service providing management of:

- the recruitment process
- induction and probation
- payroll
- HR administration
- employee relations
- employee development
- advice to senior management on HR
- policy and strategy

Benefits and challenges

The aim of the contracting arrangement is to improve the financial strength of both organisations and make better use of each organisation's resources. ARP found that

outsourcing these services to Carr-Gomm was cost effective compared to maintaining in-house services and enabled ARP to focus on delivering high quality services to the people they support. ARP is in a strong position as a client with the protection of a legal contract under which they can expect a high standard of service.

Carr-Gomm provides ARP with comparable services to their own which ensures that standards of service remain high for both organisations. The arrangement also benefits from economies of scale.

The challenge posed in developing the HR part of the service level agreement had an unexpected benefit for Carr-Gomm in that the exercise helped to clarify the service for Carr-Gomm's internal HR service standards. Carr-Gomm's Head of HR has also learned some interesting lessons in service delivery such as balancing what the customer wants and the need to move forward.

Future development

Carr-Gomm are interested in developing their role as a provider of back office services to complement their existing consultancy arm which was set up in 2002 to support frontline work with vulnerable people.

The contract with ARP runs for 5 years and was an important step for Carr-Gomm in expanding these services; they are talking to other providers about similar linkups.