



*National Council for Voluntary Organisations*

## NCVO Governance & Leadership Services - November 2008

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### WELCOME

NCVO's Governance and Leadership Services supports leaders of voluntary and community sector organisations by providing a platform for shared learning and networking, bringing together key products and support services that will help you to lead the way.

[News](#)

[Connecting Leaders](#)

[Tools](#)

[Focus on...](#)

[Tending your board](#)

### News

#### ***Economic slowdown and the credit crunch***

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The impact of the economic slowdown and credit crunch are now reaching beyond the financial sector. NCVO is working with sector Leaders and the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) to consider the impact of the current situation. NCVO has invited Leaders from organisations across the Third sector and government representatives to a summit on 24 November. Any charities which have lost funds in the Icelandic

bank situation or are having any particular problems caused by the current economic uncertainty are urged to bring these to our attention so the extent of the challenges to the sector can be assessed. If you have any particular concerns or problems please contact us at [leadershipservices@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:leadershipservices@ncvo-vol.org.uk)

### ***Governance Code Steering Group seeks Chairperson***

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A chairperson is required to lead on the development of Good Governance: A Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector (the Code). This is an exciting opportunity to join the Steering Group as it builds on the initial success of the Code and firmly establishes it as a widely used governance resource for the sector. For further details about the opportunity go to <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/governanceandleadership/?id=11344>

### ***Standing for Office: Time Off Entitlements Consultation***

The Department for Communities and Local Government and the NCVO are jointly hosting an event on the 12th December 2008 focusing on Chapter 5 of the 'Communities in Control: Real People, real Power, Standing for Office: Time-off Entitlements consultation, with representatives from across the sector. This chapter focuses on encouraging participation in governance roles in the Third Sector. The consultation document can be downloaded from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/timeoffconsultation>. If you have any ideas or comments to feed into the consultation please email us at [leadershipservices@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:leadershipservices@ncvo-vol.org.uk)

## Connecting Leaders

### ***NCVO Annual Political Conference, 27 November 2008, London***

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The NCVO 2008 conference will focus on building the political intelligence of voluntary organisations and helping to prepare you for new challenges presented by the political cycle. Keynote speakers include David Blunkett MP and Francis Maude MP. Workshops include influencing decision-making at each level of government, and preparing for an election. For further information and to book a place go to <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/events/latest/?id=10238> or contact [Nzinga Cotton](mailto:Nzinga.Cotton@ncvo-vol.org.uk) on 0207 520 2458.

### ***NCVO Strategy Conference- Alive and Kicking: creating successful strategies, 11 December 2008, London***

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Are you looking to revitalise your strategy? Do you want your organisation to stay ahead of the game, or avoid mission drift? This conference offers a great

opportunity to gain some fresh ideas and techniques to bring your strategy to life. For more information about this event or to book a place, contact [Kathryn Cook](#) on 020 7520 2510.

### ***NCVO Annual Conference 2009 Civil Society: Building trust in uncertain times, 18 February 2009, London***

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In NCVO's 90th year, our flagship Annual Conference will examine how uncertain economic times and a potential change in government present the sector with many challenges, and opportunities. Dr Benjamin Barber, leading political theorist and renowned author from the USA will be joining us to give his global perspective on the uncertain times that we face ahead. For more information about the conference, contact Matt Gilfeather on 020 7520 3160 or by email [annual.conference@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:annual.conference@ncvo-vol.org.uk)

## Tools

### ***Public Benefit reporting***

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As a result of the Charities Act 2006 Trustees' Annual Reports submitted for periods after 1 April 2008 must include a report of activities undertaken by the charity to further its charitable purposes for the public benefit. The report should also include a statement as to whether they have complied with the duty to have due regard to public benefit. To help trustees complete this activity, the Charity Commission has recently published two example reports which can be found at <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publicbenefit/pbreport.asp>.

### ***The Charity Forecast Survey***

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Join other leaders in the sector by taking a ten minute survey and contribute to this vital quarterly planning tool at [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/charityforecastsurvey](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/charityforecastsurvey) All survey takers will receive a free copy of the final report and be entered into a prize draw to win a £100 NCVO voucher. The report is kindly supported by Chantrey Vellacott DFK. Find out more about Chantrey Vellacott DFK's services for charities at [www.cvdfk.com/sectors/charities/](http://www.cvdfk.com/sectors/charities/)

### ***Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) briefing***

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As reported in the last edition of this newsletter, the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) and Charity Commission are consulting on the draft secondary legislation and model constitutions required to complete the legal framework for CIOs. Four half-day consultation events were held in October outlining the draft materials. The full presentations from these events can be downloaded from the [OTS website](#). NCVO has produced a briefing [on the key things you need to know about the CIOs](#) and will

be responding to the consultation over the coming weeks. If you would like information about the consultation or wish to submit your comments, please email [Elizabeth Chamberlain](mailto:Elizabeth.Chamberlain@ncvo.org.uk) or call 0207 520 2559.

## **Online tools**

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The NCVO Governance and Leadership team has a [dedicated website](#) with a host of information and resources to support you in leading the way.

Links of particular interest include:

[Trustee Bank](#)

[Leadership Services](#)

[Publications](#)

## **Focus on...**

### ***Key things for your organisation to consider in challenging economic times***

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In the current economic climate it is essential that you take steps to ensure your organisations is as well prepared as possible to face the challenges and seize the opportunities.

#### **Key short term activities (things to do immediately) include:**

- Review your financial position and cash flow forecasts. If you are unsure of anything you are under a duty to question information and seek professional advice if necessary.
- Adopt a 'prudent' approach to investments, balancing the protection of assets with increasing income through investments. Further information on this can be found at <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc14.asp>
- Examine the credit rating of the organisations where you hold deposits and investments. You should also ensure that the organisation is subject to the Government's deposit protection scheme. The [Charity Commission website](#) has guidance on this.
- You should review whether you are still in a position to meet your commitments. Can you complete the same work, make the same grants etc? If not, do you have contingency arrangements?

#### **Key medium term activities (things to do in the next few weeks) include:**

- Ensure you have a risk management procedure in place. Risk management should not just be seen as a compliance matter or something to use in a crisis. It can also enable you to develop opportunities and whilst focusing on the organisation's objectives.
- Review your reserves policy. Is it fit for purpose and does it meet the needs of your organisation?
- Plan for and anticipate the consequences of a cut in funding. It is quite likely that as the recession hits there may also be a fall in individual and corporate giving.

#### **Key long term activities (things to consider in the next few months) include:**

- Consider how your organisation's strategy can be developed to ensure you are well prepared for the future.
- Can efficiencies be made through partnerships or collaboration? Further information can be found at <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/collaborativeworking>
- How can you diversify your income to ensure you have a more sustainable income base? Further information can be found from the [sustainable funding team](#).
- In tougher economic circumstances your organisation will need to [demonstrates its value and sell its impact](#).
- Ensure you keep up to date with trends and information that could help you anticipate challenges to your organisation. The [Third Sector Foresight](#) team website is particularly useful.

## Tending your board


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This is a great time to consider how to plan and develop your board in the coming year. Honest discussion and feedback at this time can allow the board to reflect over the year that has gone and look forward to the challenges of the new year. Renewing and refreshing the membership and vision of your board can be critical for the future of the mission of the organisation. Being clear about what is expected from board members in the upcoming year will lay the groundwork for the commitment and efforts required, and will set expectations right for the year to follow. The [Code of Governance Toolkit](#) is a resource focusing on best practice in governance. It has a number of exercises and worksheets which can help with focusing your discussions and act as a basis to work from.

The Governance and Leadership team offers a consultancy service to help with all these activities. From comprehensive reviews to board away days we can support you. The consultancy is a customised service, and can be tailored to your organisation's needs. If you require any further information please contact [Emma Kirk](#) Tel: 0207 5202509

We are keen to hear your feedback, questions and suggestions, particularly if there are things you would like to see addressed in this monthly newsletter. To contact us, please email [leadershipservices@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:leadershipservices@ncvo-vol.org.uk) or phone Carrie Deacon on 020 7520 2501.

With best wishes,  
 Anne Moynihan  
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Ends.