



*National Council for Voluntary Organisations*

## NCVO Governance & Leadership Services January 2009

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# HAPPY NEW YEAR

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.

***In this month's newsletter:***

[Connecting Leaders](#): key events and networking opportunities.

[Tools](#): key resources and information to help you lead the way.

[Focus on...](#) A look back at 2008 and look forward to 2009.

[Tending your board](#): making board meetings more effective.

## Connecting Leaders

***NCVO Annual Conference 2009 Civil Society: Building trust in uncertain times, 18<sup>th</sup> 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 presents us with many challenges, but also with 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. Limited places are also available for direct governance support sessions. 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)

### ***Develop your Negotiation Skills, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009, London***

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NCVO's Public Service Delivery Network and the Institute of Public Finance is offering a high level skills training course that will introduce you to the secrets of negotiation to help your organisation achieve the right deal. To see the full programme and [book your place](#) or call Francesca Cignola on 0207 520 2411.

### ***NCVO Risk Management Conference, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009, London***

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NCVO's Risk Management conference will help you to understand how you can manage your risk more effectively. Using case studies and an interactive workshop, this one-day risk management conference will provide delegates with advice and top tips to identify, analyse and manage their risk. The seminar will also draw on real examples to demonstrate the importance of risk management. For further details and to [book now](#), or contact Chris Taylor on [chris.taylor@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:chris.taylor@ncvo-vol.org.uk).

## Tools

### ***Boardscount benchmarking for governance 2009***

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BoardsCount Benchmarking for governance is open for 2009, with the earlybird discount now available for all organisations. This initiative helps you to review your own governance, but also compares your governance anonymously with others within the sector and shares best practice from other organisations. Find out more and register your interest at <http://www.trans4mgt.com/boardscount/future/>.

### ***Putting a face to trusteeship***

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Board members are the lifeblood of the sector and we want to celebrate them! We are developing profiles of board members from across the Third Sector and from a variety of backgrounds to talk about the role, their experience on the Board and advice to others interested in a similar position. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please email [Governanceandleadership@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:Governanceandleadership@ncvo-vol.org.uk) with 'face of trusteeship' as the title and we'll be in touch with more information. Anyone who does provide us with a profile will receive a £25 NCVO voucher to spend on publications/events as a thank you for their time.

### ***Survive and thrive: dealing with the economic uncertainty***

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Reduce the risk of having your own economic crisis by putting some work in the key areas of your organisation. NCVO's Sustainable Funding Team have five top tips to help you weather these hard economic times. Read them at <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sfp/?id=12100>.

### ***Invest for future growth***

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Many organisations will already be looking at ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency as a result of the recession. However, some organisation will need to think ahead and will be looking at ways to develop services and trading to generate growth. NCVO is collaborating with BIG Invest to increase awareness and access to finance to develop social enterprise. To find out more go to [www.biginvest.co.uk](http://www.biginvest.co.uk) or email [ncvo@biginvest.co.uk](mailto:ncvo@biginvest.co.uk).

### ***Collaborative working to generate income***

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A new free publication from NCVO's Collaborative Working Team and Sustainable Funding Project introduces different ways of working with other organisations to generate income. Subjects covered include fundraising events, joint trading, payroll giving through consortia, legacy giving and appeals. A series of case studies illustrate voluntary and community sector experience of joint fundraising activities. [Read online](#), or order a free hard copy by email [collaborate@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:collaborate@ncvo-vol.org.uk) or call 020 7520 2440.

### ***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: [Trustee Bank](#), [Publications](#).

### ***Governance and leadership consultancy services***

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The Governance and Leadership team offers a consultancy and training service. From comprehensive governance 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](#) or call Emma on 0207520 2509.

## **Focus on...**

### ***A look back on the key governance and leadership milestones of 2008 and a look forward to 2009***

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2008 was in many ways a challenging year for the sector. The economic climate has caused much anxiety and has clearly demonstrated how effective governance and

leadership are key to the health and sustainability of the sector. 2008 will be remembered for:

- The third commencement order of the Charities Act 2006 came into force on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The following came into force:
  - The [Charities Tribunal](#) which established a further avenue for appeals and reviews of decisions of the Charity Commission. There have only been a few cases heard so far.
  - Powers were put in place to make it easier for trustees of unincorporated charities to change the administrative provisions, the purposes of the charity and transfer property. [Further information is available from the Charity Commission](#)
  - The procedures for the payment of trustees were eased. It is now possible for charities to pay trustees for goods and services they supply without the need for consent from the commission under certain circumstances. [Further information about these new rules are available from the Charity Commission.](#)
- On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 the fourth commencement order of the Charities Act 2006 brought into force the public benefit provisions. It is intended that the emphasis on the need for charities to demonstrate their public benefit will increase public trust in the sector. This has proved to be a large cause for debate in the sector particularly for educational and religious charities. In December [new guidance](#) was issued by the Charity Commission to increase overall understanding.
- Also in April 2008, the Leadership and Governance National Support Service started its programme of work funded by CapacityBuilders. Building on the work of the Governance Hub, this programme works with infrastructure organisations to build the capacity of organisations to develop, promote and champion excellence in governance and leadership practices. To find out more about this work go to the [Improving Support website](#).
- 2008 also brought in further changes to Company law with new provisions from the Companies Act 2006 coming into force. Of particular interest were the provisions bringing into force the minimum age for a company director as 16. There was also a requirement introduced that a company must have at least one director who is a natural person (i.e. a human being as opposed, for example, to a corporate body). October 2008, also brought into force the requirements for company directors to avoid conflicts of interest. This was already considered to be a duty by the Charity Commission for charitable companies. Further information on these provisions are available from the [Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform](#), or the [Charity Commission](#).
- The Corporate Manslaughter Act and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 came into force on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2008. NCVO worked with Farrer and Co to produce a [briefing note](#) to help organisations understand the impact of this new legislation.
- In June 2008 a research report was completed on behalf of the Governance Hub into the awareness, impact and success of Good Governance: the code

for the Voluntary and Community Sector ([the Code](#)) Seven out of ten respondents were aware of the Code of Good Governance, a fantastic impact in the two and half years since it was first launched. [A full version of this report is available from the NCVO website.](#) The founding group is now working on a plan to take forward the work of the Code and more news will be available later in 2009.

- The first meeting of the NCVO Leadership 20:20 core group was held in July 2008. This group meets every two months to share information, news and best practice and look forward to the key challenges for the sector in 2020. More information will be available on the NCVO website shortly. To be kept up to date with information from the group please email [governanceandleadership@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:governanceandleadership@ncvo-vol.org.uk) stating Leadership 20:20 as the title.
- Also in July, the Department for Communities and Local Government launched the Empowerment White Paper [Communities in Control, real people, real power.](#) Following on from this in October 2008 DCLG published a consultation on Standing for office: time off entitlements. The consultation had two main aims. Firstly, to encourage greater and a more diverse range of people to take up specific civic roles by helping remove the barriers to the time they have available for civic activities. Secondly, to focus on governance roles which are located within third sector. NCVO organised and hosted a consultation workshop for DCLG in December 2008, [read our response to the consultation.](#)
- In September the OTS and the Charity Commission launched the [Charitable Incorporated Organisation \(CIO\) consultation.](#) In December the [NCVO responded to the consultation.](#) The timetable established by the OTS states that the response to the consultation will be completed by the end of March 2009, and the current planned date for the availability of the new structure is late 2009.
- In October the Charity Commission launched its new register of Charities which increases the transparency in the information registered. [The register can be searched on the Charity Commission website.](#)
- The Icelandic Banking Crisis and effects of the financial sector meltdown shook the country and the sector in October. In November NCVO [held a recession summit](#) to discuss the effects of the crisis on the sector. The effects of the recession are likely to be felt deeply by many in the sector. The Government has agreed to publish a recession action plan to help the sector during the economic downturn, and [NCVO has recently produced a response to this.](#)

2009 will certainly prove to be a challenging year for all of us. It is essential that in these uncertain times, you take steps to ensure your organisations are well prepared to face the possible challenges, but are also ready to seize the opportunities that this could also bring. A further question has now arisen as to whether the time has come for more socially motivated business and organisations. With the [latest research from NFP synergy](#) indicating that the public has increased trust in charities, the

sector has a great opportunity to capitalise on this, if we manage to demonstrate that we are fit for purpose with strong governance and effective leadership.

## Tending your board

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Are your board meetings working? A new year can be a new start. You should consider whether the board's papers, agendas and minutes are serving the right purpose for your organisation. Is the right information being sent to the board meetings to allow your trustees to make their decisions? Are the outcomes of meetings communicated to staff or volunteers in your organisation? By improving the information and communications for these core meetings, you can increase the effectiveness and transparency of decisions made.

We are keen to hear your feedback and suggestions about the newsletter. To contact us, please email [governanceandleadership@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:governanceandleadership@ncvo-vol.org.uk) or phone Carrie Deacon on 020 7520 2501.

With best wishes,  
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