

Advice

Sources of advice and support for voluntary and community organisations:

1. [Legal Matters](#)
2. [Property Issues](#)
3. [Access and Equality Issues](#)
4. [Workforce, Employment and Volunteering](#)
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1. Legal Matters

Free Legal Advice from LVSC

Voluntary and Community Sector groups in London now have access to a specialist legal adviser, Rosemary Bonna, who can help on leases, licences, contracts, commercial agreements, constitutions and related commercial matters.

This is a 12 month pilot scheme funded by the London Development Agency. For more information, visit the LVSC website at: www.lvsc.org.uk/templates/information.asp?NodeID=93330.

Public Law Project Advice Line

The Public Law Project provides free detailed legal advice to VCOs on disputes involving public bodies' decisions and failures. Specialist lawyers from the Public Law Project are also available to take on particular cases to resolve disputes.

A free advice line will be available at the following times: Mondays and Wednesdays 2pm to 5pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am to 1pm. Tel: 020 7697 2198 or email evs@publiclawproject.org.uk.

LawWorks for Community Groups

LawWorks for Community Groups is a referral agency matching community groups with lawyers who will provide free legal advice (not including court or employment tribunal proceedings). For details: www.probonogroup.org.uk

2. Property

Property Advice

Property Advice for London offers a match-making service for London-based charities to access specialist property expertise from professionals on everything from refurbishments and leasing to relocation and service charges. It is run by the Construction Industry Council and Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, with sponsorship from Barclays Bank.

For more information visit: www.cic.org.uk/london/index.shtml or download the PDF brochure from: www.cic.org.uk/london/RegistrationForm.pdf

Property Advice Line

A property advice service for the voluntary sector has been set up by the charitable arm of the Ethical Property Company. From May it will provide comprehensive advice to London-based charities and community groups, but there is also a web site to offer a guide to key property issues around looking for an office, moving in, managing your office and moving out.

See: www.ethicalproperty.org.uk/advice.php.

3. Access and Equalities Issues

Free Access and Sustainability Advisory Service

The Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) is launching a new free Access and Sustainability Advisory Service, funded by the Bridge House Trust, to advise voluntary and community groups in London how to make their premises more accessible and sustainable. The service is aimed primarily at those organisations applying, or considering applying, to the *Access for Disabled People* element of the Bridge House Trust's grant programme, but is open to the voluntary and community sector in London as a whole. The service will consist of two main parts: a dedicated section on the CAE website and an advisory service.

The advisory service, staffed by an Access and Sustainability Adviser, will provide advice on access issues. The adviser will assess the organisations' needs, make recommendations for an access action plan and put them in touch with appropriate professionals.

The website will include information about access audits, how to find and appoint access consultants, architects, quantity surveyors and builders, what work is liable for VAT and what is exempt, building control and planning application processes and information about the Building Regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

For more information contact [Pontus Westerberg](mailto:pontus.westerberg@cae.org.uk), Access and Sustainability Adviser, Centre for Accessible Environments, on (020) 7840 0125, or visit the website at: www.cae.org.uk.

ACAS Guidance on new Age Discrimination Laws

ACAS have published a guide for employers entitled *Age and the Workplace*. It provides an outline of an employer's obligations under the new rules together with a number of practical tips for ensuring that you comply. It has also developed flow charts summarising the retirement procedure and some precedent letters for employers to use.

To view the ACAS guide visit:

www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/d/t/6683_Age_and_the_Workplace_AWK.pdf

4. Workforce, Volunteering and Employment Issues

PEACe - Personnel, Employment Advice & Conciliation Service

Expert and up-to-date advice and guidance on all employment related issues to London's voluntary sector employers.

Free Helpline: 020 7700 8147 Wednesday & Friday or email: peace@lvsc.org.uk

Information resources are also available online at: www.actionlink.org.uk/peace

Workforce Development Helpdesk

The UK Workforce Hub's free helpdesk can answer your workforce development questions. Their team of advisers can signpost you to sources of help on good employment practice, learning and development, leadership and management, National Occupational Standards, publications, careers in the voluntary sector, volunteering and research.

Call 0800 652 5737 or email help@ukworkforcehub.org.uk.

Advice and Legal Information on Volunteering

Volunteering England provides an information service, which can be contacted on 0800 028 3304 from 9.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. The organisation has recently published a handbook, 'Volunteers and the Law', which signposts the main issues around volunteering and where to go for further information. The full handbook costs £15, but a summary is available to download free of charge.

For further information visit: www.volunteering.org.uk/missions.php?id=1073.

5. General Advice and Guidance

Community Matters Advice & Information Service

The Community Matters Advice Line can provide information to community organisations on a wide range of topics including:

- Employment issues
- Health and safety requirements
- Charitable trading
- Constitutions and governance
- Legal structures
- Lease and other occupation agreements
- Managing community buildings
- Consulting the community
- Budgeting and accounts

The Advice Line is open Monday – Friday 9.30am-5.00pm (Closed 1.00 – 2.00 pm) on 0845 VISIBLE (8474253). Alternatively queries can be submitted electronically to: info@communitymatters.org.uk. Visit the website at: www.communitymatters.org.uk

Freedom of Information Act

Research undertaken by Ashridge Business School for National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) shows that the new Freedom of Information legislation is being widely used by the voluntary sector. However, it also found a need for more information about the Act, how to use it and where to get support. NCVO has therefore published an online guide, which can be accessed at www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/FIA

Press release about the research report, '[Called to Account](#)', or download it in pdf format via the above link.

Full Cost Recovery

A new website has been set up as part of a campaign by umbrella bodies acevo and NACVS to drive up understanding and use of Full Cost Recovery principles (ensuring overhead costs are properly taken into account in project funding bids).

A training programme over three years will be targeted at local infrastructure organisations and development workers, to provide them with the skills, knowledge and tools to offer affordable and sustainable support in full cost recovery to the smallest third sector organisations operating at a local level.

For more information, visit: www.fullcostrecovery.org.uk

Data Protection Good Practice

The Information Commissioner has produced a number of short, easy to read Good Practice Notes on specific work areas, which can be found at: www.ico.gov.uk/eventual.aspx?id=34

Two of relevance are: Charities and Marketing Practice - covers what voluntary organisations need to do to comply with data protection law when they carry out marketing activities; and Electronic Mail Marketing - aims to help businesses understand the 'dos and don'ts' of electronic mail marketing and gives an overview of the rules in the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.