



Consortia purchase of Human Resources (HR) support

A feasibility study

Sue Pittman MA MCIPD

July 2006

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Executive Summary

Research undertaken in recent years has established the need to strengthen the delivery of Human Resource Management (HRM) to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The current level of support within the sector is variable both in availability and quality and is in the main more reactive rather than the type of proactive HRM support that will make a significant difference to service delivery. The ChangeUp programme recognizes improved access to support and advice on Human Resource (HR) issues as a high level objective, which has prompted a number of regional initiatives to establish the way forward.

This study was commissioned by UK Workforce Hub and NCVO's Collaborative Working Unit to address the HR needs of small Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSOs) that do not have the capacity to employ a dedicated HR person. The study considers the feasibility of employment of an HR person by a consortium of organisations and also other possible models of consortia purchase, such as buying in services from a larger organisation, or Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) delivery.

The study establishes a number of key challenges to be addressed when considering consortia purchase of professional HR support:

- defining the type of service – moving from reactive to proactive
- ensuring inclusion of volunteers
- managing expectations and commitment of VCSOs
- role of trustees
- the size of a consortium
- the physical location of the service and employer role
- professional support for a lone post
- the HR person
- providing HR administrative support
- the make up of consortia
- cost and sustainability.

Three possible delivery models are identified:

The **large/small model** where large organisations contract their HR services to small organisations. Two examples of this model are highlighted in the report.

A **consortium of VCSOs** directly employing an HR person. This appears to be a new model.

CVS delivery of **proactive support** as a chargeable service.

The report also considers the scope for the development of tiered levels of HR support with tiered levels of payments within the CVS-based model above.

The study concludes that there is considerable scope for the development of consortia purchase, although not necessarily in one single model or in too rigid a format, and makes recommendations as to how that process can be supported.

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Introduction

This study was commissioned by UK Workforce Hub and NCVO's Collaborative Working Unit to explore the feasibility of Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSOs) that do not have the capacity to employ a dedicated Human Resource (HR) person purchasing HR professional support through a consortium of organisations.

In initial discussions it was agreed that this study should consider both the feasibility of direct employment of an HR person by a consortium of organisations and also other possible models of consortia purchase, such as buying in services from a larger organisation, or Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) delivery.

Background

The case for HR support for small to medium sized VCSOs has now been well established by research within the voluntary sector. NCVO published the report 'More than just a wing and a prayer' by the University of Strathclyde in late 2002 focusing on the Human Resource Management (HRM) priorities of small and medium sized voluntary and community organisations. It also explored the effectiveness of external resources in providing advice to the sector, and the extent to which small to medium sized VCSOs use external sources of HRM advice. The research found that although small to medium organisations are increasingly seeking to formalise their human resource management policies they find this difficult in a resource starved environment. Local studies carried out at the same time on a wide range of HR policies and practices in the voluntary sector in the Boroughs of Richmond and Kingston highlighted the need for professional support on HR issues.

In the summer of 2004 a research steering group funded by the Active Communities Unit commissioned research to look into the provision of HR support by voluntary sector infrastructure organisations to their clients or members. Their report, 'A stitch in time...', found that most support given was reactive rather than proactive and few organisations had a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) qualified person. Although many infrastructure organisations were keen to become 'problem preventers' rather than 'problem fixers', lack of resources prevented them from taking a more proactive approach and many were wary of promoting their HR services because of concerns about their ability to deal with the increased volume. The report suggested that a 'stitch in time...' culture should be encouraged which sees organisations thinking in advance about HR issues and that infrastructure organisations may want to be more proactive about offering services, and thinking about what they should offer, to encourage this culture change.

The need for voluntary and community employers to have improved access to support and advice on HR issues was recognized as a high level objective of the ChangeUp programme and there have been a number of regional initiatives to

establish the way forward. There is currently a 9 borough East London project underway to establish what is currently being offered on HR support and consider options for the future. They are considering delivery options under the management of the LVSC's PEACe HR advisory service.

Interestingly an East Midlands feasibility study into the provision of HR support as a collaborative enterprise has recently concluded that there is little demand for the type of service envisaged (e.g. coaching, mediation, training), outside of the generalist HR support currently on offer in the region but there was considerable enthusiasm for the idea of an HR Health check or audit being rolled out across the region. This apparent lack of demand may reflect more on the level of organisational development of small to medium organisations and their lack of understanding of the integral role of HR 'they don't know what they don't know'. HR Health checks will be a good first step and may lead to a better understanding of what is needed to move an organisation on in terms of HR best practice – but the help may not be there to support those changes.

Due to be published later in 2006 is an HRM delivery strategy for the 6 borough South London CVS Partnership. Development of the strategy identified the following key challenges to the delivery of sub regional HRM support.

- Moving a mindset from compliance to developing best practice
- Increasing access to CIPD qualified HR advice delivery
- Integration of sub regional or local HRM delivery with national developments
- Access to legal advice
- Diversity
- Trustee appreciation of the employer role
- Developing HR capacity building within the current disparate CVS' structures.
- Keeping in touch with developments in support for volunteers
- Sustainability - costs, and access to funding
- Strengthening HR management within the CVS themselves

Many of these challenges apply across the board to different models of addressing HR support including consortia purchase. The published report is likely to suggest that the most appropriate model to address the strategic challenges above is:

- A new CIPD qualified South London CVS Partnership post with local HR advice delivery being integrated into the current development structure of the individual CVS

To strengthen delivery at a local level:

- A 3 stage HRM quality advice model would be developed, and

- accredited HR training at NVQ level 3 (Certificate in Personnel Practice), would be provided for a CVS development worker with an HR function from each of the six boroughs

To address the needs of diverse and marginalized groups:

- A support worker from within the Black Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BMER) sector in each of the six boroughs would also be offered accredited HR training at NVQ level 3, and
- training on diversity sensitive, advice and support delivery, should be developed in partnership with BMER support groups for delivery to CVS advice workers.

The 3-stage HRM quality advice model proposed above is explained further in the section 'tiered delivery' below.

The way forward on HRM for the VCS is clearly towards more proactive support: consortia purchase should therefore be geared towards that purpose.

Methodology

Interviews were proposed with organisations already delivering collaborative HR support and HR personnel working within single organisations to sound out their views on the scope for consortia purchase of HR and collaborative working. A request was put out on NCVO's Personnel Network email which prompted offers of help from a range of organisations. These responses together with the views of the HR Director of Broadway, an organisation delivering HR support to 11 small and medium VCSOs within a two-year project sponsored by the London Housing Foundation (LHF), and the manager of the LVSC's PEACe HR advisory service, provided a broad cross section of the differing HR support currently being offered within the VCS. These fell into the following delivery models:

- Second-tier infrastructure organisations (mainly CVS)
- Larger organisations selling HR services to smaller organisations, (one of the issues addressed by NCVO's scoping study '1+1=3, Does Size Really Matter', on collaborative working between large and small voluntary organisations)
- 'Head Office' models supplying HRM support to regional offices

A general manager, an HR Director supplying in house support and an independent HR consultant were also interviewed.

In addition to their views on the advantages and challenges to consortia purchase of HR support, the interviewees were asked the following questions about the service that they currently provided:

- the number of HR personnel delivering support in their own organisations,

- how many staff or organisations they supported,
- the level of qualification of the HR personnel,
- the type of service provided,
- the service provided for volunteers,
- how the service was funded and evaluated and
- how long the service had been operating and future plans

Appendix 1 lists the organisations that took part in this study and summarises their responses to the questions on their current service.

The two larger organisations delivering HR services to smaller agencies had already been noted by NCVO as case studies on collaborative working and summaries of these projects can be seen at Appendices 2 and 3. The London Housing Foundation (LHF) HR project 'Beyond a helpline' being delivered by Broadway's in-house HR department (App 3) provides a particularly helpful framework for considering consortia purchase of HR support.

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Advantages and challenges

The response of the interviewees were almost without exception, very positive about the role that consortia purchase of HR could have in developing the capacity of small VCSOs' – 'great', 'it could be fantastic and make a real difference', 'huge role for providing HR at a reasonable rate' – and they had anecdotal demand for this type of support. The key advantages were thought to be in the access to professional expertise and in the opportunity to develop the proactive HR support that small VCSOs most need – 'so much better than "making do" with administrators doing HR'. There would also be savings on the development of policies etc with the costs spread amongst groups.

However it was recognized that such projects needed careful management. A number of significant challenges to consortia purchase of HR were identified at the tender and proposal stage of this study and were added to by the interviewees. These should not be underestimated and are addressed as follows:

Type of HR service

Consideration of the role of consortia purchase of HR support needs to be examined as a part of the wider consideration of how high quality HR support can be delivered to the voluntary and community sector. The case for more proactive HR support was referred to in the background given earlier in this report. The current level of HR support within the sector is very variable both in availability and quality and is in the main more reactive than proactive.

The professional HR support being supplied by those interviewed for this study ranged from helplines, HR specialist support supplied by second-tier infrastructure organisations and larger organisations contracting out their HR services to smaller groups. All the interviewees currently giving professional HR advice within second-tier infrastructure organisations were concerned that the majority of the support was given on a reactive rather than proactive basis. Although more proactive capacity building work was thought to be key to making a real difference within the sector, time constraints on the HR advisors gave little opportunity to work with groups beyond dealing with problems as they arose. One advisor was particularly concerned that very small groups, particularly from the BMER sector hardly consulted her and was hoping to build up that contact over time. Those giving advice at this level were particularly frustrated at the lack of time and resources to educate smaller organisations within the sector about the importance of HR, not only at a basic level dealing with legal compliance but also the ability of best practice HRM to impact the organisation to achieve its goals and improve its service – 'either bigger or better'.

Consortia purchase of HR support would be able to offer a far more proactive service for its members, more in line with the HR service being delivered by the two larger organisations to smaller groups.

The HR service being delivered by Carr-Gomm to ARP (see App 2) was considered by Carr-Gomm's HR Director to be the equivalent of that being delivered within Carr-Gomm itself, with the HR Director and HR Manager attending ARP meetings and getting to know the business. Carr-Gomm are looking at developing their HR service to other small groups in the future.

The service being delivered within the London Housing Foundation project by Broadway (see App 3) has much to offer as a starting point for a model to be adapted for consortia purchase. The service is designed to be proactive and offers the 11 participating organisations:

- an audit of their current HR situation and needs;
- the development of core policies, procedures and competencies that will be adapted for each agency;
- training in relation to the above and other areas;
- regular HR surgeries;
- a helpline with dedicated support;
- guaranteed updating and support following any change in legislation or accepted good practice;
- a nominated account manager for each participating agency.

The HR audit is considered to be the bones of the delivery package, enabling a robust clear HR strategy to be developed for each agency. The helpline is considered a last resort and is expected to diminish as capacity building takes place.

Broadway were involved in the development of the project at an early stage, with the service delivery package being developed from a thorough consultation process; participating agency heads attended two interactive workshops. The resultant package is flexible enough to deal with agencies at different levels of development, delivering robust recruitment and performance management models and a 'compulsory' management development programme which then enables managers within an agency to act as a team, knowing what changes they are working towards. The service delivery agreement setting out exactly what agencies can expect to see delivered is copied at Appendix 4.

The LHF is funding a comprehensive evaluation by outside consultants – working closely with Broadway to maximize learning which will be disseminated through LHF's Impact programme both to homeless agencies and also the wider voluntary sector.

Ensuring inclusion of volunteers

Those interviewed for this study had limited contact with volunteers. Most of the second-tier organisations referred queries on the management of volunteers to Volunteer Centres unless the query was about the possible employee status of the 'volunteer' or the employer role of the Trustee. One of the HR directors was

involved in occasional volunteer recruitment and induction. The agencies taking part in the Broadwater scheme were not heavily dependent on volunteer input and had not included volunteer management as a separate part of their delivery plan.

However volunteers are the key stakeholders in many small organisations and in some, all frontline service delivery is by volunteers. The service delivery plan for a consortium with such groups would need to ensure that the volunteer role was integral to that plan. The plan should take account of developments in best practice management of volunteers; Volunteering England would be able to offer advice.

Managing expectations and commitment of VCSOs

This was seen as key area to get right from the outset without which there was a very strong risk of the failure of the project - 'different groups might want different things', 'each group would think the HR person only worked for them'. A clear service delivery agreement is essential.

Not only must the role of the HR person be clearly defined, with consortium members having a clear idea of exactly what they might expect from the service but they also need to know what they must commit to the project and 'contract' their own input. Dealing with staff issues within small groups is generally one task of a range of many carried out by one or two key people and time can be huge issue. One of the CVS HR advisors reported that some groups continually cancelled their HR audit making it impossible to make any progress.

Consortia should consider adopting a similar model to the Broadway service level agreement at Appendix 4. This not only clearly states what agencies will expect to see delivered under the project but also what the expectations are of the agencies for each of the target delivery areas.

Trustees

Linked to the management of expectations of organisations is the role undertaken by Trustees. Trustees do not always understand their role as employer and in small organisations often have a very 'hands on' role – not always constructive. An HR Manager working in-house would probably be expected to be closely involved in steering HR policies through the Management Committee. In a consortium HR role, satisfying several Trustee boards could prove difficult and the relationship with Trustees would need to be defined within the HR role. In consortia of very small groups it might be helpful to have a joint consortium HR Committee or Steering Group at Trustee level.

The size of a consortium

There is a significant challenge in determining the optimum number of organisations in an HR purchasing consortium and the total number of

employees which one person could handle. It would largely depend on the type of service envisaged along the proactive/reactive continuum and the state of organisations' current HRM policies and practices – although the system should be robust enough to cope with differences.

CVS currently supplying professional HR advice report that many organisations need considerable help – 'lots of handholding'. With too large a consortium, this role could easily become overstretched, as with many of the CVS roles, and move back to reactive rather than proactive support.

The challenge for some organisations in finding the capacity to take on board new initiatives has already been noted above. However this is not necessarily directly related to the size of an organisation. There may be issues of organisational development and capability. The importance of an organisation understanding what they have to input in time and commitment in order to reap the benefits of the project is probably more critical than the size of the organisation. There has to be a key person or 'champion' willing and able to take this forward.

For the role to make a difference and move the organisations forward in HRM some of the interviewees felt that for a single HR person, 5 groups would probably be the maximum – perhaps a psychologically satisfying number in that each group would feel that they had a day a week allocated to their needs. However costs might be considered high shared among only 5 organisations. Where groups are fully committed to making the necessary capacity available a larger consortium size could be considered.

A maximum of 50 staff was suggested although this could be a little high – the contract between Carr-Gomm and Alcohol Recovery Project allocates 3 HR employees for 100 staff. EDP have some director time, an HR Officer and a half time HR Manager delivering HR to 83 staff but the current capacity is not considered adequate. Broadway are delivering HR support to 11 agencies with 175 staff between them, a further organisation outside the project and 160 of their own staff, with an HR Department of 5 staff at managerial or advisor level.

There was a suggestion that a group of part-time HR professionals or a larger group of HR professionals dealing with a larger client group would provide a more flexible arrangement where time off could be covered – although it should be noted that medium sized groups employing a single HR professional have to deal with absence without additional cover. Group delivery would also address the challenge of providing peer support noted below.

Physical location of service and employer role

A consortium will need to think carefully about where the service is located and who will be the HR person's employer and line manager.

The location could depend on the type of service envisaged. If a proactive service is envisaged then the HR person will need to be visible and working as far as possible from within the organisations, and may require a physical presence for part of the week. Restricting the number of groups in the consortium offers the option of having the HR person physically present on at least one day a week.

Computer use will also be an issue: a mobile HR person would most probably need a laptop.

However if the service is based in one organisation it could be perceived as getting more than their fair share and be a very real issue. That organisation would need reimbursement of their overheads and possibly a management fee if the post is line managed there. However, the Director who 'employs' will not want to be at the whim of other Directors and there were concerns voiced about who would manage the situation if groups differed in their opinions about the quality of the service.

It was also suggested that a consortium HR person could be located within the local CVS. This could address some of the concerns above but it would be important to be clear what role the HR person is expected to fulfil; delivering a proactive service for a smaller number of organisations at a realistic cost or a service similar to the current more reactive CVS model at a lesser cost. Liaison with other CVS development workers would allow more coordinated support to groups and increase the impact of service delivery.

There was also a concern raised about potential problems on indemnification for individual groups if things go wrong – this will impact the group who is actually the employer; it would be advisable to obtain legal advice on this point.

Support for lone post

Several interviewees expressed concern that a lone post might feel isolated without colleagues. The need for linking up and cross working within a professional network should be recognized as should the need for a mentor. The post holder at the Hillingdon CVS project has been very grateful for the support provided by PEACe who have been assisting the project on a consultative basis.

There is also the question of legal support. The new Rotherham Voluntary Action HR post is a joint project with the Law Centre and illustrates how second-tier infrastructure organisations in one region have addressed the problem; a summary is attached at Appendix 5. The PEACe advisor is supported by a legal advisor which the Hillingdon project can also tap into.

The person

The consortium would need to know who to employ – they need to be clear on what they are looking for in the postholder and may need help in defining that. The person would need to be an experienced HR generalist – HR specialists would need to be avoided – and probably have worked at a higher level ‘someone with intelligence and breadth of thinking e.g. when recruiting – they must have the ability to think about different needs and cultures’. They would also need to be very ‘hands on’ and be able to hit the ground running.

HR administrative support

Administrative support for recording absence, keeping personnel files up to date etc., will need to be provided to allow the HR person to focus on delivery of proactive HRM support. Consortium members will need to ensure that capacity is provided within their own organisations.

One of the interviewees for this study suggested that IT software could play a big part, recommending the LiquidHR website as an example. This certainly has potential, providing online access to record keeping and to staff policies etc. that can be accessed by staff and management, but would be a huge undertaking, possibly something that the UK Workforce Hub/Collaborative Working Unit might consider exploring further.

Make-up of consortia

There could be advantages in keeping sub sectors together, where participating groups might have the same approach to issues. The two examples of large/small arrangements examined within this study are both working in similar sectors. This might prove most beneficial where sub sectors have specific HR issues e.g. the development of care workers within the requirements of the Care Standards Act.

Consortia purchase of HR might be an option for consortia which have already formed for other purposes. Small providers are now forming consortia to bid for Supporting People money where Local Authorities have funding for homeless or disability projects. Other consortia are also being formed to bid under competitive tendering. However a note of warning should be sounded. One of the interviewees highlighted problems they had experienced with consortia. Some are very loosely based and can be in competition with each other: ‘they don’t show all their cards and can be almost uncooperative therefore the HR person could be under pressure – pulled one way rather than another – what’s good for one might not be good for another’.

Cost and sustainability

Whilst one of the advantages of consortia purchase is that the funding is unlikely to disappear ‘en bloc’ and the project should be more sustainable, there is a risk that individual organisations might expect to be able to drop out at short notice. It

would be advisable to insist on commitment for at least a year with 6 months notice to terminate being required before the end of the year.

As consortium members improve their policies and practices it may be possible to expand the consortium size and reduce costs, although progression to best practice HR can take considerable time as organisations adjust to change. The London Housing Foundation are expecting agency costs to reduce over time as agencies become able to maintain their higher standards at a similar budget allocation.

The LHF/Broadway project is subsidized by 50% of the real cost by the LHF. Agencies pay £2,000 plus £200 per employee. For 15 staff the actual cost is £10,000 but only £5,000 would be paid. This is for a high quality proactive service with access to a full HR team and a clear delivery package. It was suggested above that 1 person to 5 organisations is a viable ratio but using the estimated costs of employing the Richmond CVS HR advisor shown below, that would mean individual organisational costs in excess of £8,000.

Gross salary, NI contributions and pension	£37,000
Office overheads	£2,000
Management fee at 10%	<u>£3,900</u>
Total	£42,900

Broadway have just advertised for a Senior HR Advisor to support their project at a similar salary level to the above.

Some of the groups within the South London CVS Partnership had intimated that they would consider a chargeable HR service and it may be that the SLCVSP will carry out a feasibility study in the future which may address the problem of sustaining funding to deliver HR.

The SLCVS HRM delivery strategy also considered tiered delivery of HRM. This is explained further below. A tiered delivery system might allow a system of tiered payments and would probably work well within a CVS delivery model but would probably over-complicate a consortium purchase arrangement.

Models for consortia purchase

Large/small model

NCVO have carried out a scoping study on collaborative working between large and small voluntary and community organisations – ‘1+1=3 Does Size Really Matter?’ – which concluded that there is huge potential that this way of working has for the VCS. This model would appear to work very well for HR delivery in the VCS and can address many of the challenges identified earlier more easily than an isolated consortium of small groups. It can probably offer the easiest and most secure option for small organisations but it will not be available to most. The success of such a project also very much depends on the quality of the package being offered by the large organisation. The LHF/Broadway project would appear to offer an excellent model both for the large/small option and as a foundation for the purchase of an HR person by a consortium. This project has only just started and it will be interesting to follow its progress to see what lessons can be learned.

Consortia of VCSOs employing an HR person

This appears to be a new model but with considerable scope for development. There are a number of key challenges which have been the focus of this report. These must be addressed at the start of the project if it is to realize its potential, most notably:

- The development of a robust delivery strategy and evaluation plan – consortium members will then be clear about what they should expect to see from the project and the changes that are expected to be made
- A clear statement of what consortium members are expected to commit to the project to enable delivery
- A consortium size that fits the delivery strategy i.e. smaller for a proactive package being delivered by a single HR person
- Careful consideration of the location and the role of the employer
- Mentoring or professional network support for the post holder
- Providing HR administrative support

CVS delivery of proactive HR support

This envisages a package similar to that being delivered under the LHF/Broadway project (App 3 and 4) but under the wing of a CVS as a chargeable, full cost recovery service to a limited number of organisations. The same challenges would need to be addressed but this would have the advantage of the CVS managing the project and providing the necessary support, including taking the role of employer. The CVS itself could benefit from the service either by adopting the large/small model above or by offsetting the HR service provided to the CVS against the management fee.

There is also scope for encouraging the development of the type of CVS based professional HR advice and support currently being delivered by those second-tier infrastructure organisations listed in Appendix 1 but as a chargeable service. This type of professional second-tier infrastructure HR support is currently very limited across the country and many of those posts struggle to maintain funding for the service. This could provide a low cost sustainable service to many organisations which do not currently have access to professional HR support. However with the larger consortium size the service would have to be on a more reactive basis. There is scope here for developing a more proactive model based on a tiered service with a tiered level of payments. This is considered below.

Tiered delivery

The SLCVS Partnership HRM Delivery Strategy includes a recommendation to develop a tiered delivery model. As well as being able to react to direct queries and provide model policies and training, the CVS felt that there is a strong need for proactive 1:1 outreach contact with groups. The HR needs of groups also vary widely both between groups and at different times in their own development, and there is also the challenge in integrating any HR model within the individual CVS's current differing delivery of support and advice.

It was decided that these challenges could be partly addressed by the development of an HR advice or quality model broadly reflecting the voluntary sector three stage PQASSO quality mark system e.g.

Level 1 for the proposed, new or very small employer, delivering just the basic 'start up' legal requirements e.g. model employment contracts (basic written statements are all that is legally required but VCSOs should be encouraged to start with a full contract to avoid future legal weaknesses and problems), equal opportunities recruitment and general policy, H&S and discipline and grievance policies, avoiding establishing employee status with volunteers, and basic statutory employee rights.

Level 2 developing a full set of policies such as bullying and harassment, and absence which help protect groups from the risk of an Employment Tribunal and to ensure good employee relations, basic HR Management advice on induction and probation, the importance of development as a retention tool.

Level 3 employee relations problems, more difficult legal issues, help with Investors in People, developing the 'people' side of management and leadership skills, coaching for Trustee / senior manager relations.

It was suggested that advice and training at Levels 1 and 2 could be delivered at local CVS level across the partnership with accredited HR training at NVQ level 3 (Certificate of Personnel Practice) being provided for a CVS HR development worker from each of the six boroughs.

Advice at Level 3 would be given by a fully qualified (CIPD graduate diploma) central, regional post.

This tiered delivery model could provide a framework for the development of a system with tiered levels of payment.

Conclusions

Any initiatives to improve HRM within small VCOSs should be welcomed and consortia purchase has its place within that framework although it may be unhelpful and unnecessary to think in terms of a single rigid model. Each consortium will have different needs and will gain the most from the project if the stakeholders take responsibility for developing the project to address their own needs and to commit the time and energy necessary to reap the benefits offered by best practice HR.

The challenges identified with this study provide an excellent framework in which to make those decisions. However it is recognized that for some consortia, although the will and commitment might be there, they will struggle to develop a robust model without some form of professional help or outside project management such as a CVS.

Where groups are considering forming an independent consortium, they should consider their membership with care. Members must have the capacity and commitment to ensure the success of the project.

There would appear to be considerable scope for large organisations to develop their own HR function as a social enterprise to sell their HR services to smaller organisations. Medium organisations with sound organisational and management development might also consider hosting and developing an HR project from within a consortium with an element of social enterprise.

Recommendations

The Workforce Hub/NCVO should support the development of consortia purchase of HR support.

Any developments of this approach should:

- focus on the delivery of proactive HR support
- ensure consortium members are consulted at the outset and be closely involved in the development of their project to create management 'buy-in'.
- consider the challenges identified within this report at the development stage of the project
- liaise with Volunteering England to ensuring HRM delivery plans address the needs of volunteers
- consider addressing the need for providing professional help to potential consortia who do not have the necessary in-house expertise to develop their own model, addressing the key challenges and having a clear and realistic plan of the changes they expect the project to make to their

- service, the timeframe for those changes and how those changes will be evaluated. This should be targeted
- consider the development of a tiered delivery and payment plan
 - liaise with LVSC's PEACe service or other similar services to develop coaching or mentoring support for lone HR workers
 - liaise with PEACe and the Law Centre to develop legal support for HR advisors
 - seek legal advice on indemnification if a consortium HR employee advises incorrectly
 - consider development of HR Information Systems for the VCS

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Appendices

These are attached as separate documents

Appendix 1 Interviewees

Appendix 2 Carr-Gomm/ARP summary

Appendix 3 LHF/Broadway summary

Appendix 4 Broadway Service Level Agreement

Appendix 5 Rotherham VA/Law Centre summary

Further information

NCVO's **Collaborative Working Unit (CWU)** offers information and advice to help voluntary and community organisations make decisions about whether and how to work collaboratively. It serves managers and trustees as well as engaging with infrastructure bodies, funders and policy makers.

Email: collaborate@ncvo-vol.org.uk

Tel: 020 7520 2440

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/collaborate

The Collaborative Working Unit is supported by Bridge House Trust, Lloyds TSB Foundation, the Tudor Trust, the Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust, and the Dulverton Trust.

The **UK Workforce Hub** offers guidance and advice to help voluntary and community organisations to attract, develop and retain the staff and volunteers they need.

The Hub promotes good employment practice in the voluntary and community sector by offering a one-stop-shop website and a helpline for organisations and a variety of publications and networks.

Email: workforcehub@ukworkforcehub.org.uk

Tel: 0800 652 5737

www.ukworkforcehub.org.uk

UK Workforce Hub is funded by ChangeUp.

