

THIRD SECTOR CAPACITY-BUILDING FOCUS GROUP

DISCUSSION GROUPS FEEDBACK

Introduction

The Children's Workforce Development Council and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services held a focus group with individuals from the voluntary and community youth sector, training providers, awarding bodies and local authority representatives. This took place on the 15 July 2008. At the event a series of questions were raised for discussion groups regarding the volunteer accreditation scheme proposal and training needs. To follow is a summary of the responses which will help to inform the work of the third sector capacity building strand of the Youth Workforce Reform Programme.

The information has been collated by CWDC and added to (highlighted in pink) by Nichola Brown from the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

Discussion Groups 1

In thinking about the ways Third Sector front-line and managerial staff and volunteers currently access training:

1. What's working well in your area of the country or in your national organisation?

- Safeguarding
- Training – Awareness/CAF/integrated process/Management/Youth work/internal for volunteers/bespoke
- Leadership & Management course pilot
- E-learning
- Volunteer systems
- Funding – Train to gain/partnerships with colleges/network approaches with other organisations

2. Where do you get the money for staff and volunteer training?

- Core funding
- DCSF
- LA
- WSPP
- Lottery
- Fundraising / donations
- Awards for all
- Train to gain

3. What are the challenges and barriers to the goal of ensuring well-trained staff?

- Resistance to training/change from volunteers. Volunteers lack time
- Funding/Financial resources
- Travel, time, motivation and costs
- Constant change – every Children’s Trust is different
- Staff don’t understand IYSS
- Communication
- Lack of sector infrastructure

4. How could those challenges and barriers be overcome?

- Continual subsidy & funding
- Provide training via different methods e.g. e-learning, deliver training at premises, trainer audio tapes or podcasts, as not everyone can attend training and people learn in different ways.
- Closer partnerships between VCS & public sector for e.g. commissioning
- Emphasis on a ‘quality’ training experience – avoid government speak & unnecessary conditions.
- Consolidation of universal goals for whole sector
- Investment in infrastructure
- Consensus statement from third sector
- CWDC should take over youth work from LLUK
- Share training – larger organisations offer training to smaller

Discussion Groups 2

When thinking about the types of training available to equip workers to deliver integrated youth support services and how it is delivered:

1. Which of the 11 training topic suggestions do you think are essential? Which are useful? Which are not priorities at all?

TOPIC	ESSENTIAL	USEFUL	NOT A PRIORITY
Multi-agency working	<p><i>Various responses according to individual experience</i></p> <p><i>Do it not train it.</i></p> <p><i>Do it continuously</i></p>	<p><i>Various responses according to individual experience</i></p> <p><i>If linked to work of operation</i></p>	<p><i>Various responses according to individual experience</i></p> <p><i>Also about team working</i></p> <p><i>For community</i></p>

	✓ - it's a principle <i>For infrastructure</i>		<i>groups</i>
Common Core training	<i>Not necessarily every aspect.</i> <i>For larger groups</i>	<i>Not necessarily every aspect.</i> <i>Do it but hide it</i>	<i>Not necessarily every aspect.</i> <i>Parts of it won't be relevant</i>
Lead Professional role	<i>For some targeted youth work providers</i>	<i>Must understand</i>	✓
Safeguarding and child protection including an awareness of Contact Point and Common Assessment Framework	✓		✓
Youth work skills, linked to various levels of training	✓		
Children and young people's development	✓	up to a point	
Health and safety, including risk assessments	✓		
Understanding the current policy and funding environment	<i>Use sector networks</i>	<i>Use sector networks</i>	✓
Fundraising support including an awareness of commissioning frameworks		✓	✓
Financial management, including business planning	✓	✓	
Performance management and impact assessment	✓ <i>Essential if you're commissioning etc</i>		

Any further comments on training topics:

- There are big differences in training cultures: VCS, public sector, health etc to overcome.
- Up and coming legislation
- Good safe guarding practice at Brentwood (Debbie Cordingly)
- Diversity is missed out. It ought to be included
- Community groups need to be motivated to make up training and see relevance

Following the event, **Youth Access** (James Kenrick) sent the following list of training needs as regrettably these were not noted at the event:

- “ The CWDC’s long list of priority training areas we discussed in the focus group in no way matches the priorities of the youth information, advice and counselling services (YIACS) sector.
- Agencies on the front-line will only want to go on training about integrated working if it’s affecting them – and the evidence from our members seems to be at the moment that many elements of integrated working are simply not happening on the ground in the way that the DCSF and CWDC are assuming.
- YIACS require more specialist training on things like safeguarding and information sharing than the kind of generic training the CWDC seems to have in mind – our members have been giving us a clear message that local safeguarding training doesn’t tend to cover the kinds of scenarios with which they are having to deal and that they need training targeted specifically at YIACS so that they can discuss with other YIACS ethical and practical issues that come up in the course of advice work and counselling.
- There is also a clear unmet demand for training on working with different groups of young people (refugees & asylum seekers, YP with mental health issues etc.) and specific issue training (self-harm, gangs/guns/knives, homelessness etc.). Training on many of these topics is likely to be seen as a far higher priority by our members than training on integrated working – which most agencies have actually been doing very successfully (without some of the more formal systems and structures like CAF, ContactPoint, Lead Professionals etc.) for many years”.

Nichola Brown has also been informed of a need for training for working with asylum seekers and refugees (from Student Action for Refugees).

2. Do you think that regions have individual needs over and above this list? If so, what might they be?

- VCS not necessarily accessing it
- CWDC need to be aware of regional differences - rural areas or inner cities? e.g. one area might need to deal with diversity more than another. Personal safety skills, dealing with violent groups for example
- Good communications key to regional approaches
- How do border issues work?
- Accessibility issues rather than need
- Infrastructure capacity issues
- Local delivery of training to cope with scale and access but cross authority access is key to facilitate partnership working and economies of scale. Often lack of training in some areas

3. Should training be multi-agency or not? Why?

- Yes
- Depends on topic but generally positive.
- There needs to be communication and sharing of good practice between organisations
- Needs to be a mixture of delivery

Why not?

- The needs of the small groups of volunteer staff.

4. Is the present delivery infrastructure adequate for delivering the training you have identified? If not, how could it improve?

- Adequate in some and not in others.

How could it improve:

- Improve training initiatives.
- We need more people to deliver training on the ground
- Ensure ease of access.
- Train the trainers
- Needs to be commitment on all sides.
- Need for more assessors e.g. to assess NVQs
- Adaptability of if infrastructure for each area
- Different infrastructure – identify needs
- No. We don't understand what it is. Pulling together and mapping what exists is required.

5. NCVYS will be delivering information sessions to national members (national, voluntary & youth orgs) to inform them of workforce reform initiatives and the integrated working agenda in order to explore which initiatives are of relevance. If we can secure more resources, we hope to follow this up with individual meetings with members. Is there anything else we should be doing? *Response to the feedback made in italics and colour by NCVYS.*

- Avoid London centric sessions (*arranged the information session for York in December but received no bookings. Other partners of NCVYS also struggling to attract audiences to events outside of London*).
- Expenses to be covered (*in the grant application to try and secure funding for the workforce development work post April 2009, NCVYS has increased the request for funding to support travel costs for members*)
- Backfill costs (*although agree this is important to do, funding for the grant application was limited so unable to apply for money to cover backfill costs*)
- NCVYS have a role to explain things to people and give idea of impacts
- NCVYS to link regions together (*not sure what this is about – so whoever made the comment please do get in touch. However, in the grant application proposal for next year there is a continued focus on brokering practice between organisations and networks*)
- Small workshops on specific issues to focus on action (*good suggestion and woven in to grant application*)
- Buddying systems – facilitation of practice exchange through shadowing and informing (*practice exchange and brokering practice is a key feature of the grant application for work next year. Will look at how we can promote work shadowing opportunities between individuals. Sharing feedback with NAVCA too for their grant application to support local infrastructure organisations (which will support our local networks too)*)
- Help with unpacking policy agenda and identify implications for workforce (*will continue with information sessions, policy briefings & articles in the NCVYS newsletter Exchange. The next policy briefing is due in January when the Children's Workforce Strategy 2020 paper is released*).
- Communications an issue (*agree this is an on-going challenge. Making good progress in setting up a database of workforce development specialists across the NCVYS membership. Also have a good database of contacts across the wider field. Problem for NCVYS is that not all members have the capacity to disseminate information down through to their networks – in particular national voluntary youth organisations*).
- Vulnerable YP workers need higher level of engagement in integrated working (*totally agree and organisations which have vulnerable young people workers will be NCVYS' priority to support 2009 -2011, should the grant application be successful. NCVYS has written the Why Workforce Reform information sheet to help leaders and managers in the sector (in particular those that work with vulnerable young people workers) understand why they need to engage in the integrated working agenda and receive training. NCVYS has also been involved in promoting consultation of the vulnerable young people worker award. NCVYS would expect that any integrated working training available nationally to be prioritised to this group.*

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6. How do workers hear about training available in your area and in which ways (if any) does that need to be strengthened?

- Lots of mail outs – local, regional and national infrastructure
- Chat room would be great. Yahoo group / chat room etc
- Training directories – but they are costly and don't always get to workers
- Email bulletins – flexible formats
- Frameworks, consistent approaches

7. Would a development worker be of any help in brokering training needs and opportunities in your area?

- Yes if specifically for training and supported by infrastructure
- There is a need to promote collaboration between voluntary organisations and statutory sector organisations, someone who worked with both sectors jointly