

# Something to *believe in*

A report on recruitment  
problems and opportunities  
*in the Scottish Voluntary Sector*



# **Something to believe in**

## **About the report's commissioners**

This report was commissioned by the HR Network. The HR Network is made up of a number of social care organisations in the Scottish voluntary sector and aims to provide a forum for the discussion and dissemination of good employment practice. Seven of these organisations feature in this report.

## **About the report's authors**

The Scottish Centre for Employment Research is part of the University of Strathclyde Business School. It produces high quality academic research on work and employment that is intended to be useful to policy-makers in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

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## **Foreword by Jackie Baillie, MSP**

The voluntary sector, not least the social care sub-sector, makes an important contribution to the lives of many people in Scotland. It provides them with indispensable services that help them lead full and active lives. It also provides a huge number of jobs, many of which are amongst the most rewarding and fulfilling. I have a long association with the voluntary sector not just previously as a member of the Scottish Executive but before becoming an MSP and continuing now. It is a sector that I am pleased to be able to try to help develop.

I know the sector struggles with a number of problems, pay not least of them. However image is also a concern. Many people do not think of a career in the voluntary sector and they are unaware of the positive impact that a job in a voluntary organisation can have both on themselves and the people they help. If the sector is to continue to be able to do its good work, it is essential that more people, and from different backgrounds, are attracted to work in it. This report recognises many of the recruitment problems faced by voluntary organisations in Scotland but highlights the opportunities that are also available. Scotland is a country that cares and as the report's title emphasises, a job in the voluntary sector is something to believe in.

## Executive summary

Despite popular misconceptions, voluntary sector jobs can be good jobs and there is a need to encourage more people to work in the sector. There are around 50,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland providing a wide range of services. The sector is a significant employer in Scotland, with over 100,000 or nearly 5% of all Scottish employees.

The voluntary sector is a growing part of the Scottish economy and offers many employment opportunities. Despite these opportunities, nearly 50% of organisations in the voluntary sector have recruitment difficulties and the vacancy rate is higher than in the public and private sectors.

The importance of the sector is increasingly being recognised and its delivery of services is expanding. Services previously provided by the public sector are now being transferred to the voluntary sector through partnerships and sub-contracting. At the same time, with new legal requirements, the voluntary sector has to professionalise this delivery. The sector has to resolve its recruitment problems if it is to expand.

Drawing on new and existing research the report examines recruitment in the sector and offers practical recommendations to improve it. The research was conducted over summer 2004.

The research suggests that recruitment is hampered by misconceptions about the sector, relatively poor pay and a shortage of suitable applicants at all levels in voluntary organisations.

These are real problems, lessening voluntary organisations capacity to reach targets and objectives, establish new projects and meet quality standards. In the short-term, recruitment has to be improved; in the long-term funding has to be addressed.

There are benefits to working in the sector. Existing employees believe that their work ‘makes a difference’ to people’s lives, and it offers a sense of belonging with high levels of job satisfaction. It also offers staff opportunity for creativity, autonomy and flexibility. The sector provides real opportunities for personal and career development, and commitment to it is strong. As one employee said in the study:

‘This organisation has good work conditions and I believe that no other work would give me the same job satisfaction. This type of work is something I believe in and genuinely care about it. I enjoy it and it is very satisfying.’

Voluntary organisations provide jobs for all segments of the labour market. Having the right kind of personality is more important than issues such as sex, ethnicity or age.

More than 75% of managers in the study had recruitment problems for care workers and other specialist posts. Reasons include a tight labour market, competition with other voluntary organisations, local authority and other sectors such as retail, expectations of what the job involves, the nature of care work, lack of qualified applicants for certain posts, uncompetitive pay, unattractive working patterns and delays in recruitment due to new legislative requirements.

Employees who stay the shortest in the organisation were those with unrealistic expectations of working in the care sector or people who were inflexible and unable to cope with the demands of the sector. Conversely people who stayed the longest tended to have the right personality and experience, and were willing to invest time and effort to ensure that service users have a positive experience.

Based on the research, the report recommendations include:

- ∄ There is a need to consider re-branding the sector. Too many potential employees equate the voluntary sector with volunteering; not paid jobs.
- ∄ Voluntary organisations in social care should target new groups of potential employees, specifically older workers, men and ethnic minorities.
- ∄ The voluntary sector should develop closer links with college and university careers services to attract graduates and young people.
- ∄ Individual voluntary organisations and the Scottish Executive should work together to develop graduate recruitment and career development programmes.
- ∄ For all workers, recruitment should emphasise job satisfaction in voluntary organisations to counter relatively lower pay.

## Background

The voluntary sector provides a wide range of services and is a significant employer in Scotland. The type and size of organisations, and the services provided varies enormously – for example housing, social care, arts and sports, health and community development. There are around 50,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland. Employment across the sector is estimated to be over 100,000 or nearly 5% of all Scottish employees – relatively higher than the rest of the UK.<sup>1</sup> The importance of the sector is increasingly being recognised. Services previously provided by the public sector are now being transferred to the voluntary sector.

These employment opportunities need to be considered alongside the recruitment problems for the voluntary sector. Competition from the public and private sectors for paid staff is strong, principally for management and front-line care staff. UK data suggests that nearly half of all voluntary organisations experience recruitment difficulties.<sup>2</sup> In Scotland the vacancy rate of the voluntary sector is higher than those for the public and private sectors. The latter two sectors also have management recruitment problems, compounding the difficulties of the voluntary sector. In addition, relatively fewer younger workers are being attracted to the voluntary sector in Scotland. Graduate recruitment is a problem.<sup>3</sup>

These recruitment difficulties cause problems for voluntary organisations, for example in meeting quality standards. There is a belief amongst employers that the social care sub-sector, is facing: ‘... a growing staff crisis ... threatening the long-term provision of quality care to the most vulnerable in our society.’<sup>4</sup>

These problems must be addressed. In England and Wales, it is claimed funding shortfalls are being met by recourse to voluntary donations and the capping of salaries, which reduces the appeal of jobs in the sector as well as affecting retention, staff leave for better paid jobs elsewhere. This makes it harder to deliver services to clients.<sup>5</sup>

This report reviews recruitment opportunities and difficulties within the Scottish voluntary sector. It is timely because as the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) argues: ‘Scottish organisations seem particularly inactive in their approach to dealing with recruitment problems.’<sup>6</sup>

## Who works and where

Social care voluntary organisations provide services to some of the most vulnerable people in society. The Government is developing partnerships between the voluntary and public sectors to deliver more of these services so that, in practice, they

become ‘outsourced’ to the voluntary sector. In the past, many staff in the voluntary sector had few or no qualifications. The Government now regulates provision by the voluntary sector to ensure that standards are defined and maintained, and the sector is now moving towards having better qualified workers.

Voluntary sector jobs can be categorised into two groups – paid staff and volunteers. The sub-sectors of social care and welfare employ most paid staff; most volunteer staff work in arts, sports and cultural activities. There are an estimated 107,000 full-time and part-time paid staff in the voluntary sector, or approximately 5% of the overall Scottish workforce – proportionally twice that of the UK figure. The number of voluntary sector jobs in Scotland has increased by around 4000 per year, or a 17% increase from 1997 to 2001.<sup>7</sup>

Women continue to dominate the workforce in Scotland, making up around 70% of the labour force.<sup>8</sup> Of all paid staff, 39% work full-time, 44% part-time and 17% sessional hours. Women tend to work part-time; men full-time. Ethnic minority groups constitute only 1.5% of the paid workforce in Scotland.<sup>9</sup> This figure is low compared to the UK voluntary sector and is less than for the public and private sectors at 6.5% and 6.3% respectively.<sup>10</sup> There are many young paid staff, around 7.6% of the total workforce, but who are likely to be employed as care assistants.<sup>11</sup> The voluntary sector workforce seems well educated, with 28.6% having degrees.<sup>12</sup> However, there is still scope to increase the number of graduates and young people in the sector.

## **Recruitment difficulties**

Over a quarter of voluntary sector employers in the Futureskills Scotland survey anticipated recruitment difficulties over the next 2-3 years. This figure is higher than for the public and private sectors. Higher vacancy and hard-to-fill vacancy rates are also more common than in the public and private sectors.<sup>13</sup>

## **Real and perceived reasons for recruitment difficulties**

There are a number of reasons for these recruitment difficulties. Whilst the positive aspects of working in voluntary organisations are recognised – job satisfaction, flexibility, ethical opportunities, and a degree of autonomous working absent in the public and private sectors – potential employees and managers are concerned about inadequate career progression, precarious job security and poor wages.<sup>14</sup>

Some of these concerns may be purely perceptual. A 2004 survey revealed that a number of voluntary organisations had improved their employment practices. It showed that 48% of voluntary organisations are accredited by Investors in People; 61% offer flexible working; 52% offer family friendly policies beyond statutory requirements; 43% have career development paths for paid staff; there are more female managerial staff (58%); and absence rates are lower than in the public and

private sectors.<sup>15</sup> By 2003 in Scotland, 80% of voluntary organisations had funded training over the previous 12 months, significantly a higher percentage than employers in other sectors.<sup>16</sup> Paid staff appear as satisfied as employees in other sectors. In particular, their ability to ‘make a difference’ to other peoples’ lives is a key motivator. Labour turnover (21%) is compares well with the private sector (23%), although it is significantly higher than that for the public sector (12%).<sup>17</sup>

However concerns about relatively lower pay are real. Approximately one-third of voluntary organisations speculate that recruitment problems are related to uncompetitive salaries in the sector. Social care voluntary organisations must compete with local authorities and even supermarkets for the type of employees who might be care workers. For managers, both the public and private sectors are competitors, and for professional staff local authorities, the NHS and the private sector are competitors. The voluntary sector finds it hard to compete on pay with these other sectors. In England and Wales, for

example, care assistants in the voluntary sector earn over a £100 a week less than road sweepers and refuse collectors and more than £400 a week less than train drivers.<sup>18</sup> Average weekly earnings in the Scottish voluntary sector during 2002 were £288.26.

These earnings are significantly lower than in the public or private sectors. The weekly pay gap between the voluntary and private sectors is currently £40 (or 13%) and even wider in relation to the public sector at £72 or 20% lower. Earnings have also dropped compared to average earnings for the public and private sectors in Scotland over 2001-2002. Earnings continue to rise more steeply in other sectors so that pay gaps are and will continue to be an issue.<sup>19</sup>

Government recognises the important role played by the voluntary sector. In the long term both central and local Government must work with voluntary organisations in dealing with the pay issue.



## Research findings

The first part of this section reports data from seven case studies from the HR Network, based on interviews with HR Directors, employees and managers. The second part explores supply issues and focuses on the misconceptions of employment in the voluntary sector amongst potential employees.

### What makes a good voluntary sector worker?

Having experience was a key factor amongst both managers and employees. This experience can include a long work history in social care for managers or, for employees, experience in caring – either in the sector or, more informally, through unpaid caring in the family context.

A key issue is the increasing emphasis on qualifications; specifically, the requirement for employees to be qualified to S/NVQ level 3. Managers are aware of the implications of this change for existing and new staff: ‘With the new kind of Care Commission standards that’s all going to change because people are going to have to have qualifications. So we are going through a period of change.’ (Manager)

For those without qualifications or experience, a number of respondents believed their personalities were an important factor in getting their job. A number of HR Directors

highlighted having the ‘right’ kind of personality and attitude for care work. One said, ‘We can put them through SVQs but we can’t change the basic personality and values and I think that really is the key to a social care job ... it’s about having the right personality and values’. Another recognised that personality and values are important to make sure that service users are treated with respect. ‘We are looking for people who regard the people that they support as equals and supporting them to live the life that they would choose.’

With a wide range of jobs available, there is no typical voluntary sector worker. However, older women tend to dominate front-line care work. Men do work in a variety of jobs but HR Directors and managers acknowledge that this segment of the labour market remains relatively untapped: ‘I think we certainly need more males, I know that’s a sweeping statement you shouldn’t make, but in general we would like to encourage males to come into the profession and it doesn’t seem to happen.’ (HR Director)

The potential for targeting younger and older workers is also recognised. It was suggested that younger people are good because they can be trained and they tend to be flexible. However, they may be more inclined to move on if other opportunities arise. The potential to recruit older workers looking for a change of

career or re-entering the labour market after childcare or other caring responsibilities was also appreciated.

‘... we get lots and lots of people saying I would really like to work in this area and I’d like to change career or I haven’t worked for a while ... so there are lots of people who appear interested but don’t have any experience at all or qualifications ... they’ve got to be the people that we target in future if we are going to fill posts.’ (HR Director)

HR Directors stressed that their organisations provided opportunities for all segments of the labour market regardless of sex, ethnicity or age. Having the right kind of personality – being non-judgemental, patient, calm manner and a positive attitude – are important qualities that individuals can bring to the job. One HR Director acknowledged that, ‘there is no doubting in my mind that this is a vocation.’

## What do workers think of their jobs?

For both managers and employees, the primary reason for taking a job in the sector was their high level of commitment to their organisation’s cause and values, as Tables 1 and 2 illustrate.

**Table 1: Managers’ reasons for taking the job (%)**<sup>20</sup>

<b>Managers</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Values of the organisation	87	9	4
Type of work	83	13	4
Conditions	46	36	18
Lack of alternative work	35	65	0
Other people in the organisation	32	36	32
Childcare and related reasons	19	10	71
Hours	18	50	32
Pay	17	57	26
Partners job	5	16	79

**Table 2: Employees' reasons for taking the job (%)**

Employees	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Type of work	71	27	2
Values of the organisation	63	33	5
Conditions	33	55	13
Hours	28	43	29
Other people in the organisations	24	37	39
Childcare and related reasons	20	12	68
Pay	8	64	28
Partners job	7	15	79
Lack of alternative work	3	10	88

These two tables stress the importance to managers and employees of the type of work and the values of the organisation. As one HR Director said working in the voluntary sector is, 'challenging and rewarding' and 'one of the most enriching jobs available to people.' Equally over 70% of managers and employees stressed the importance of pay and over 80% also recognised the need for good conditions of employment.

Managers and employees noted what they liked about their current job, including: having innovative and creative work, freedom and autonomy at work, a sense of belonging to the organisation, flexibility, being able to make a difference to

service users lives; the values of the organisation; and room for personal and professional growth.

Moreover, people wanted to stay working in the sector. Managers and employees were asked where they saw themselves in five years time. Table 3 illustrates the high level of commitment to the voluntary sector.

**Table 3: Where staff see themselves in five years time (%)<sup>21</sup>**

	Managers			Employees		
	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes	No	Maybe
Stay in the voluntary sector	83	0	17	79	8	13
Stay in the industry	95	0	5	80	10	10
Stay in the organisation	81	0	19	69	13	19
Stay in the job	62	5	33	59	17	24

Typical comments included:

'I will no doubt be in the job in five years as like I said it doesn't feel that I'm getting stagnant, it's quite changeable, it feels like a new job.' (Manager)

'I really like what I do. To work in the care sector for me has never been about the pay packet.' (Manager)

## Recruitment problems

On the whole people like working in the voluntary sector. The key task is getting them into the jobs in the first place. Most recruitment is from the local labour market, followed by the Scotland-wide labour market. But there are problems with these markets. For example, a number of respondents recognised the very tight labour market in Edinburgh.

Over three-quarters of managers stated that they had recruitment problems. These problems were for care workers and other specialist posts. Box 1 outlines a number of reasons for recruitment problems.

### Box 1: Reasons for recruitment problems

- € Tight labour market. There are too many jobs and not enough people.
- € Competition with other voluntary organisations, the local authority or other sectors, such as retail: ‘... it’s something that you must really want to do, as it’s really demanding supporting somebody who maybe needs a lot of attention, who is exhausting and that is different to someone who might work in retail’ (HR Director).
- € The work is not what potential employees expected it to be like.
- € The nature of the work being emotionally demanding, challenging and draining (e.g. working with people with substance abuse problems).
- € Lack of qualified people applying (e.g. social work positions).
- € Pay is uncompetitive, so people use the voluntary sector as a stepping stone to other sectors with better pay: ‘... we are competing for someone who might otherwise become a cashier in Tesco’ (HR Director).
- € Hours – anti-social or insufficient hours for part-time positions, ‘a lot of people we are trying to support require very short period of time, it might be a couple of hours in the morning, afternoon or evening and you don’t need staff around in between.’ (manager) Potential employees not turning up for interview (sometimes due to Disclosure<sup>22</sup> potential employees would have to wait two months for interview and as a consequence often find alternative employment).

Recruitment advertising usually attracted a good response but the quality of some applicants was often considered to be poor; usually not the right kind of people for the job. With near full employment across Scotland the quality of labour can be an issue. One HR Director candidly acknowledged that, ‘unemployment is so low so you have not got a lot out there, this sounds horrible, but if you have exhausted the pool, what is left? Do you really want what is left anyway?’ The problem is compounded by competition for staff, with one manager noting how, ‘of the 25% that have left us, they have all been poached so the competition is huge.’

Recruitment is usually through adverts in local and national newspapers, though informal methods, such as ‘word of mouth’ are also common. College career services are used by less than a fifth of managers. Some innovation in recruitment is evident as Box 2 shows.

#### Box 2: Widening the recruitment pool

- £ Involvement with organisations dealing with the long-term unemployed.
- £ Consolidating job advertisements across the organisation.
- £ Seconding staff from a local authority.
- £ Job rotation scheme with organisations outside of the voluntary sector.
- £ Rewarding employees who refer friends to the organisation.
- £ Radio advertising.
- £ Targeting ethnic minorities through community newspapers and mosques.
- £ Attending recruitment/job fairs.
- £ Placing adverts and posters on notice boards in the local library, village hall and corner shops.
- £ Advertising in further and higher education colleges, especially for sessional or relief staff.
- £ Simplifying the wording of job adverts.
- £ Open days to publicise the organisation and its work.
- £ Creating placements for specialist staff.

There is also the general cross-sector website, [www.goodmoves.org.uk](http://www.goodmoves.org.uk), which aims to publicise employment opportunities in the voluntary sector.

## **Perceptions and misconceptions amongst potential workers and their supply**

The supply of labour to the sector also needs to be considered. Focus groups and interviews were held with potential employees and those involved in this supply, such as the New Deal. The interviews and focus groups examined the misconceptions and broader perceptions held about the voluntary sector.

### *£ 'There are few paid jobs'*

The voluntary sector offers a wide range of paid work. However, there is a lack of awareness of this variety outside the sector. The public perception is of 'volunteers' and 'charity'. As one careers adviser said, 'The first thing when we start talking about the voluntary sector to a student is that you have to make them aware that you are talking about paid jobs'. Asked to comment on what the voluntary sector meant to them the student focus group also illustrated this lack of awareness: 'I think it means it's going to be under-funded and it's maybe working in charity shops, befriending people in the community, community kind of work, but basically working for nothing'. Similarly, in a focus group of older unemployed people the prevailing attitude was about volunteering and not paid work.

### *£ 'Only involves care jobs'*

There is a lack of basic knowledge about voluntary sector jobs. There is a range of jobs in voluntary organisations such as front line care work, administration, fundraising, project

management, finance and information/PR posts. However, there is often a lack of awareness of these opportunities. A careers adviser recognised that once students were made aware of the opportunities that exist in the voluntary sector, 'they're surprised by the sector ... once they start to look they're quite amazed by the breadth and the types of organisations and the types of jobs ... that there are policy and research jobs as well as care assistants.' The New Deal Co-ordinator noted that many of her clients, especially men, respond badly to the suggestion that they should consider work in the voluntary sector. She recalled when a voluntary organisation was able to offer warehousing work, 'Oxfam used to have a depot in Blantyre and it was tremendous ... but as soon as you mentioned the word Oxfam it was like "och, I'm not going to Oxfam" but once they got the client in it was just like any other warehouse ... it was a fabulous experience for the client.'

### *£ 'There's only limited scope to acquire new skills'*

Due to the wide variety of work in voluntary organisations, the sector can offer jobs with wide ranging responsibilities. These responsibilities are often greater than those offered by comparable positions in the private or public sectors and allows for the development of experience, knowledge and transferable skills. Moreover, voluntary organisations are professionalising their activities. Despite this change, the perception is still of an amateurish sector. A focus group respondent who had undertaken a degree in social work recalled attending a focus group which was considering the voluntary sector: 'this women was sitting there slagging off the voluntary sector and she said

they're just a bunch of middle class do-gooders and I said excuse me but they actually employ professional qualified staff ... everybody in the organisation I'm working in has got a qualification and we're not sitting there knitting tea cosies and selling them, I was raging at her.'

€ *'Students unaware of transferable skills'*

The potential for graduates in the voluntary sector is enormous. Those taken on by voluntary organisations can expect to be given responsibility early and gain experience in a variety of roles. A respondent in one of the student focus groups who had undertaken a politics and sociology degree was surprised that her research and analytical skills could be attractive to voluntary sector organisations: 'if you're saying that there you can consider policy issues ... that would definitely appeal to

me ... it would be a way of getting into policy work'. There is no doubt that skills, such as research, strategic thinking, project management, fundraising and public relations, which are routinely developed by graduates in voluntary organisations, are highly desired by employers both within and outside the voluntary sector. The voluntary sector is also a meritocracy and graduates can aim to cut their teeth in their first job before seeking upward mobility based on the experience they have gained. The lack of awareness amongst many graduates of the opportunities in the sector means it needs to market itself better to graduates. Organisations need to be proactive in establishing links with careers services in the universities, 'I think they need to market themselves as graduate employers if they want to target students.' (Careers Adviser)

## Summary

This report has examined paid staff recruitment in Scottish social care voluntary organisations. These organisations play an increasingly important role in delivering key services to some of Scotland's most vulnerable children and adults. Services include residential care for children and young adults, and support for the disabled to lead full and active lives. However, these organisations are not just providing more services, they are also now required to deliver better services, with better-qualified staff.

However, there are recruitment problems as voluntary organisations compete with the public and private sectors for skilled, paid staff. There are difficulties in filling vacancies due to a shortage of appropriate potential employees and because of the perceived unattractiveness of jobs in the sector.

To address these issues and attract the right staff, the voluntary sector must be made more visible and the perceived unattractiveness of its jobs addressed. In short, to meet its aims and objectives, the voluntary sector must increase its capacity to attract paid staff that possess the right skills, personality and experience. Box 3 summarise the recruitment strengths and weaknesses of the Scottish voluntary sector.

### Box 3: Summary of recruitment strengths and weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
Important sector	Lower pay/competitiveness in a tight labour market
Commitment to the sector	Limited workforce diversity
Job diversity	Perceptions of voluntary work/sector
Job satisfaction	Low qualification base
Keeness to train	
Opportunities for personal/career development	

There are many types of paid social care jobs within voluntary organisations. This report focused on front-line care workers, front-line specialist professionals and management.

Organisations do not have absolute recruitment shortages for these jobs but they are having difficulties attracting the right kind of staff. With a tight labour market across Scotland, the pool of available workers is now more competitive. Voluntary organisations compete with supermarkets, etc., for staff who might become care workers and compete with the NHS and local authorities for more specialist staff. As a consequence, vacancy rates are higher in the voluntary than public and private sectors in Scotland. Such shortages create service delivery problems for voluntary organisations so that better recruitment is needed.



Voluntary organisations are less able to attract the right staff for two main reasons. Firstly, these organisations offer lower pay than public and private sector competitors. Secondly, potential employees have a number of misconceptions about voluntary sector work and employment. Pay is a long-standing problem that requires a long-term solution with central and local government rethinking funding formulas. In the meantime, staff shortages need addressing. The second reason offers some leverage.

Potential employees perceive the voluntary sector to be staffed by volunteers rather than paid workers. They also believe that the type of jobs available are narrow and that these jobs, for graduates at least, do not offer opportunity for using and developing transferable skills. The reality is very different. The voluntary sector does use volunteers but the paid workforce is significant: over 100,000 or 5% of all Scottish employees.

These jobs are highly diverse, both in terms of type and level. For example, from care workers, through to specialist practitioners and management, the latter including project managers and development officers. These jobs involve a range of skills, soft and hard, generic and specialised.

Moreover, as compensation for lower pay, existing staff believe that they work for an important sector that ‘makes a difference’ to people’s lives, are highly committed to the sector, desiring to stay in it for the sense of belonging that it offers, they also report high levels of job satisfaction. Voluntary sector work and employment offers staff opportunity for autonomy, creativity and flexibility; its outcomes are rewarding too. The sector offers more training and is more supportive of training than other sectors and there are real opportunities for personal and career development.

## Recommendations

There are other short-term practical actions that can and should be taken by individual employers, sector bodies and Government to improve recruitment to the sector.

### Raising the profile of the sector

The voluntary sector must be made more visible and the ‘labelling’ of the sector needs to be considered. The ‘voluntary sector’ detracts potential employees and careers advisors: ‘voluntary sector’ equals ‘volunteering’, rather than paid employment. Other labels now used for the sector include ‘not-for-profit sector’, ‘community’, ‘third sector’, ‘social economy’, charity’ and even ‘civil society’.

#### **Recommendation: Re-brand the social care sub-sector.**

This re-branding cannot be undertaken only by the HR Network, but requires consensus across the sub-sector. In partnership with SCVO and voluntary sector employers the Scottish Executive should fund a re-branding exercise. The re-branding should then be used as part of a recruitment campaign to raise awareness of the sector. This campaign should improve the public’s understanding of care work and other jobs available in the sector. It would also emphasise the variety of jobs available in the sector. The campaign should highlight the

high levels of commitment and job satisfaction of existing employees’ in the sector.

### Developing new recruitment opportunities

The voluntary sector can provide jobs in Scotland. There is reasonable jobs growth and the sector has a wide range of jobs and these jobs are being increasingly professionalised. Developing new sources of labour is a pressing issue. Whilst, a tight labour market, full employment and competition for labour creates real problems, there are segments of the labour market that are under-represented within voluntary organisations. For front line care positions, there are obvious groups that could be targeted.

- £ Older workers – for many older workers or those returning to the labour market there is a need to raise awareness and provide channels of entry to jobs in the sector; for example, working in conjunction with initiatives such as the 50+ scheme at Strathclyde University.
- £ Men – men are increasingly moving into jobs previously dominated by women, especially services. This transition can be difficult for many men. Some need encouragement to find their way to the voluntary sector but could be

targeted, particularly those looking for a change of career or recently made redundant.

- £ Ethnic minorities – Few ethnic minority employees work in the voluntary sector in Scotland; significantly less than for the UK as a whole. Organisations should target more ethnic minority employees' using positive role models, community leaders, community newspapers and, if appropriate, religious centres.

**Recommendation: Target recruitment of older, male and ethnic minority workers.**

Graduates in specialist vocational areas already enter the social care sub-sector. There is more difficulty attracting other professional and managerial staff. College and university careers services should provide better guidance, helped by the voluntary sector. Voluntary organisations and SCVO should:

- £ Target colleges' and universities' student career services with better information and material to explain the range of job opportunities within most voluntary sector organisations.
- £ Identify and attend colleges' and universities' careers fairs.

**Recommendation: The voluntary sector should have targeted recruitment of students.**

There are now more graduates, some of which are having difficulty finding jobs that allow them to fully use their skills. The voluntary sector can provide these opportunities, especially in professional and managerial jobs. However, many students are unaware of these opportunities.

**Recommendation: Voluntary organisations develop internship and work experience programmes with colleges and universities.**

However it is individual organisations, not the sector, that are employers. To help attract these graduates, individual voluntary organisations need to develop more sophisticated graduate opportunities. With help from the Scottish Executive, the Civil Service graduate recruitment programme should be rolled out as a generic model that could be tailored for individual organisations.

**Recommendation: Voluntary organisations and the Scottish Executive should work together to develop graduate recruitment and career development programmes.**

## **Emphasising the positive in recruitment**

The sector needs to avoid a ‘qualifications straitjacket’ in which only qualifications matter. Beyond qualifications, the people who work best – and longest – are staff with the right experience and values. Even amongst graduates there is a difference between those who are attracted by high pay and those who want fulfilling jobs.

Some organisations are getting better at recruitment though certain aspects of the job should be more strongly emphasised.

**Recommendation: Recruitment should emphasise the positive job content of voluntary work and high levels of job satisfaction and commitment in the sector.**

These positive aspects help counter the negative – pay – but also reflect the true nature of work and employment in social care. These are jobs that are fulfilling and which people believe in.

## Research methods

The first stage of the research was a review of academic, government and commercial literature and data sets focusing on employment and recruitment in the UK voluntary sector.

The second stage of the research involved in-depth case studies of seven voluntary organisations from the HR Network in Scotland. The social care sub-sector, the focus of the research, is the largest single employer of the voluntary sector at around 30% of total employment. The case studies involved interviews with each organisations' Human Resources Director; managers who were involved with recruitment; front-line employees, encompassing professional, associate professional and care workers. Table 4 provides more details. Interviews were conducted over summer 2004.

The third stage of the research involved analysis of labour market supply issues. Perceptions of the voluntary sector as a place to work are a neglected issue.<sup>23</sup> This stage of the research involved interviews and focus groups with potential employees as well as key informants in organisations and agencies

involved in the general supply of labour; students, careers advisers and New Deal Co-ordinators.

**Table 4: Case study interviewee details**

Organisation	HR Director	Managers (No.)	Front-Line Employees (No.)
Quarriers	Yes	4	16
Aberlour	Yes	5	25
Scottish Society for Autism	Yes	7	17
One Plus	Yes	2	11
Key Housing	Yes	2	16
Thistle Foundation	Yes	6	7
ELCAP	Yes	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

This mixture of methods and material enables both a deep and broad analysis of recruitment opportunities and problems in the voluntary sector generally in the UK and for Scotland.

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Munro and Shah (2004).
- <sup>2</sup> Wilding *et al* (2003).
- <sup>3</sup> Munro and Shah (2004).
- <sup>4</sup> Barnard *et al* (2004: 1).
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> See Cunningham (2000) and Shah (2004).
- <sup>7</sup> Shah (2004).
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> Wilding *et al* (2004).
- <sup>11</sup> *NCVO/NTD Survey of Jobs Roles and Salaries in the Voluntary Sector 1997/1998*, cited in Passey, Hems and Jas (2000).
- <sup>12</sup> Wilding *et al* (2003).
- <sup>13</sup> Munro and Shah (2004).
- <sup>14</sup> Wilding *et al* (2004).
- <sup>15</sup> Agenda Consulting (2004).
- <sup>16</sup> LFS (2000) cited in Four Nations Voluntary Sector Research Group (2002); Munro and Shah (2004).
- <sup>17</sup> Munro and Shah (2004).
- <sup>18</sup> Barnard *et al* (2004: 15).
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Where data is represented as a percentage, the figure has been rounded to the nearest decimal place.
- <sup>21</sup> In this table industry refers to the social care sub-sector.
- <sup>22</sup> Disclosure is the process of vetting potential applicants and will often involve a lengthy process of rigorous checks on their background and previous employment experience.
- <sup>23</sup> Wilding *et al* (2003: 5).





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