



SOURCES OF HELP DURING THE RECESSION

Charity Commission survival guide for charities

Charity leaders have been given a new tool to assess the impact the recession has had on their organisation and how well it can deal with the crunch in the future.

The Charity Commission has released a set of 15 questions for charities to ask themselves in order to gauge how well placed they are to survive the recession.

Titled *The Big Board Talk*, compiled by the Commission with support of business organisation the CBI, the document covers four areas of charity operations – strategy, financial health, governance and whether it makes the best use of its own resources. It is designed to be used as a structure for discussions at trustee meetings, planning days and the like.

Charity Commission chief executive Andrew Hind said it is critical that charity boards prioritise reflection on their strategy. "Asking these key questions will help trustee boards review their options, make the hard decisions and enable them to have a clear understanding of the challenges they face and the best ways to tackle them," he said. Richard Lambert, CBI director general, said that the questionnaire may help charities distinguish what is essential from the 'nice-to-haves'.

A copy of *The Big Board Talk* can be downloaded from the Charity Commission website www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Managing in Tough Times

This guide, produced by Bristol ChangeUp Consortium, covers key issues that may affect Third Sector organisations during periods of financial insecurity.

It offers a framework for identifying and assessing current risks and offers guidance on how an organisation can manage and adjust to change. Should the difficult decision be made to close the organisation, it offers guidance on the steps that are required depending on the legal structure of the organisation. The guide is downloadable from www.changeupbristol.org.uk

Fundraising HealthCheck – Online

Produced by the Institute of Fundraising, this is a free, confidential diagnostic tool to help you understand the impact of the recession on your fundraising portfolio.

Armed with your net income and/or your investment budget, you can use Fundraising HealthCheck to generate customised reports that provide:

- A prognosis for each area of your fundraising, based on past experience and current trends.

- Practical advice and guidance on how to survive and thrive during the economic downturn.

To access the Fundraising HealthCheck please visit www.fundraisinghealthcheck.org

New HR how-to guides from the Workforce Hub

The UK Workforce Hub has developed three new how-to guides for voluntary organisations. The guides are:

- How to survive the recession – alternatives to redundancy

- 360-degree appraisals

- HR software in voluntary and community organisations.

The Workforce Hub is looking to produce more how-to guides in the future and would be grateful for any comments or thoughts you are willing to share. Email direct to Emma Allford at emma.allford@ncvo-vol.org.uk for more information, or visit www.ukworkforcehub.org.uk/hr.

Free legal advice for voluntary and community organisations

The LawWorks for Community Groups project provides free legal advice to small charities, not for profit, voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises in England and Wales using volunteer lawyers.

They can help you with a wide variety of legal work including company law, employment law, intellectual property law, property law, charity law; tax/VAT law; insolvency and help in drafting contingency plans; insurance law; health and safety law; general contractual / commercial matters etc.

You apply to them using the online application form. Project staff review the application and help you understand the scope of advice required. If the application is approved, they then try and match you with a volunteer legal advisor who provides the legal advice for free. www.lawworks.org.uk

Gift aid toolkit on CD

HM Revenue & Customs has published a CD toolkit on using Gift Aid to increase charity income. You can request the CD by phoning HMRC on 08453 020 203 or emailing charities@hmrc.gov.uk.

Financial crisis helpline

The Charities Aid Foundation has launched a free financial crisis helpline for charities.

The informal and confidential helpline allows charity leaders to have a one-off confidential discussion with one of the Charities Aid Foundation's managers. The managers will talk through the charity leader's concerns and suggest possible steps that could be taken. The helpline number is 0800 980 2000

Support for voluntary organisations during recession

The Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) has launched a website aimed at helping the voluntary and community sector through the economic downturn. www.recessionsupport.org.uk offers charity chiefs practical advice and expert guides from industry leaders on a range of topics.

It also provides a selection of tips about business, cost saving, fraud prevention, staff management and funding, as well as useful links to courses and relevant events.