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## Personnel and HR advice

Often when we answer the phone, it's someone with a problem related to employment of staff. We operate in an increasingly complex legislative environment and the rules keep changing. How can the average manager without an HR department keep up? Or what do you do if you're a management committee faced with employing someone for the first time?

When we get these sorts of questions at OCVA, we always suggest:

**1. The ACAS** website [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk) and helpline 08457 47 47 47 Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations. They provide up-to-date information, independent advice, high quality training and work with employers and employees to solve problems and improve performance. You can download booklets on essential topics such as parents at work or absence, as well as useful templates for the paperwork you need to have in place when employing people, ranging from job descriptions to written warnings. They have also introduced e-learning packages for those of us who enjoy with that sort of thing.

**2. The Voluntary Sector Legal Handbook** (all 900 odd pages of it, but you can consult it for free in the OCVA Resource Centre). I proofread every word when I was at DSC and know it to be a true labour of love and meticulously accurate as well as user-friendly. Author Sandy Adirondack's associated website at [www.sandya.co.uk/legal.htm](http://www.sandya.co.uk/legal.htm) is where she posts useful updates to the information in the book, recent legal rulings and handy links.

**3. HRNet**, a free email network run by the Cranfield Trust. HRNet allows charities to share Human Resources problems and offer each other support and advice. Cranfield Trust Volunteers who have specialist HR skills will also answer the questions submitted to the HRNet website. The service provides:

Active Participants - a list of all the charities who are members, with their contact

details and a brief summary of their activities.

Discussions - an area where you can submit your questions regarding Human Resource issues. Other charity members of HRNet will then be able to respond, offer help and advice based on their own experiences and to send sample documents to the site for you. Questions will also be posted to HRNet Volunteers, who have HR expertise from the commercial sector, for their response. The discussions may also be searched for future reference.

Library - an archive area where older information on HR issues is stored.

a weekly newsletter by e-mail with information about new HR developments, as well as details of new questions submitted and any responses given. (Please let us know if you would prefer not to have a particular question included).

Web Links - lists and gives a brief description of useful websites.

Membership of HRNet is free. For an application form please contact The Cranfield Trust on 01794 830338 or by Email: [hrnet@cranfieldtrust.org.uk](mailto:hrnet@cranfieldtrust.org.uk)

### **Two top tips on employment**

1. If you have always survived on volunteers and your organisation is going to be employing someone for the first time, you should look at incorporating your charity as a company limited by guarantee as well, so it's the organisation that is the employer, not the members of the management committee.
2. If you're using someone to do a piece of work and you're not sure if they can be considered as self-employed because, for example, they are coming into your offices on a regular basis, you can consult a quick checklist of questions on the website of the Inland Revenue and Customs at:

[www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed/tmaemployed\\_or\\_self-employed.shtml](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed/tmaemployed_or_self-employed.shtml)

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