

# What staff & volunteers do we need?

**As well as full-time staff, there are four other main types of staff:**

## **V**olunteers

Just because you are beginning to employ staff does not mean you will stop using volunteers. In fact it is quite possible that the number of volunteers will increase as the project expands.

In some cases volunteers may be working alongside paid staff - doing similar work. In all cases your volunteers deserve proper support - clear job descriptions, support and training for example.

But, in order to avoid confusion and possible legal problems you should not use terms like 'contract', 'employer' or 'employee' with regard to volunteers. Better are terms like 'volunteer', 'intention', 'relationship' and remember that that you cannot 'require' anything of your volunteers.

## **S**elf-employed staff

It is tempting to engage staff on a 'self-employed' basis.

There is a small financial saving on National Insurance payments, and you don't need to bother about tax administration.

But HM Revenue & Customs (the government department dealing with tax) will need to be convinced that person really is self-employed. If they are working from their own premises (e.g. their

home), provide their own equipment, decide for themselves what hours they work then they could be self-employed.

Seek the advice of an accountant or HM Revenue & Customs who have clear leaflets on this matter (IR56 and IR148).

## **P**art-time and job-sharing staff

Before you even begin to employ someone you will need to assess whether the budget allows or the work requires a full-time or part-time person. You may even be in a position to be able to choose or have a mixture.

There are some advantages to part-time staffing.

- Improved flexibility to manage workloads.
- A wider pool of candidates for recruitment.
- Ability to find people with different skills and attributes.
- Retention of valued employees.
- Increased ability of your organisation to respond to change.

But there may also be higher costs, a lack of continuity and fragmentation of the work compared to employing fewer full-time staff.

Job sharing is also popular in certain contexts. In theory you get some of the benefits of both full-time and part-time workers. You have continuity because someone

is staffing your project all the time and also flexibility because you have two people with, potentially, complementary skills.

But job-sharing may require additional time for the sharers to liaise and communicate, it may lead to unclear lines of communication and may be difficult to recruit replacements if one of the sharers leaves before the other.

For an organisation that takes equal opportunities seriously, it may be considered worth the effort to make it possible for people to work part-time or as a job share. This may enable some excellent people to apply for the job who would not be in a position to work full-time.

In general part-time staff and job-sharing staff have all the same rights as full-time staff.

## **T**emporary and casual staff

You might choose to employ someone on a temporary or casual basis.

Reasons for doing this include:

- the work is only for a specific project which is time-limited,
- you intend for the job to be permanent but at the moment you only have funding for a limited time,

**Right Livelihood:  
 Avoidance of work that causes suffering to others or that makes a decent, virtuous life impossible.  
 Do not engage in any occupation that opposes or distracts one from the path. Love and serve our world through your work.**

*From the Buddhist Eightfold path*

- the work is unpredictable,
- you need people to fill in for permanent staff.

Casual and temporary staffing allow you some flexibility but you need to ensure that you are not abusing workers natural rights.

While the law does not normally give temporary or casual staff the same rights as permanent staff, it does offer protection to staff who are employed casually on a regular or repeated basis.

Normally a worker gains full employment rights when they have worked for you for a year - although there are certain circumstances where the law protects workers from unfair dismissal or discrimination at any time.