

# Capacity Building Project



## GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

### Case Study 7

**The Organisation:**

Waveney Enterprises

**The Challenge:**

To improve the skills and knowledge of staff and trustees

**The Response:**

Participation in the Wage 2 Work scheme and a comprehensive programme of training for staff and trustees

**Examples of Good Practice:**

1. Accessing free training opportunities
2. Meeting the legal responsibilities of trustees
3. Volunteer management

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## **The Organisation:** Waveney Enterprises

Waveney Enterprises is a registered charity, founded in 1984, to operate craft workshops for the benefit of people with learning difficulties in the Waveney district. The organisation provides work-based daycare for adults with learning difficulties who work in the organisation's craft workshop in Beccles, making a range of quality craft items. Products such as leather goods, rugs, patchwork, business cards, letterhead, papier-mache pots and wooden items are produced by the service users and sold through the organisation's showroom. Waveney Enterprises also provides service users with training in cooking, social and life skills, literacy and numeracy.

## **The Challenge:** To improve the skills and knowledge of staff and trustees

The challenge was to engage staff, volunteers and trustees in training with a view to improving their skills and knowledge in some key areas including health and safety, volunteer management and employment law. As a small organisation with only 3 employees and limited funding, it has always been difficult for Waveney Enterprises to access training. The cost of training is often prohibitive and demands on staff mean that it is difficult for them to take time off from their duties to attend training. Trustees were often reluctant to attend training and the organisation faced problems retaining and recruiting new trustees because of the legal responsibilities that go with trusteeship.

Often, only the manager of the organisation was able to access training and this was considered risky as the development of skills and expertise was focused on one person only. If anything had happened to the manager, there would have been serious consequences for the organisation. The organisation was also vulnerable to potential problems in the areas of health and safety and employment law, which place numerous legal obligations on employers.

## **The Response:** Participation in the Wage 2 Work scheme and a comprehensive programme of training for staff and trustees

Waveney Enterprises applied to host a work placement under the Wage 2 Work scheme, an Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) scheme run by Suffolk ACRE and funded by Jobcentre Plus and the ESF. Under this scheme voluntary organisations could host paid work placements for up to 50 weeks, giving unemployed people opportunities to enter paid employment as well as building the capacity of the host organisations. The project was run in partnership with SAVO who provided free training for participating organisations, aimed at building their capacity. Through this scheme, Waveney Enterprises hosted a work placement for a woman who was already volunteering for the organisation. Her role was to assist service users with various crafts and to run training activities.

After completing her work placement, a small amount of funding was secured to continue the post and the volunteer is now a well-respected member of staff. Her confidence, self esteem and knowledge have greatly increased because of the opportunity she has had to gain work experience and because of the

training opportunities taken up. More recently, this ILM programme participant managed to secure a permanent job with Waveney Enterprises when another staff member left the organisation.

Waveney Enterprises was able to access a range of free training opportunities as participating in the Wage 2 Work scheme enabled the organisation to access all SAVO training for free. This was taken up by the ILM programme participant as well as by other staff and trustees. With an additional staff member in post, it was much easier for staff to be released from work to attend this training. It is hoped that additional funding will be secured to make the fourth post a permanent position. This will enable all staff to be released to undertake more training in the future.

## **Examples of Good Practice:**

Waveney Enterprises have planned a range of training activities for staff and trustees to attend, and the learning has been having an impact on the way the organisation is managed. The training has had an impact on the management of volunteers and on governance, giving trustees greater confidence that their legal obligations are being met.

### **1. Accessing free training opportunities**

Waveney Enterprises has accessed a number of free training opportunities through its participation in the Wage 2 Work Scheme. The organisation had also previously applied for training bursaries from SAVO to pay for staff to attend some training events and received free one to one training and support from a SAVO Training Officer.

Three members of staff attended free training in health and safety and risk assessment and this has resulted in greater awareness of the organisation's health and safety obligations. More thorough risk assessments are now being undertaken and recorded in writing. Staff also attended training in Food Hygiene and this learning is regularly passed on to service users who work in the canteen area. Other free training accessed under the scheme included training in volunteer management and trustee training (detailed below).

By identifying training needs and planning to meet these needs, Waveney Enterprises is a safer, stronger and more professionally-run organisation. This means the organisation is well-placed to try to increase its funding for the future.

### **2. Meeting the legal responsibilities of trustees**

Being a trustee of a charity involves some onerous legal obligations including those under health and safety and employment laws. Trustees should be aware that they are ultimately responsible for meeting these legal obligations. Unfortunately, the responsibilities that go with trusteeship are often a barrier to successful recruitment of trustees. By improving understanding of the responsibilities of trustees and ensuring that trustees have the necessary skills to discharge these responsibilities, recruitment of trustees can be improved.

Two of the trustees attended SAVO's health and safety and employment law courses and they now feel better informed about where they stand with the law and understand their legal responsibilities as trustees. For example, prior to attending the SAVO's Employment Law Essentials course, the organisation had concerns about how to deal with a potentially difficult disciplinary matter. Although on this occasion the dispute did not end up in an Employment Tribunal, the trustees and manager now feel

better informed about the legal requirements regarding disciplinary matters and confident about using their grievance and discipline procedure in the future. In order to meet best practice standards and ensure compliance with employment law obligations, the organisation is also in the process of introducing written employment contracts for all staff.

The two trustees who attended the training are supporting the idea of further trustee training and are now looking at holding a trustee away day in the spring. The purpose of this event will be to focus on the role and legal responsibilities of the trustees.

### 3. Volunteer management

The person employed through the Wage 2 Work scheme undertook training in all aspects of volunteer management and one of her roles in her new post is coordinating volunteers. She attended SAVO's 4-week course, "All About Volunteers", which covers legal and policy matters relating to volunteers as well as good practice advice on recruitment, induction, supervision and training.

Following this training, the organisation has introduced a structured volunteer induction programme and developed a volunteer induction pack. The pack provides new volunteers with information about the organisation, its policies and procedures and the roles and responsibilities of volunteers. A more structured approach to the induction of staff will also be adopted in future. Another change is Criminal Records Bureau checks, which are now routinely carried out for all volunteers.

## Sharing the Learning:

Waveney Enterprises has taken advantage of opportunities available to voluntary organisations to build their capacity by hosting a placement for an ILM programme and by accessing free training. Planning training activities for staff and trustees and improving the management of volunteers has improved the organisation's skills and knowledge in a range of important areas.

#### Lessons Learnt

- There are opportunities for people to be placed with voluntary groups under various Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programmes currently available
- Planning training activities enables training needs to be identified and improves outcomes from training
- Health and safety training will help you meet legal obligations and create a safe workplace for staff, volunteers and others
- Training may be required to ensure your organisation is complying with essential employment law requirements
- Trustee training helps to improve governance
- A thorough and planned induction programme for staff and volunteers is good practice

#### Questions To Consider

- Would your organisation be in a position to participate in an ILM programme?
- Do you plan training activities for your staff, volunteers and trustees?
- Do people responsible for health and safety have sufficient training to meet these responsibilities?
- Do you have written employment contracts for staff and an effective grievance and discipline procedure?
- Do your trustees need training and are they motivated to undertake it?
- Do you have a structured induction programme and an induction pack?