

Voluntary and Community Workforce - Phase Two

Skills for Justice - Case Study

Supporting your VCS

Capability Builder “HR in a Box”

In October 2002 Community Justice NTO launched “The Capability Builder project”. The project aimed to promote and support the use of national occupational standards in the community justice voluntary organisations. The project was delivered between October 2002 and October 2004 across the whole of the UK.

The two key outcomes were:

1. The development and distribution of the Capability Builder software
2. Provision of a Human Resource Development (HRD) advice service.

The Capability Builder software provided a range of interactive tools to support the recruitment, development and retention of staff and volunteers. These tools were developed to reflect accepted good practice in human resource management. As far as possible, the software was designed to guide users through a sequence of logical steps.

The software was based on using the following National Occupational Standards:

- Community Justice
- Youth Justice
- Drugs and Alcohol (DANOS)
- Supervisory Management

The Capability Builder CD also contained:

- A manual for managers, containing general advice about a number of common human resource tasks, as well as instructions for using the software
- A manual for staff, containing more concise guidance on using the software to access personal records
- Source documents (ie copies of the Community Justice, Youth Justice, DANOS and Supervisory Management standards as Adobe documents).

The HRD advice service provided direct advisor support to work with organisations. They tailored the service according to the needs of the client organisation including:

- loading the software (particularly for those who were not very IT literate)
- navigating the software and using the various tools it contains
- general HR guidance.

Part of this service was taken over by the Skills for Justice Implementation Teams, following the restructuring of NTOs.

The project was well received and widely used. The project final report concluded that:

- The offer of the software at no cost provided a ‘foot in the door’ for CJNTO and latterly Skills for Justice to offer a

product / service to voluntary organisations in the justice sector and to start to build productive relationships with these organisations

- The creation of Skills for Justice meant that Capability Builder was offered as one of the products of a much larger organisation. For example, this has raised the question whether Capability Builder and the Integrated Competency Framework (ICF) software are competing to offer the same type of software solution. The ICF software was specifically designed to meet the needs of the police and wider policing family.

The project final report estimated that the Capability Builder CD would have a ‘shelf life’ of a further 18 months, ie April 2006. It was recognised that by that time the national occupational standards it contained were likely to be out of date. However, it was felt reasonable to continue the promotion and distribution of the current version of the software until at least October 2005.

New Developments

As Capability Builder approached the end of its shelf life, Skills for Justice funded a review of the software to be undertaken. This commenced in November 2005. Skills for Justice worked with the original Capability Builder developer to undertake an evaluation study to ascertain its current usage and opportunities for future development.

This study was completed by January 2006 and focused on voluntary organisations within the community justice sector. The feedback from users and Skills for Justice Implementation Teams were not surprising in that:

- The software was now deemed out of date due to updating of NOS.
- Not all features of the software were used, focus was on using the software to access standards to produce job descriptions and also training needs analysis.
- The software had been most extensively used by organisations delivering drug and alcohol services. This was due to the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse requiring service providers to incorporate NOS into job descriptions. Therefore these organisations found this particular feature very helpful.
- Following IT development and the increased access to broadband internet connection, it was felt that a web based model would now be more accessible and up to date.
- Many respondents felt that a wider range of more generic standards would be useful such as, management, finance, administration etc.

More Information

Further details and up to date news can be found at: www.ssda-volunteer-workforce.org

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