

Cranfield Trust



Background information

The Cranfield Trust was established 27 years ago to provide charities with the management expertise they need to thrive. The management consultancy service provides tailored business advice and solutions for charities just starting out on their journey, those looking to take their next steps or those wanting to build on previous success.

It is here to help non-profits cope with the management challenges they face. Every year hundreds of charities across the country access its management consultancy service, to gain advice, guidance and skills from our team of highly skilled volunteer consultants.

HRNet is The Trust's free on-line HR Advisory service which all charities are welcome to register and join to find up to date information on HR issues and also ask questions.

Our development support offer

Cranfield Trust management consultancy projects cover a wide range of activities. Topics in high demand include:

- Reviewing/updating strategic and business plans with trustees/staff/volunteers
- Reviewing organisational structures
- Facilitating partnership working and merger discussions
- Evaluating income generation activities and supporting feasibility studies
- Helping with contracts and the tendering process
- Strengthening financial processes, cost and cash flow management
- Developing marketing and communication strategies
- Reviewing resource plans and HR policies and procedures

As the volunteer consultants are mostly from the private or public sectors, it is not able to provide fundraising advice. However, much of its work supports fundraising, for example, by ensuring organisations have a robust business plan, helping define service costs, developing marketing strategies, undertaking feasibility studies for trading/social enterprise, and preparing information for tendering.

How do I know if this provider is right for my charity?

The Cranfield Trust have a team of friendly, projects managers who visit each organisation to discuss their needs before scoping a consultancy brief and finding a consultant with the right skills local to them. Often charities have a range of management issues/challenges and spending time with our Project Managers

talking through these can help charity leaders shape a plan and decide priorities. Organisations can have support through one or more consultancy projects or can have a mentor to help with a wide range of issues.

Input needed from you

A typical Cranfield Trust management consultancy project lasts anywhere from a few months, to over year, depending on the nature of the project. The Project Managers remain in touch throughout the life of the project, meaning it is able to respond quickly to requests for support.

The purpose of Cranfield Trust volunteer consultants is not to carry out the work but instead to work collaboratively with your charity, facilitating and mentoring a designated person or team to achieve your project outcome.

Charity Feedback:

“The trustees recognised that the partnership needed to review its current position and structures and also needed to agree the best way forward in the short to medium term for all concerned in order to:

- Identify and prepare for potential opportunities
- Identify and develop contingencies against potential threats

Through the LBF Enable programme and the volunteer mentor from the Cranfield Trust the partnership has been able to work through options available to them and to provide a clear direction for the business plan. The Cranfield mentor started in June 2015 and after familiarising herself with the individual charities within the partnership arranged with the charity manager a staff / trustee away day in October 2015. This was well attended and resulted in the creation of a steering group made up of 2 representatives from each trustee board. The steering group will have a mandate to make certain decisions. The Boards have nominated their representatives and the steering group will meet for the first time on 20/11/2015. The presence of the Cranfield Mentor as an independent adjudicator and with her wealth of experience in business planning and organisational change has been invaluable and I am sure has saved a lot of time and energy. I feel we have got to our present position quicker and with less deviation along the way”.