

# The Scottish Voluntary Sector

A brief for new Councillors

## 1) About the Sector

### Voluntary Organisations are:

- non-profit driven
- non-statutory
- autonomous
- run by individuals who do not get paid for running the organisation

The terms 'social economy' and 'social enterprise' are also used in connection with the voluntary sector. 'Social economy' is generally used when the user wishes to highlight the economic dimension of the voluntary sector. 'Social enterprise' is now more commonly used to describe voluntary organisations that raise a significant amount of their income from trading (usually 50% and over) and who, while non-profit *driven*, undertake other activities specifically designed to make a surplus so that they can reinvest this surplus back into the organisation (i.e. none of the money goes to individuals as it would in a private business).

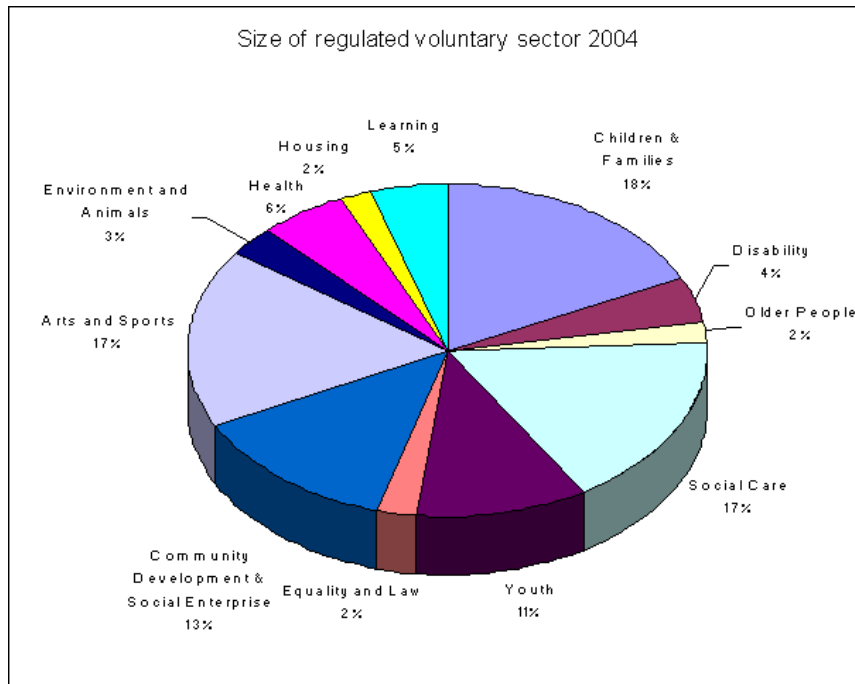
### The Scale and Shape of the Voluntary Sector in Scotland

- 50,000 voluntary organisations
- 1.2 million volunteers including 200,000 unpaid trustee
- 120,000 paid staff (equivalent to 5% of the workforce & 12% of the part time workforce)
- 60% of voluntary organisations have no paid staff
- Annual income of around £2.6 billion (1.2% of the annual turnover of the economy). This is mostly self generated from trading, rent and investments, less than 40% comes from the public sector.
- 65% of voluntary organisations have an income of less than £25,000
- Many voluntary organisations have charitable status

[www.scvo.org.uk/scvo/Information/AboutTheSector.aspx](http://www.scvo.org.uk/scvo/Information/AboutTheSector.aspx)

### What does the Voluntary Sector do?

There are few areas of public life that do not have voluntary sector involvement and many large charitable voluntary organisations are household names. From housing associations to care providers to environmental campaigners; from village halls, to arts and sports groups; from self help to advocacy; the list is endless. However, it is true to say that the *popular* image of the voluntary sector tends to be linked to the concept of charity and hence to social and environmental justice issues and work with vulnerable groups. It is true that a great deal of the sector's work is in such areas but the following breakdown is more revealing:



## 2) Who's Who?

### The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)

SCVO is the independent national umbrella body representing the voluntary sector in Scotland. It seeks to advance the values and shared interests of the sector. Its range of services includes representation, essential information, discounts on products and services and networking and communication support. It publishes *Third Force News* (TFN) every week and runs a helpline on 0800 169 0022.

[www.scvo.org.uk](http://www.scvo.org.uk)

### The Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS)

The network of CVS comprises 56 independent voluntary organisations situated across Scotland that serve other voluntary organisations by providing a range of development and support services to them. CVS activity is supported by the Scottish Executive and local authorities, as well as by trading income and funding from a wide range of sources. CVS work closely with SCVO but they are not 'branches' of SCVO. There is at least one CVS in every local authority area. CVS are *the* key local link for the voluntary sector in their area.

[www.scvo.org.uk/cvsnetwork](http://www.scvo.org.uk/cvsnetwork)

### 'Thematic Intermediaries'

There are a number of voluntary sector umbrella bodies that serve groupings in the voluntary sector organised around areas of work e.g. community care, environment, arts, sports. Although national, they have strong local contacts through their members. Their services will typically concentrate on meeting needs related to their members' area of work. Examples include Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS), Scottish Environment Link (SELink), Voluntary Arts Scotland (VAS) and the Scottish Sports Association (SSA). SCVO enables these bodies to network but they do not have a formal network in the manner of CVS.

### The Scottish Voluntary Sector

A brief for new Councillors

2 of 3

SCVO Networks Team: 0131 556 3882

### 3) What does the voluntary sector want of politicians?

In conjunction with CVS and a range of thematic intermediaries SCVO recently produced **Scotland's Voluntary Sector Manifesto: The voluntary sector vision for Scotland**. This document calls for action by national *and* local government. It breaks down into specific policy areas covering, for example, sport, social care, transport, children and young people but it also covers the key support the sector requires as a whole, for example:

- Implementation of 'Full Cost Recovery' and consistent application of 'Best Value'
- Reduction in the burden of red tape
- Devolved budgeting for local communities
- An increased role for the sector in public service delivery
- Adequate support for trustees and a campaign to attract more people to become trustees
- Recognition that much of the rural economy operates 'beyond the farm gate' and of the need to support the pivotal role the sector has in sustaining rural communities

The full manifesto and a summary document are available online at:

[www.scvo.org.uk/manifesto](http://www.scvo.org.uk/manifesto)

A number of individual CVS (for example, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council and CVS Fife) and thematic intermediaries have also produced manifestos. Links to some of them are available on the SCVO website:

[www.scvo.org.uk/scvo/PolicyAndParliament/ViewPolicyInformation.aspx?al=t&page=&all=&from=PDSR&Info=1005&TCID=156&PageName=Elections%202007&CatID=11](http://www.scvo.org.uk/scvo/PolicyAndParliament/ViewPolicyInformation.aspx?al=t&page=&all=&from=PDSR&Info=1005&TCID=156&PageName=Elections%202007&CatID=11)

**For more information contact:**

**Andrew Jackson**  
**Policy Officer**  
**SCVO**  
**Mansfield Traquair Centre**  
**15 Mansfield Place**  
**Edinburgh**  
**EH3 6BB**  
**Direct line: 0131 474 6183**  
**Email: andrew.jackson@scvo.org.uk**