

+ READING VOLUNTARY ACTION

The [RVA Advice Service](#) offers employment advice and support to charities and community groups delivering services in Reading.

Features of the service:

- Free, confidential service to Trustees and senior staff within charities.
- The RVA Advice Manager's experience: qualified solicitor, working within the VCS for over 10 years. Within RVA for 7 years. CPD in areas of employment law and HR.
- RVA has professional indemnity insurance in place to cover this service.
- Service available Monday – Thursday by way of:
 - Appointments – virtual or in person
 - Telephone
 - Email

Scope of the employment / HR advice and guidance includes:

- Employing for the first time
- Legal responsibilities of trustees when employing (Charity law); appropriate legal structures and trustee protection from liability.
- Recruitment, including reviewing job descriptions and adverts, and assistance with planning for the recruitment cycle
- Reviewing and assistance with drafting employment contracts, contractor agreements and contracts for all types of engagements, including fixed term, term-time only, permanent contracts.
- Equal opportunities in recruitment and employment as well as referral to the RVA Inclusion Manager, who provides a free service to assist with frameworks for inclusion development.
- Guidance with handling grievances
- Guidance with handling disciplinaries – conduct or performance related
- Guidance with handling sickness or other absences,
- Statutory entitlements
- Flexible working
- Reasonable adjustments
- Avoiding discrimination

- Guidance when handling Harassment/Bullying allegations
- Whistleblowing, including implications in Charity Law
- Safeguarding incidents connected to employment and implications in Charity Law.
- Health and Safety matters connected to employment
- Annual leave entitlements for various types of workers/employees
- Guidance when planning and undertaking a restructure – including mergers and implications in Charity Law.
- Guidance when planning and managing TUPE transfers
- Guidance when planning and making redundancies.
- Financial implications and finance strategies linked to employment, including reserves policies, income generation and Trustees' legal duties.
- The RVA Safe and Sound Quality Award covers good governance when employing within the charity context. This is also free of charge for charities delivering services in Reading.

Outside the scope of the RVA Advice Service:

- Where the nature of the advice sought carries a higher risk for the charity, RVA will always refer organisations to relevant external professionals such as Employment Solicitors – for example if there is a risk of a matter progressing to an Employment Tribunal. Arrangements are in place for third sector reduced fees with Dexter Montague Solicitors and Blandy and Blandy Solicitors.
- RVA does not undertake payroll services but will refer organisations to local, affordable services, such as Paycol or David Jones Accountants.
- RVA does not undertake case work but will support Trustees and Senior Managers in this process, with good practice guidance and by highlighting any risks and mitigation, at no cost to the charity.