

# Charity News



February 2012

## Take an umbrella

Written by David Taylor, Charity Consultant at Grant Thornton.

**The Charity Commission is expecting all charities to become part of a voluntary sector umbrella body.** I favour membership of such bodies (I would, as a former NCVO treasurer) but for reasons other than taking on the Commission's regulatory tasks. The stated objectives of charities becoming more self-reliant and trustees taking more decisions are admirable.

Most professionals are required to belong to a body which acts as regulator as well as providing service, advice and support. In the same way, voluntary sector organisations (many of who are not charities) join an umbrella body to represent them in the political arena, to campaign and to provide information and help. This is the organisation's choice, and comes at a cost. But some will not want to join because their expectations are

not necessarily aligned with the umbrella body.

There are many aspects to be explored. Just reflect on the possible definition of what constitutes an umbrella body. Charities may welcome advice but may not wish to take it. Who accredits the umbrella bodies and are they themselves required to be a registered charity? Perhaps most importantly, where will the resources come from as this activity can be resource intensive and there may be doubts on continued funding, let alone initial funding – one such body recently closed down because of the closure of the organisation providing most of its financial support.

Encouragement to join looks good to me. The Commission's advice role is vital. But compulsion needs careful thought or the umbrella spokes will get in someone's eye.

## VAT cost sharing exemption - summary of responses

**Following the extensive consultation exercise undertaken by HMRC in the summer, the draft legislation for the implementation of the cost sharing exemption has been published.**

The draft clauses do no more at this stage than replicate the wording of the EU Directive so the detailed rules and guidance on how the exemption is to be implemented in practice is still awaited. HMRC has, however, published a summary of the responses to the consultation – please [click here](#)

## Charities you can support with confidence

**The Charity Commission's strategic plan was published in December and is focused on setting out the key priorities leading up to 2015. This follows an extensive review consultation involving professional advisors, members of the public, charities and umbrella bodies.**

The plan also sets out the vision of

the regulator, being 'charities you can support with confidence'.

The Strategic plans are:

- developing the compliance and accountability of the charity sector
- developing the self-reliance of the charity sector.

To download a copy of the publication, please [click here](#)



**Carol Rudge**

Head of Charities and Not for Profit  
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Grant Thornton is ranked as a top three adviser to the charity, education and housing sectors and we pride ourselves on providing specialist knowledge to them. We would like to invite you to attend a series of seminars focusing on some of the current issues affecting organisations within these sectors. Each of these sessions will address a different issue and you are welcome to attend as many sessions as you wish.

## London

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## RSVP

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## Seminar programme

### Financial Crisis – How to come out of it stronger

This session will look at covering growth, potential acquisition opportunities and improving in-house efficiencies. We will also look at how to avoid becoming a casualty.

### London

**Tuesday 31 January 2012**

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

### Housing Finance workshop

Our accounting update for registered providers will offer practical guidance covering issues affecting your financial statements. Topics will include: component accounting, capitalisation policies and asset impairment, together with reporting on governance and internal controls under new regulatory requirements as well as an update on tax issues in the sector.

### London

**Thursday 8 March 2012**

8.30pm Registration and coffee  
9.00pm Seminar commences  
12.00pm Lunch

### Leeds

**Friday 9 March 2012**

9.00am Registration and coffee  
9.30am Seminar commences  
12.30pm Lunch

## Leeds

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### When social media becomes a liability

Social media's biggest advantage is also its biggest disadvantage – its pervasiveness. It has millions of frequent users, which means misinformation or malicious falsehoods can be spread as far and as fast as any positive publicity. The not for profit world is particularly vulnerable to this and our team of specialists can take you through ways of mitigating these risks and what you need to be thinking about.

### London

**Wednesday 25 April 2012**

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

### Tax/VAT/Employee issues update

Our tax seminar will provide an update on developments in direct taxes, VAT and an update on employee issues as they affect the sector, as well as providing timely reminders on topical issues.

### London

**Thursday 24 May 2012**

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

### Financial health of the Higher Education sector

Following the release of the Grant Thornton report on the UK's higher education institutions, our education specialists will report on the findings from the analysis of the financial statements as well as themes coming out of the sector including the tuition fee debate one year on. Discussion will also include topics such as, internationalisation, shared service options and student recruitment.

### London

**Wednesday 4 July 2012**

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

### Education update

The session will concentrate on key sector issues and developments within the higher and further education sectors over the past 12 months and offer timely reminders on topical issues

### Leeds

**Friday 6 July 2012**

9.00am Registration and coffee  
9.30am Seminar commences  
12.30pm Lunch

### An update on IFRS

As the migration of UK GAAP to IFRS continues to develop, this session will provide an update on the latest position for the not for profit sector, highlighting key developments, areas of concern and practical issues which need addressing. Specialists from our not for profit and IFRS conversion teams will lead the session with plenty of opportunity for debate.

### London

**Wednesday 10 October 2012**

8.30am Registration and coffee  
9.00am Seminar commences  
5.30pm Finish

### Charity topical update

This session will concentrate on key charity sector issues and developments over the past year.

### Leeds

**Friday 5 October 2012**

9.00am Registration and coffee  
9.30am Seminar commences  
12.30pm Lunch

### London

**Tuesday 13 November 2012**

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

### Tax/VAT/Employee issues update

Our tax seminar will provide an update on developments in direct taxes, VAT and an update on employee issues as they affect the sector, as well as providing timely reminders on topical issues.

### London

**Wednesday 5 December 2012**

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés



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