

How do you start up a community group?

Start By Planning

Defining the reason for your new group might be the starting point, as will defining what you want to achieve. The group needs a single purpose or aim. Your aim should describe the people that you want to help and what you hope will change as a result of your group existing. Your aims should be realistic but also broad enough to cover everything the group wants to do. All the members setting up the organisation need to discuss and agree the aim. Once you know what you are interested in, you can start to think about how to set it up and operate it.

Before you set up a new group, it is worth checking to see if there are any existing groups in your area (or similar). You can research this on the internet, at your local library, through your local CVS or local authority. If there are groups with the same aims then maybe you could join forces with them.

If there is not a suitable group in your area that you can join, the following suggestions will help you to set up and run your own group.

Your organisation will probably be set up to support a group of people in need. In order to make your service effective you will have to undertake a little research to identify who will benefit, whether there is a need and obtain evidence of this. You should consult with the group, talk to them before deciding what services to offer.

The people who will benefit from your work are called your beneficiaries.

Example sources of evidence

- Questionnaire asking people's opinions
- Written and spoken statements from users and community members on what services they need
- Numbers and types of people who may use the service
- Information from the latest census and local authority
- Observations/case studies of change

Speak to the experts

Your local Council for Voluntary Service will be able to offer you advice and guidance on setting up your group.