

Setting up a new organisation: basic guide



1 First considerations

- Decide on the group's purpose/aims.
 - i) What will it do?
 - ii) Who are the beneficiaries?
 - iii) What do you want to achieve?
 - iv) Where and how will you operate?
- Is there a demand/need for what you want to do?
- It is a good idea to involve those you want to help – hold a meeting or event and get the community on board. Listen to the views of local people.
- Are there any other local groups who are already doing what you are proposing?
- Are there any other local organisations you can work with in partnership?

2 Choose an appropriate structure for your organisation

You need to choose a structure that fits with how your group will operate. These include:

- Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Charitable Company
- Unincorporated Organisation
- Charitable Trust
- Community Interest Company
- Limited Company
- Community Benefit Society
- Co-operative Society

Further guidance from MSVA is available on different structures to help you.

3 Choose a name for your organisation

Considerations:

- Do not use a name that is misleading
- You cannot choose a name already in use or very similar to an existing one
- Avoid offensive language
- Check that there are no intellectual property rights on your proposed name
- Consider choosing something distinctive so that it is easy to search for

4 Write a governing document

Your governing document is the legal document that creates the organisation and says how it should be run. Templates are available for different structures.

5 Find Trustees

- You will need a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and other Trustees as set out in your governing document.
- Think about the skills and experience required and recruit accordingly.
- The Charity Commission recommends a minimum of three unconnected unrelated trustees with a good range of skills.
- Your governing document may say how long trustee appointments should last, and whether trustees can be reappointed after their term ends. Otherwise there are no set limits.
- When recruiting your first board of trustees, aim to stagger the lengths of the first appointments so that the trustees don't all change at once.

6 Set up a bank account

- Set up an account in the name of the organisation
- It is sensible to have at least two signatories who are unrelated

7 Fund your organisation's work

- You can start to raise funds for your charity once you have your governing document and trustees in place.
- Before you start to raise funds:
 - i) You'll need to prove your charity's income each year will be over £5,000 if you want to register it with the Charity Commission, unless it is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) which must register whatever its income.
 - ii) You can raise money even before you become a registered charity, so long as you make it clear that you are not yet registered. For example, you could raise money from the public by holding events or sponsored activities.

Further resources on funding and fundraising are available for MSVA members.

8 Other policies to consider

You will want to consider other policies for your group, depending on what you do. Other policies can include:

- Confidentiality
- Data protection
- Equalities
- Gifts
- Health and safety
- HR
- Lone Working
- Safeguarding
- Volunteer policy
- Whistleblowing

Note that this list is not exhaustive.

MSVA are able to provide model policies to member groups.