

You and your friends have an idea for a community project, activity or service - can you make it work? How do you get started?

This simple step guide offers an overview of the stages involved, and the things you need to consider when setting up a community group or project. These stages do not always follow a logical step by step process. Very often you will need to make several decisions all at once and some of the 'stages' will need to happen simultaneously.

### **Identifying the need**

Before you set up a community group you will need to establish what your group wants to do, identify if there is a need, and ensure there are no other groups in your area doing the same thing.

You will need to consider things such as:

1. Who is the group for? Will the group offer a service to the general public or local community or will it be for members only?
2. What are the aims of the group and what do you want to achieve?
3. Where will the group operate and what is its geographical area?

### **Choosing your structure**

Having established there is a need or demand for your ideas, you will need to decide on the most appropriate structure for managing or running the group.

### **Establishing a committee**

The Committee, Management Committee or Board (if you are a Company Ltd by Guarantee or Community Interest Company) is the governing body of a community group. The committee members or directors are the people responsible for taking care of the organisation on behalf of the other members. Key things to consider when establishing your committee are:

- Who will be on your Committee
- General Committee Responsibilities
- Legal Responsibilities
- Forming Sub Committees

### **Developing a Constitution**

A constitution is a written framework of rules for your organisation. It is in effect your group's governing document, stating your aims, clarifying decision-making procedures and establishing a basis for good practice. It will be a basic requirement for your group to operate. You will need it to open a bank account, apply to funders, register for charitable status, become a company, hire staff or acquire premises. See our template constitution for further information.

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