

Starting a new voluntary or community organisation

The purpose of this information sheet is to introduce some of the issues involved in setting up a new voluntary organisation or community group.

What is it that you want the organisation to do?

- Why have you decided to set up a new organisation or group?
- What will the aims of the organisation be?
- How do you intend that the organisation will achieve these aims - what will it actually do?
- Who will benefit from the organisation? Will the organisation offer a service to the general public or a specific section of the public, or will the organisation be of benefit solely to its members? There is no reason why you shouldn't create a 'club' that only benefits members, although it may be more difficult to attract funding.
- Are there other people who wish to be involved? One person can have the idea for a new organisation but an organisation needs a number of people to help run it, usually as part of a committee. An organisation will also usually need other people to be members.

Where do you want the organisation to work?

Will the organisation work in one or a number of local authority wards, or is it intended to cover the whole of Newcastle, the North East, or the entire UK? You should be clear about the geographical area you intend that the organisation will work in.

Will the organisation overlap with the work of any other organisations or groups?

You need to do a little research to find out if there is already an organisation doing the same kind of things you want to do and in the same area. Duplicating what other organisations are doing won't help when it comes to trying to get support, funding or volunteers, so it is a good idea to ensure that what you want to do is new and/or unique in some way before you start.

Could you work in partnership with any other organisations or groups?

If there are groups already doing similar work perhaps you could make your idea an addition to their already successful organisation, or join them and work together to develop something new.

Alternately, you could set up a new organisation and both organisations share premises and

costs and work together for the benefit of both groups.

What Newcastle CVS can do to help

Newcastle CVS provides a range of free support/Specialist Services to new voluntary organisations and community groups working in Newcastle.

Newcastle CVS Information Section can

- help you find out whether there are already other organisations doing the sort of thing that you want to do, in the area that you want to do it
- help you decide which organisational structure will be best for your organisation
- provide you with a suitable governing document

The Funding Advice Section can

- help you to plan a budget and ensure your business plan is adequate
- help you identify suitable organisations to approach for funding (although we can't help you actually fill in funding applications)

Newcastle CVS Ellison Services can offer advice/support on a range of issues such as:

- setting up a basic book-keeping system
- understanding the financial records a voluntary organisation needs to keep
- putting procedures in place to control expenditure
- accounting for restricted and unrestricted funds
- meeting Charity Commission financial reporting requirements (where necessary)

The **Newcastle CVS website** includes many publications which may be of further assistance to anyone thinking of starting a voluntary organisation: www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk

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