

How to...

*set up a
community group.*



Sutton

take part

Introduction

This leaflet will tell you more about community or voluntary groups and what you need to do to set one up.

Why set up a group?

There are many reasons why people might want to set up a voluntary or community group.

- **There is a need**

Local people who have identified a need for a particular activity or service in their area set up most voluntary groups. It could be that there is a real gap in services or activities in your area. Or maybe a service is already being provided but is not accessible enough, or is not being delivered in an appropriate way.



- **To get something done**

There may be an identified need, but crucially it needs the time and commitment from people, like yourselves, who are willing to get on and do something about it!

- **To work with other people**

Running a group is a team effort. It isn't just about the amount of work to do, but also about shared responsibility. Starting a group means working together with people who share similar concerns and are aiming to solve a particular problem or meet a certain need.



What makes a successful group?

- ✓ Meeting a need
- ✓ Being clear and realistic about what you want to do
- ✓ Team effort
- ✓ Securing resources to help you achieve your aims (e.g. people and funding)
- ✓ Understanding legal & other responsibilities

Getting organised – committees and constitutions

There are usually three to four people who first set up a group and later a Management Committee of between three to eleven people.

Responsibility for the group should be shared between a number of people who will make decisions, co-ordinate activities, make sure funding is in place and so on. You will need to set up a management committee responsible for ensuring that your group:

- sets aims & objectives and plans ahead
- works towards its aims and objectives, and acts in the best interests of the people your group is set up to support (your beneficiaries)
- has enough resources to carry out all of your work, and that these resources are well-managed and used to meet your aims and objectives
- holds regular committee meetings to take decisions & work together.

The constitution

Your group will need a Governing Document so that everyone knows:

- what your organisation is called and what it aims to do
- how your organisation will be run
- who is responsible for running your organisation

You also need this document to apply for money to run your group – people will only give money to you if they are confident it will all be accounted for and spent properly

The normal type of governing document for a small group is a constitution.

Once your group have agreed and signed your constitution, it is a legal document. The committee, not the members, will be personally responsible for making sure the rules are followed.



Getting started

It is important to think about the following things before getting started

- What do you want to achieve?
- What kinds of activities will you want to provide to achieve this?
- How do you know there is a need for what you want to do? Who needs it? How many people need it?
- Will your group meet these needs in full/in part?
- What will be the benefits from running your activities?

For each of your proposed activities, you need to think about the following:

- Who will run the activity? Do you have volunteers or will you need paid staff? Is training required?
- What skills or experience do you have within your group to run the activity?
- Will you need premises? – For example, hall hire or office space?
- How will you advertise your services and publicise your group?
- How much will it cost? Where will funds be sought and who will do the fundraising? You need to be as specific and realistic as possible about costs. Do you have access to equipment, or outside expertise, which could help you?

Where to go next

Sutton Centre for Voluntary Service (SCVS) provides help, support and advice to new and small community groups in Sutton.

When you have read through this guide and thought about some of the questions and issues you contact Jacqui Cocker the Development Officer at SCVS to discuss what help you might need.

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Useful information

SCVS RESOURCES

SCVS runs a training programme to meet the needs of voluntary and community groups. For more information please contact SCVS for a copy of our training directory. SCVS also has a library with a number of useful sources of information and reference for new groups.

USEFUL CONTACTS

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

(NCVO) Helpline: 0800 2798 798

Companies House Tel:

0870 3333636

www.companies-house.gov.uk

London Voluntary Service Council:

Tel: 020 7700 8107

www.lvsc.org.uk

Charity Commission helpline:

Tel: 0870 333 0123

www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Inland Revenue: New employers

Tel: 0845 607 0143

Health and Safety Executive

Tel: 0870 1545500

www.hse.gov.uk/hsehome.htm

Inland Revenue Charity Helpline:

0151 472 6036

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Social Enterprise London:

Tel: 0207 704 7490

www.sel.org.uk

Sutton Take Part provides other information about being an active citizen and runs several training programmes to meet the needs of Sutton's residents and community groups.

For more information on this please go to **www.suttontakepart.org.uk** or contact the Active Citizenship coordinator at **info@suttontakepart.org.uk** or call **020 8644 2867**

