



THE BASICS

DO YOU NEED TO START A NEW VOLUNTARY GROUP?

So, you have a cause that is dear to your heart and you have been considering, setting up a charity, group or organisation.

You really want to make a difference, but have you really considered what's involved? Is a new voluntary group the best way to help that cause? What's out there already? Do you have the time, energy and resources to be able to really make it work? Do you know what you need to do and how to do it?

First things first, you have your idea and you know what you want to support, but what's already out there? Is there someone nearby already doing what you want to do? If so, have you considered helping them with their project, rather than starting your own?

The economic climate is tight, Brexit, probably means the loss of a number of European funding streams, so unless you're planning on never needing any external income, resources or volunteers, it might be worth offering your services to an existing group, who will be extremely glad of your input and who will no doubt be your competition for funding and support streams.

Remember, even if your project is totally unique and the wonder cure for your cause, you still have to convince others to support it and this often relies on your project ticking their funding and emotional boxes. No matter how amazing you think your project is, the ten or twenty, thirty other projects trying to attract the same, funds, support and volunteers also think that theirs is the best thing since sliced bread.

Do you need to set up a voluntary group?

Is someone already doing what you want to do?

Do you have the skills?

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You might be considering a voluntary or charitable project, but you are stepping in to one of the most competitive markets out there, and one that is quite hard to survive in.

Once you've researched your project and decided whether or not to go ahead, the next step is to work out what skills and resources you're going to need to make it work.

CAN YOU RUN AN ORGANISATION? DO YOU HAVE THE SKILLS?

The fact that you have decided to launch a new group is amazing, but in every walk of life there are elements that we enjoy and those that we don't. There are skills that we have, and ones which we haven't acquired. So, to be successful when launching your new group or organisation, it is worthwhile to take a minute and work out what your strengths and weaknesses are.

In addition to this, as the founder, your passion and enthusiasm may be best used to drum up support and gain exposure for your cause, rather than, for example, trying to design a poster, that someone else could do in minutes.

The key areas to consider are:

- financial management,
- governance,
- technology,
- fundraising, and
- marketing.

Once you have made a list of your strengths and weaknesses you can start to think about the help you are going to need and whether or not you think you will be able to find it.

IS IT THE RIGHT TIME?

Setting up a new group or organisation requires a lot of time and effort.

Until you have managed to recruit support and engage volunteers, workers etc. everything will depend on you.

Have you considered the impact that running the group will have on your other work commitments? Family life?

Take a moment to list all of the things you currently do in your spare time?

How much time is left for your new venture?

GETTING STARTED

If, after considering all of the above you are still raring to go, read our guide to Getting Started.