

STARTING A VOLUNTARY GROUP

FIRST STEPS

What will it be like starting a voluntary group?

It is an achievement to start a group. It can be enjoyable and give you a lot of satisfaction. It can also be a lot of work! However, working with others and reaching agreement can be challenging and frustrating.

How to begin?

The best way to start is to bring together a group of people who share your interests and/or concerns. At first just talk about what the group could do. It will possibly emerge that not all interested people want to get fully involved, but will be prepared to help occasionally.

What should come from the initial discussions?

You should have some idea of what you hope to do and how you could go about doing it. Also you should find out what people have to offer.

How can I ensure that this is achieved?

A good start is to discuss what the problem is that you are trying to tackle. You will probably find that people see the problem in different ways. People will have:

- ◆ different solutions and methods in mind
- ◆ different skills to offer
- ◆ varying amounts of time to give

Try to get some commitment and agreement from people.

How do I do all this?

It is usually a good idea to have an open meeting to launch the new organisation. Contact the local papers and radio stations. They will usually help without charging.

You could also invite particular people such as:

- ◆ potential users
- ◆ people from other voluntary organisations
- ◆ interested councillors and / or local authority / health staff
- ◆ people from similar groups elsewhere

The meeting could be formal or informal. Either way it is a chance to:

- ◆ explain what you have in mind
- ◆ make or strengthen useful contacts
- ◆ seek publicity
- ◆ attract group members
- ◆ attract other volunteers
- ◆ find out how your proposals look to other interested people

Links can provide more information, help and advice. Contact us if you need any further assistance.

Links believes that this information is correct at the time of publication, however details may change. You are advised to contact Links for the up to date position and seek legal advice where appropriate.



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