



# Factsheet

## 1 Getting Started

**So you want to start a new group?**

**Congratulations! It's an exciting time but maybe also challenging and overwhelming - help is at hand.**

**There is a lot to consider when setting up a new voluntary or community group from scratch.**

**All sorts of questions need answering and once your group is up and running it will need to be well managed to continue delivering effectively.**

**Having a plan of action and plenty of help and support will help.**

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### **Get a committee**

Community groups and voluntary organisations are not 'one person shows' - there must be at least three people who are prepared to take on responsibility for the new group or organisation; three people who are prepared to serve on a committee.

### **Values**

Every group or organisation should have values. They are the principles upon which your organisation will be built and then flourish. Take some time to discuss what the values of your new organisation will be and write them down - keep it simple!

Things you may want to think about are: justice, equality, diversity, empowerment, respect; human rights, disability.

Think about your group wants to do and what will influence the ways in which it does things.

For example, a community centre might have values such as:

- To treat everyone who uses the centre as equals
- To recognise that everyone in the community has a contribution to make
- To respect everyone who uses the centre

### **Vision**

What kind of world does your group want to see? What will the existence of your group or organisation help to bring about?

Answering these questions will help you to define the vision of your organisation.

For example the vision of the British Deaf Association is: "to see a world where deaf people who use sign language enjoy the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities and quality of life as everyone."

### **Mission**

Your mission will sum up in one sentence what your organisation does.

Here is an example: "Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of women and children in poor and marginalised communities."

### **Objects**

Objects are about your purpose; they are your aims and sometimes the formal name used for aims is "objects".

If you are not sure about your aims are then write down what you intend to do (your activities), then ask yourself why you want to do that - the "why", will bring out the object.

Here is an example: An organisation provides information and support to the Eastern European community. Why do they do this? To reduce isolation in their community; the object therefore is: to reduce social isolation.

Your objects are really important because an organisation is only allowed by law to work within its objects.

### **Area of Benefit**

Choosing your area of benefit is a really important decision!

By law your organisation can only carry out your activities within the area that has been specified. So when starting out it's important to think about the area of benefit very carefully:

- Will you only work in your local area or ward?
- Will you work throughout London?
- Maybe you will need to operate throughout in England and Wales?
- Perhaps you are going to be an international – if so which countries will you serve?

You must make up your mind about these geographical considerations and it is usual practice for an organisations area of benefit to be included in its governing document.