



Factsheet

Case for Support

Key Messages

What is a case for support?

- A case for support is a way of explaining why a group is asking for support.
- It is essential to prepare a case for support because it presents the whole group in structured, disciplined, elegant way and is a handy tool to use when gift solicitation opportunity arrives.
- A case of support may have two forms: generic (explaining purpose, need and financial consequences of the whole group or specific project in general terms) and specific (which is basically a generic case for support tailored for specific audience: for specific funder, individual donors, businesses etc.).
- Case for support allows groups to communicate effectively without getting chaotic. Everybody approached for support likes to hear who will benefit, how and how much it will cost – no vague declarations that ‘we want to do something for children’.

How to build a case for support?

A case of support is an elegant, emotive, precise and concise document describing:

- What are organisation’s mission and values;
- What is the need;
- Why is it important and urgent;
- How the group will address the need (specific objectives);
- Why the group is the best to address this need (history and credibility; specific skills and assets);
- What will happen if appeal will fail;
- How the funder/donor can help.

A case for support should be a concise document, preferably 2 pages (maximum 4). It should present a group and NOT bore donors to death at the same time. It can present the whole organisation or be tailored for specific project that needs funding and it is quite natural to have both handy to use.

Longer documents are used as basis for proposals and applications for grant funding and business support, shorter version are extremely important when approaching donors directly, for example in networking situations.

Cases for support in this form or other include ‘ask’ – if a group is asking for money then a financial need and budget of project should be laid out; if a group asks for other type of gift, e.g. free of charge service, it has to be described.

It is also very important to have a fundraising strategy in place and include its concise version in ‘ask’ part. Funders and donors like to see that an organisation is sustainable and their gift won’t be wasted.

Key Terms

Need: a reason why an organisation wants to deliver certain activities. It needs to be well-researched and well-evidenced preferably with numbers (e.g. statistics) but real-life case studies are also welcome.

Importance and urgency: a case for support needs to highlight importance and urgency of the need because otherwise funders/donors may either assume that their support will be better placed with other organisations or that they can postpone their support, which usually leads to dropping any attempt eventually.

Specific objectives: description of activities that will lead to addressing the need. Objectives should be SMART which stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.

For example:

“Organisation A will provide luncheon club for 40 elderly people from Dagenham 3 times a week for 48 weeks a year” – all those elements indicate that an objective is **specific** (luncheon club), **achievable and realistic** (it’s not a flight to Mars!), **measurable** (40 people) and **timely** (in specific time frames with specific frequency). Saying that “Organisation A will deliver activities for older people” is not enough for anybody to give a grant or donation. Even the most complex projects can be described in SMART outcomes.

Fundraising strategy: a document detailing what are funding needs and how will be addressed. It outlines:

- current organisational funding and financial situation
- the amount of money to be raised
- delegate a person in charge of raising the money (not necessary, depends of organisational governance and management)
- methods to be used to raise money
- time-scale of fundraising (crucial!)

Signposts

Documents and websites useful for fundraising:

- **LVSC** www.lvsc.org.uk then click the ‘Advice and Support’ tab
- **KnowHowNonProfit:** <http://www.knowhownonprofit.org/funding/fundraising/fundraising>
- **Directory of Social Change:** best publisher of materials on fundraising sources and techniques and other money-related issues for non-profits: www.dsc.org.uk/publications - groups can also use their library and on-line search engines, contact directly for more details.
- **NCVO Sustainable Funding Programme:** www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sfp