

Starting Up

Most organisations start with two people having a conversation. A need is identified and you want to do something about it. Now is the time to collect information and set the foundation on which to build.

➤ First Steps

Before you start the “real” work you need to consider the following elements:

- Know your market. Is there a real need in your community? Are people prepared to volunteer? Is another organisation doing the same work locally or nationally?
- Survey the community and hold an open meeting.
- Collate information – try the council, local library, census etc.
- Ask other groups for support.
- Form a steering committee.
- Decide upon your legal structure.
- Give the organisation a name - make it original, snappy and relevant.
- Draw up an action plan.

➤ Building the Organisation

After the research has been completed, the next stage is to get the infrastructure in place, for example:

- Decide upon your legal structure and draw up the constitution or set of rules.
- Elect a committee and decide upon membership and officers.
- Decide the address for correspondence.
- Organise a bank account, signatories and procedures for banking.
- Draw up a budget and think about fundraising.
- Possible insurance requirements.
- Develop policies – Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Environmental, Disciplinary and Grievance (for paid employees and volunteers), Data Protection, ICT.

➤ Other Considerations

- The financial year and AGM dates (make sure the AGM is scheduled giving sufficient time for the year end accounts to be prepared).
- Letterheads and printed material. How much will it cost? How much do you need? Is it too flashy or does it look like junk mail?
- Monitoring and evaluation. Start from the word go – this information will be needed

for future fundraising. Remember “soft outcomes” as well as facts and keep any newspaper clippings.

- Publicity – think how to make your activities well known to users and supporters.

➤ The Hallmarks of a Well Run Organisation

- Formally set up with clearly documented aims and rules.
- Run by a clearly identifiable body of people who take responsibility, and are accountable for controlling the organisation.
- Manages accounts and resources well.
- Complies with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- Acts with respect to the legal and human rights of the individual.
- Is able to show how its activities are, or will be, able to support its aims.
- Is open in the conduct of its affairs, except where there is a need for confidentiality.
- Carries out its aims with regard to the requirements of the beneficiaries, community and relevant wishes of its donors.
- Conducts its external relations, fund-raising and publicity in a way that enhances its own reputation and that of voluntary and community organisations generally.

NVS can supply further information and help on any of these points.



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