

## **Advice for New Groups**

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If your group is new (in its first financial year, perhaps) it is extremely difficult to obtain a grant. There are very few opportunities to obtain a starter grant. Berkshire Community Foundation, for example, no longer gives starter grants.

You may be able to obtain a grant or contract from your local borough, town or parish (or county if you are working outside Berkshire) council if your group has been set up specifically because of an urgent need that has been identified due to a gap in provision.

You should also look out for local opportunities as a result of a large regeneration or similar initiative.

The main reasons for difficulty in obtaining grants early in a group's existence is because funders would like to know that there is both a need and that the group has some longevity, and the funders like to see a set of accounts.

This means that when you start out you need to raise some money through other methods. The two most common ways are either through events or by donations.

### **Running events**

Running a simple event such as a raffle in the office are quite easy to do and don't require too much planning. If you choose to run a bigger event you will almost certainly need insurance and maybe carry out a risk assessment or obtain permissions from your local authority. You may be able to tag onto another event, for example have a stall at a local fair or carnival, but you are likely to still need public liability insurance. You may be able to find someone to do a sponsored event such as run in a marathon for your cause.

### **Asking for donations**

If you want donations from people you have to ask and you have to inform people of how to make a donation. If you wish, you will probably be able to join Local Giving, an online donation portal ([www.localgiving.com](http://www.localgiving.com)). This would enable you to collect donations online through debit or credit card donations and allow your donors to apply gift aid. You can also use Local Giving if someone is doing a sponsored event on your behalf. Berkshire Community Foundation can help you sign up to this. There is an annual fee and a small commission on each transaction. From time to time there are match funding opportunities with Local Giving.

If your group or work is based in the Borough of West Berkshire and you can split your work into specific projects you may be able to join Findmeagrant ([www.findmeagrant.org](http://www.findmeagrant.org)). This would enable you to collect donations online too. There is no fee, no commission, gift aid can be applied and there are match funding opportunities, but your project has to be accepted, is time limited and you have to write a report when your time comes to an end.

### **Approaching local businesses**

It is possible that a local business may give you some money. Cold approaches to businesses are highly unlikely to succeed, so you would almost certainly need someone who works for the business to give you an introduction. Remember that many small businesses are less able to donate money than individuals.

Once you have completed your first financial year you will be able to produce a set of accounts and this will help to start you off with your grant funding. It is recommended that you have your accounts independently inspected, but you would not normally have to have them audited. By using the two most traditional end of year dates, you may be able to foreshorten your first year, by choosing your end of year date to be either March 31<sup>st</sup> or December 31<sup>st</sup>. Don't make your first year just a few months though!

Make sure that you don't just fundraise; spend some of the money you raise on your activities.

### **Registering as a charity**

You do not need to register as a charity unless you complete any full year with an income greater than £5,000. If this is a one off occasion, you will still probably not have to register as a charity. More grants are available to you if you are registered, but the drive to obtain grants is not a reason to register as a charity and the Charity Commission may not accept your application if you are not meeting the £5,000 criterion. If you are a sports club you need to register with your local body.

### **Grant opportunities**

You must remember that relying on grants probably won't give you sustainability. Most funds are many times oversubscribed and as less money becomes available from the public sector, in conjunction with ongoing low returns on investment, obtaining grants is becoming harder and harder. However, the more grants you obtain the easier it is to acquire the next one, because your grants record acts in a similar way to credit rating.

You can use Funding Central ([www.fundingcentral.org.uk](http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk)) to source grant opportunities.

### **Ways of fundraising**

The best advice is to use other ways of fundraising to create sustainability and view any grants as a bonus, which gives you opportunity to do additional work.

Different ways of fundraising include:

- Grants
- Contracts
- Donations (Individuals and Companies)
- Events
- Sponsorships
- Memberships
- Subscriptions
- Trading
- Wills and legacies
- Tax deductions