

Getting ready for funding

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Before you even think of applying for funding, make sure that your organisation is ready to receive it. Funders want to know that you are capable of managing their money, that your organisation is fit and healthy, and that you have all the necessary policies and procedures in place.

Small pots of money

If you are thinking of applying for small pots of funding here are some basic things that you will need to have in place:

- Your community group or organisation must consist of at least three people (preferably not related), a set of rules (**constitution**) and a bank account in the name of the group
- If you have been in existence for more than twelve months then you will need to have a set of accounts for the previous year or a breakdown of the income and expenditure for the past twelve months
- If you are a brand new group then you will have to have a **cash flow forecast** (a breakdown of how much you think your project will cost over the next twelve months)
- You will have to plan your project and think about what you want to do: Who is the project for? When will you deliver the project? Where will it be delivered and why is it needed? What evidence do you have to show that this project is needed?
- Most groups will need to have insurance, especially if you are working with members of the local community

You will need to have all of the above in place (as a minimum) in order to apply for small pots of funding to get your project underway.

Larger pots of money

As your organisation grows and becomes more established, you will need to take a more comprehensive approach to your development to make sure that you are ready for funding. The following checklist will help you to consider some of these things.

Is your organisation fit and healthy?

The checklist overleaf offers some basic requirements that funders are looking for. As your organisation develops and grows, you might want to undertake a full review of your organisation or focus on particular topics as you go along.

Factsheet

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Organisational checklist – basic requirements

Governance and committees

- Does your organisation have clear aims and objectives?
- Is the Management Committee elected at the AGM in a way that is representative of all members?
- Do members of your management committee regularly attend meetings?
- Do you have all the appropriate policies and procedures in place (including equal opportunities and health and safety)?
- Does your committee act on your policies and procedures – are they implemented well and reviewed regularly?
- Does your committee play an active role in strategic planning?
- Does your organisation have a clear decision making process (including reporting from sub groups)?
- Does your committee review its effectiveness annually?

Staff and volunteers

- Does your group have enough volunteers or staff to begin delivering services?
- Do you carry out appropriate checks i.e. CRB (Criminal Record Bureau check)?
- Are you informed about the legal issues that come with staff and volunteers?

Managing your finances and income

- Do you generate any of your own income?
- Is your funding from a mix of sources?
- Do you keep accurate financial records (can you account for all your income and spending)?

Your place in the community

- Do you have a good working knowledge of the area that you work in?
- Do you signpost to other organisations in the area that deliver a similar service?
- Are you involved in any local networks?
- Do you have good links with statutory agencies (are they aware of your service)?
- Have you got a clear idea of your target audience and who your services are aimed at?
- Do service users know about your service – do you have a range of marketing techniques that you use to get the word out (such as a publicity leaflet, a website, making use of social media, a presence at local events and networking sessions, press coverage)

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Have you got agreed priorities that you work towards?
- Do you regularly report on progress and record any important data (such as number of volunteers who attend your events, or number of outreach sessions provided)
- Do you have a system to review your service where members, partners and service users can feedback in order to improve service delivery?

Key Words

Constitution - a set of rules governing your group

Cash flow forecast – expectations of your group's finances

Strategic planning - thinking about the future and making appropriate plans

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**For any further information, guidance and support,
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