

## Resources for **small groups**

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### **An introduction to fundraising**

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Most groups find that having some funding enables them to do far more than they would otherwise be able to. Even for the smallest support or self-help groups, a few hundred pounds can help publicise meetings, attract members, hire transport, or make use of better, more accessible premises. Other groups may have far greater needs for funding, say for buying major items of equipment or employing workers.

This page looks at where to start with fundraising. In particular, it considers:

- why you need to plan your fundraising and how to go about doing it;
- how to decide what to fundraise for; and
- how to decide on a budget.

#### **Where to start**

Before you start fundraising you need to have a clear idea of what you want the money for. Funders prefer to fund a group with a clearly defined idea of what they want to achieve, how they will achieve it and how much everything will cost.

Fundraising needs to be done in a systematic way and you need to have a clear plan before you start. In some cases, plans can be fairly simple and straightforward but where there are a larger number of issues to consider the planning process will take longer.

There are any number of different ways to carry out a project, and what you decide to do will depend on how your group works, what resources you already have and how much you feel you could successfully raise (it is worth remembering that a small group with little or no funding to date is likely to have great difficulty raising hundreds of thousands of pounds). You need to have thought about all these issues before you start approaching potential funders.

#### **Preparing a budget**

Costing up your project needs to be done carefully and two particular issues you need to consider are:

- *Are your costs accurate?* E.g. have you compared prices? If seeking to employ a worker, do you know how much to pay?
- *Have you included everything?* E.g. maintenance of equipment; national insurance and pension contributions for staff; inflation & salary increments for longer projects; out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers. A new project may also mean added 'core' costs: more stationery, more telephone calls, bigger premises etc.

Your project needs to be cost effective to attract funding but don't underestimate your budget in the hope that it will make your project look more attractive. If your budget is too low, it may make the project unworkable. Your aim should be to get an accurate, comprehensive estimate of your costs. However a

funder may only offer to pay you part of what you asked for. If so, a good budget will help you identify whether a smaller project is viable or you need to raise more money elsewhere.

### **Developing a fundraising strategy**

For most groups, fundraising is not a one-off event. Over time you may well find various parts of your work funded from a number of different sources, all of which come to an end at different times. It therefore makes sense to make fundraising part of your planning process. At the very least, it is important to know when each piece of funding runs out and to decide beforehand what you will do when that happens. It is worth remembering that the time between submitting an application and receiving any grant can be many months, so think ahead.

