

The information below is an overview of requirements and for further more detailed information, support and guidance etc please contact the BVA Group Development team via telephone 01256 423816 or email admin@bvaction.org.uk (please quote "BVA Group Assistance" on title).

www.bvaction.org.uk

First of all, are you sure there is sufficient demand for your group?

- ✓ How do you know there is a need for this group?
- ✓ Is there another group offering a similar service in the area?
- ✓ Have you considered joining an existing group instead of starting a new one?

Once you have established a need for the group, you need to take into account the following:

- **Aims and Objectives**
 - What will the group aim to achieve?
 - Have you asked your service users what they would like from the group?
- **Management of the group**
 - Who will be involved?
 - Who will be responsible for organising and running the group?
 - How often do you plan to meet and where?
- **Resources and finance**
 - Have you got enough resources to start the group (money, volunteers, staff, transport, if needed)?
 - Have you got suitable premises? Are they fully accessible?
 - Have you thought about all the costs involved?
 - Where can you get funding for the group?
 - Will you be charging or asking your service users to donate money to cover the costs of the group meetings?
 - Will you provide food and refreshments?
 - Will Volunteers/Staff need training?
 - Will you need a bank account for the group?
 - Does the group need insurance?
 - Will you be a membership group?
- **Legal**
 - Decide which legal framework best applies to your group (registered or unregistered charity, trust, association, etc) and ensure you comply with the relevant requirements

Additional considerations you need to bear in mind:

- Think of a name for your group, make sure that it does not already exist.
- Depending on your legal setup, draw up a governing document for the group. This sets out the aims of your group and how it will function
- Make sure that everyone involved in or running the group has agreed to the content of the constitution/rules
- Elect leaders who will be responsible for managing the group
- Participate in the BVA Merlin Good Practice Review
- Find suitable premises if required, book in advance (if you can)
- Open a bank account in the name of your group. You must have at least two people aged 18 years or over to act as signatories for the group. We recommend 3 signatories to cover all eventualities
- Find out about insurance from an insurance provider
- Set your first meeting date and keep a log of attendance
- Hold an annual meeting to present the accounts and re-elect leaders every year
- Keep accurate accounts to present to the group on an annual basis – you will need to keep copies of the accounts for 10 years.

Basic Concepts

(which will help determine which type of setup will be suitable for your group):

- ✓ Will the group employ staff (or will all work be voluntary)
- ✓ Will the group expect to own land, building, investments or other substantial property
- ✓ Will the group expect to be involved in activities, leases or contracts where there is financial risk
- ✓ Will the turnover be higher than £5,000 per year?
- ✓ Will the group have political objectives or take part in political lobbying other than in a generally educational sense.