

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

Further information coming soon

In the interim the following information as guidance has been provided by 'KnowHow Non Profit'

1 - Be decisive and plan ahead as far as you can

At the end of a project, it can be tempting to hang on as long as you can before making the decision to close the doors or end the activity - you might be hoping for a last minute reprieve, alternative funding source or similar. However, being decisive and setting a date for closure can give you time and space to plan your ending, give staff the best chance of finding new work, enable you to control publicity around your closure, and think about what your organisation's legacy will be.

2 - Take good professional advice

Make sure you take good legal and financial advice at the earliest possible opportunity - there are likely to be tricky issues to be resolved, and having all the facts will help you when talking to staff and partners.

3 - Be open and honest with staff about what's happening

As soon as a decision has been made regarding the closure of your project, communicate with the staff concerned. Be available to answer questions and concerns, and keep everyone informed of timescales and other arrangements. Answering a question with 'we don't know yet' is better than letting rumours and speculation run riot.

4 - Plan how you're going to communicate with the wider world

Just as you would write a communications strategy for a campaign, event or project, you should sit down and plan how you're going to communicate the news that your organisation is closing. Are there media opportunities you could use to highlight what you've achieved?

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Are there events where staff could speak or pass on what the organisation has learned?
When, and through what channels are you going to announce the closure of your project?
What plans need to be put in place regarding, for example, ongoing projects, before the announcement is made?

5 - Get your staff involved with communicating about the closure

Make sure everyone's aware of the key messages about your closure, and when you're going to make the news public.

6 - Talk to your key partners first

Before making any sort of public announcement about the closure, you'll need to talk to key partners, board members, volunteers, stakeholders, suppliers and so forth who will be affected - the last thing you want is for key people to find out the news through gossip, or via a press release or news story. Draw up a list of the people you need to talk to, and decide who should carry out these meetings. For example, in some cases, the message will need to come from your Chief Executive, whereas for other connections, it might be more appropriate for a project officer who's worked closely with the partner concerned to let them know the news.

7 - Understand that people may be upset

Although you've had time to plan and absorb the news that your organisation is to close, bear in mind that the announcement may come as a shock to some. In particular, volunteers often have a long association, and feel a high-level of commitment to an organisation. As with your staff, you might need to be available to answer questions, and listen to the concerns of volunteers and partners.

8 - Think about 'rehomeing' work where possible

Part of the conversation you'll need to have with key partners is about work which might continue after your organisation has closed - unfinished projects, themes and so forth.

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Are there partners who might be able to continue this work, and if so, what will they need from you - make a plan for each project you're handing over, and make sure records are up to date before you close. Part of the communications work you do around your organisation's closure might be to make clear what projects will continue, and who will be taking them on.

9 - Consider the practicalities of closing down

For example, when will you need to give notice / move out of your offices? Are there other projects or organisations to whom you could pass on equipment and / or information? What provisions might you need to make for disposing of or archiving sensitive material?

10 - Support your staff

Staff who will be losing their jobs are naturally going to be concerned about their own prospects. If you can, provide practical help such as training in CV writing or interview techniques. Each individual will have different needs and aspirations, so if possible, arrange some one-to-one support.

11 - Think about what your legacy will be

As well as the practical considerations of closing down your office, think about what your organisation's wider legacy will be. Thinking about what you've achieved will be a key part of putting together your communications strategy, but it's also useful to think about whether you can share your knowledge in other ways - for example through speaking at events, writing an article for a relevant publication, or even putting together a physical or online archive of information that will outlast the organisation.

12 - Remember to celebrate

Although closing a project or organisation can be very difficult and have a major impact on the lives of staff, volunteers and partners, it is still important to take time to celebrate the successes achieved. For example, although the Mersey Basin Campaign closed its doors in 2010, it did so on time and on budget, and having largely achieved its original aims. It left behind a wealth of knowledge and experience for others to draw on.

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These messages were important to the organisation's final communications strategy, and this positive focus also helped staff to feel that they'd represented a successful project, giving them confidence in taking their skills and experiences out into the world.