

Setting up a Save the Children Supporter Group in the UK



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1. Groups

➤ Why do we have them?

Local Groups are an effective way for volunteers to lend their support for our work. They provide continuity and stability to our volunteering network. Groups contribute to our work by raising vital funds and awareness and, through their ongoing commitment, enable us to plan and account for our income year on year.

It is important not only to maintain our relationship with existing Groups but also to develop new ones to build and strengthen the network.

By registering with us Groups receive benefits too. These include:

- direct and up to date information about our work
- use of our logo and access to our resources
- Insurance cover for Save the Children UK approved events where Save the Children UK Risk Management procedures are followed
- Guidance and assistance with Health and Safety / Risk Management / Governance issues
- appropriate training and induction
- membership of a UK wide support network

➤ How do they work?

The structure and activities of Groups are guided by Save the Children's Constitution. This sets minimum requirements and standards in a way that ensures our accountability and is not too burdensome for the volunteers involved. The communication of these requirements needs careful management so as not to detract from the informal, flexible, volunteering environment we aim to provide.

➤ What are the key requirements of a group?

- volunteers based in the same geographical area, part of the same community/social group or simply interested in running an event together
- raises funds and stimulates interest in our work within the local community
- supports Save the Children Week
- activities are organised by a group of 3 or more people with an elected Group Leader/Chair and a Treasurer who keeps a log of group finances
- meets at least once a year to plan activities
- keeps a record of all important decisions for all group members to see

➤ **What is the role of a group leader/secretary?**

- to lead, co-ordinate and support the group and its activities including risk, insurance, health and safety issues
- involve as many members as possible in the active running of the group, calling for volunteers to deal with specific roles
- be responsible for promoting the recruitment and induction of new volunteers
- draw up agendas for meetings and encourage discussions, making sure that all points of view are considered
- receive the groups communications package and pass on this information to group members. Some correspondence will require immediate attention and action may be necessary between meetings. Email address is required.
- encourage and promote support from a range of people eg Group members, helpers, potential helpers, staff, local contacts in shops, businesses, schools
- ensure that people who have supported your group are sent thank you letters/certificates
- compile a report of group activities during the year to share with your regional Save the Children staff

➤ **What is the role of a group treasurer?**

- manage the group finances in accordance with the Treasurer's guidelines
- receive and bank all money collected by, and given to, the group keeping a permanent record of all money received and spent
- issue receipts for all monies received
- attend or send a financial status report to Group meetings and answer any queries about Group finances
- maintain a bank account in the name of The (group name) Group of the Save the Children, and ensure that all funds are paid into this account
- the Group must not hold in the account more money than is needed to meet prospective commitments
- ensure that no money raised in the name of Save the Children is spent on other causes
- ensure that the rules of 'Handling Public Money' outlined in the Treasurer's Handbook are strictly adhered to for the protection of both the donors and Group members

2. Planning

Setting up a new Supporter group is a fantastic way to use your skills and enthusiasm to support Save the Children. Planning for a new group in your area is an exciting opportunity to network and bring people together. In this section we'll talk you through the different stages of planning your new group.

➤ **How many people do I recruit?**

A group is when you have three or more people working together. It is for you to decide how many people you'd like as part of your group. Initially you may decide to start with 3-4 people and at a later stage recruit more group members. Or if you have extensive contacts and know a number of people who are keen to get involved then your group could start with 8-10 group members.

Remember there is no limit to the number of people you have as part of your group. It's important that they all play an active role in the activities you organise and feel part of the group.

Here are some tips on how to recruit people to your new group:

- tap into your current network of friends, family and work colleagues to see if any of them would be interested in joining your group
- also ask your contacts about their networks and together assess their suitability to join the group
- think about the types of activities you'd like to undertake as a group and then identify the skills you'll need from different people
- once you know the skills you're looking for identify who can support you
- advertise in your local shop window, social/sports club noticeboard or in your local newspaper

When thinking about who your target audience is, remember to think what might attract them to Save the Children and where to find them.

This is some advice from our volunteers:

"Head-hunting involves tracking down one key individual and is useful when starting in virgin territory. My detective work begins in the local library and moves onto visits to local figureheads: I found clergy, councillors and MPs helpful in giving advice on their

'patches'. I gradually narrow down my list of options to one key person and ask them to use their influence in starting a Group."

"I was really keen to contact young mums in one of the villages in my area: one of my contacts had young children of her own and was very involved in her nearest National Childbirth Trust (NCT) group. However, as her own children grew older, she found that she and other mums were 'outgrowing' NCT. She decided to hold a coffee morning/Christmas card sale in aid of SC, inviting other mums like herself – and from there grew an SC group. Now they hold regular events which their families can join in too."

Make full use of the media and internet, think carefully about who you are trying to reach and what lifestyle they lead – are they best targeted via newspaper or radio, web ads or editorial? Utilise your warm contacts, draw up your adverts, letters or editorial and be prepared for the response.

➤ **What type of activities do we undertake?**

Deciding on the types of the activities you'd like to undertake, as a group is important in the planning stage. This will also help with your recruitment of new group members.

A brainstorming exercise could prove useful at this point. Bring together a number of people who are interested or who might be interested in joining your group. On a piece of paper list all the activities a supporter group could undertake. Remember, at this stage in the exercise you should think big and don't restrict any creativity. List all the activities that come to mind no matter how small or large. Once you've finished brainstorming look at each idea individually and think about whether this is something as a group you'd be interested in undertaking. After completing this part of the exercise you will have a list of activities that your group could undertake.

These activities will help you decide the types of skills your group members will need and will support your recruitment. At this stage you can think about the skills that your group needs, such as people who are good at:

- organising things
- approaching people
- public speaking
- negotiating good deals
- IT literate
- marketing/advertising
- motivating and supporting others

- someone who has experience/knowledge of risk assessment, insurance, and health and safety issues

This is an example from one of our volunteers:

“With the tennis tournament as the event, we knew the type of person we were looking for and where to start looking. We placed adverts in newspapers, tennis magazines and on club notice boards, and we contacted the Lawn Tennis Association and other appropriate organisations. We knew we were looking for 3 or 4 key people who could work together as a team to get the tournament off the ground ... now that they've done it once they are keen to try again. Success definitely breeds success”.

Stay flexible, keep an open mind and don't be afraid to revise your initial aims to suit opportunities as they arise.

➤ **What do I name the group?**

Save the Children supporter groups are named after the town/city in which they operate. Your group name will be the town/city in which you will fundraise e.g. Leeds, Harlow, Wrexham.

If there were an existing supporter group in your town/city your fundraising name would be the area in the town/city and the name of the town/city in which you fundraise. For example in Manchester if there are two supporter groups then they could be named Salford (the area), Manchester group and Wilmslow (the area), Manchester group. This way we know they both operate in Manchester but are in different parts of the City.

➤ **What support will I have?**

Save the Children's supporter groups have access to a network of other supporter groups, resources and staff. For support you can contact your nearest supporter group and ask them for ideas, feedback and support. “It may help to ask the nearest Group to make new volunteers welcome and they can be asked to give close support once the new Group has been established.”

We offer a range of resources to our supporter groups, to help them with their fundraising activities. You'll be sent details of these as part of your welcome pack, once you've registered as a new group.

You will also have support from regional and central staff. Details of these will be sent to you when you register as a new group.

3. Ready to go

Now you've completed your planning it's time to start thinking about taking the next steps. In this section we'll talk you through your first key steps as a Save the Children supporter group.

➤ How do I register as a group?

Every new supporter group must register with Save the Children to receive the support we offer. It's important for insurance reasons that we know of all groups fundraising under the name of Save the Children.

All new groups must complete the New Group Registration Form, a sample of which is in the appendix of this booklet. You can either print off a copy of this form or you can request one by calling us on **0845 606 4027**. You will notice that on the **Group Registration Form** you are asked to list the details of your group leader/secretary and group treasurer. This is so we have the details of the 2 key volunteers in your group registered under specific roles. On page 4 we have explained what these roles entail.

At this stage your group will also need to decide if you'd like to open a trading account which will allow you to trade Save the Children trading goods (e.g. xmas cards). If you would like to open a trading account then please mark **YES** clearly on the new group registration form.

All members of your group (including group leader/secretary and treasurer) must also register with Save the Children by completing a Volunteer Registration Form. We'll send these forms in your welcome pack once we receive your **Group Registration Form**.

➤ What communications will the group receive?

All groups will receive an annual group's package, which will be sent to the group leader. Individual volunteers will receive individual mailings, which will be sent to them directly.

Details of these communication packages will be provided once you've successfully registered as a new supporter group.

➤ What should our first group meeting look like?

Give some thought to the first meeting. Will it be an 'open' meeting, in which anyone may attend or will you try and select a group of volunteers with a common interest? Will you have an event set up for them or will you leave them to set up their own activities? Sometimes it can help to have key volunteers already in place to help steer the meeting.

Give the new Group time to settle in. They are likely to need more support in their formative stage from the group leader, if they don't already know each other they will need time to bond as a team. Remember some of them will be new to Save the Children and will need supporting in understanding the charities work. In your welcome pack you'll be provided with information which you can share with all your group members.

Talk your new group through their first activity – boost their confidence and make sure they want for nothing! Ensure they are aware of their responsibilities towards Save the Children and talk them through the Groups welcome pack so that they are clear of the resources available to them.

Save the Children does not provide 'seed' or 'start up' funds for new Groups. If your Group needs funds to help set up their first activity you will need to talk through the options with all members of your group. This might involve seeking sponsorship to help cover costs or holding a small 'no-cost fundraiser' to get some money in the bank.

Last but not least, share your success with us. We love profiling our volunteers and are always keen to hear about your successes. Other volunteers also enjoy hearing about each other's success stories. We'll tell you more once you've registered.

➤ **And finally**

Having read all of our top tips on setting up your own supporter group, we hope you're full of energy and raring to go. We have a network of over 500 supporter groups and would love for you join them in raising vital funds for vulnerable children around the world. We look forward to receiving your registration form and sending you your welcome pack. Here's to many years of fun filled fundraising!

If you have any further questions which you feel aren't answered in this guide then please contact us on 0845 606 4027 and we'll be more than happy to help.

New group registration form

Group Name	_____
Area	_____
Region	_____
Opening Date	_____
Trading account to be opened?	Yes/No

Group Leader/Secretary	_____
Address	_____ _____
Post code	_____
Contact No	_____
Email	_____

Group Treasurer	_____
Address	_____ _____
Post code	_____
Contact No	_____
Email	_____

Please return completed form to Supporter Care Unit, Save the Children,
1 St John's Lane, London. EC1M 4AR.



Save the Children

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