

Organising and Running a Launch Event

What is this Guide For?

This guide shares our hints and tips on how to organise a welcoming and interesting launch event for your local group

What is a launch event?

The aim of a launch event is to officially introduce your group into the local community. Your group may have met a few times already but an official launch gives the group the opportunity to put on an exciting event to present the group more widely and invite more members of the public to attend and keep coming back.

What activities can we have at a launch event?

You can have a variety of activities at a launch event. Think about your audience and what would appeal to them. A family event would be different from an adult one. Depending on your audience, you may wish to have a speaker on diabetes related topic, or organise entertainment and activities which encourage people to socialise. Your event might follow a set agenda or may be a social event or get together.

Here are some examples of activities that you could include:

- A welcome stand
- Refreshments
- A welcome presentation from committee members
- A talk from a professional speaker on a diabetes related topic (this could be a GP, DSN, Dietitian, Diabetologist etc)
- A presentation by a Diabetes UK representative about Diabetes UK / how Diabetes UK supports people living with diabetes
- A Diabetes UK information literature stand

What should we think about when planning a launch event?

Ideally you should start planning and organising your launch event as early as possible. Ask committee members to volunteer to be on a sub-group to help organise and run the event. This group should meet regularly to assign tasks and to discuss progress and any challenges. . You will find a *planner* at the end of this document to help the group plan the event.

Here are a few important things you may want to think about as your plan your event:

- **Set a budget** for your event. Remember to take into account venue costs, publicity/printing costs, refreshment costs, equipment hire etc.
- **Set a time, date and book a venue.** Plan the date well in advance if you can. If you are paying for the venue don't forget to ask if they have a cheaper charity rate. Confirm how guests enter the venue, for example, do they need to sign in at a reception desk?
- **What activities** will you have at the event? Plan who will organise these (i.e. a volunteer may be responsible for recruiting a specific speaker).

- **Will you be providing refreshments?**
- **What equipment** will you need? List these in as much details as possible to ensure you have everything you need on the day. (i.e. tea and coffee area would have cups, milk, spoons, jugs etc).
- **Invite local VIPs such as the Mayor or local MP** – get permission to take photos and use their attendance as a press advertisement after the event
- **Will you be handing out any information?** For example, you may want to hand out the group contact details, a calendar of the group events, or a 'save the date' for the next meeting.
- **Will you be collecting any information from those attending?** Collecting the contact details and preferences of those who attended the event means you can keep them updated with information about the group. Remember to keep this information secure and follow the guidelines for collecting contact details on the *Local Groups Portal*
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How could we publicise our launch event?

Here are a few ideas. See the section on *promoting your group* on the *Local Groups Portal* for more information on promoting group activities.

- **Word of mouth-** Encourage your family and friends to attend.
- **Produce a flyer-** The flyer could be displayed in a variety of places in the local area such as GP surgeries, Diabetes Specialist clinics, pharmacies, libraries, sports centres and community notice boards. They are handy to have in your pocket to hand out too. (You will find *template flyers and posters* in the section on *promoting your group* on the *Local Groups Portal*)
- **NHS services** - Invite your local GPs and diabetes team. (See our guide *How to develop links with the NHS*)
- **Community and Social Groups-** Contact local community groups to tell them about the group and encourage their users to attend.
- **Local Media and Press Releases-** Use our *Local Groups Template Press Release* to contact your local press. Have an advert, event listing or a story printed to promote the event.
- **Online-** Promote the event on your group website and on social media pages. You can also use websites which promote and list events in your area, such as <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/> or <http://www.gumtree.com> (See our guide *How to promote your group through Social Media*).
- **Local Events-** Tell people about your group and your launch event when you are at local events, such as fetes and supermarket collections

How can staff in your Diabetes UK local office provide support with the event?

- We can provide advice and guidance to assist you with planning your event
- We can support you with publicity. For example we can support you with press releases and help you promote the event in local media. We can also promote your event to local Diabetes UK members on your behalf
- We can attend your event to speak and help out

Top tips for the day

- Before the day, ensure volunteers are assigned specific roles (i.e. meet and greet, setting up, preparing tea and coffee).

- Plan who is going to be bringing along all the materials you need.
- Arrive at the venue in good time to setup.
- Be welcoming and positive to your attendees. This encourages people to come back
- Don't panic if things don't go to plan. People will not mind or notice as long as they feel welcome and are enjoying themselves.
- Finally, **enjoy it** as it is your launch event. **Celebrate** that your group has officially launched!

Tips for after the event

- Follow up with those who came with a letter, call or email to thank them for attending and keep them informed about future meetings.
- Send out a press release (you can use our template) with photos to continue promoting your group.
- Keep in touch with your local Diabetes UK office so they can continue to support you and your group as the group grows and develops.

TASK LIST FOR PLANNING THE EVENT



Task	Deadline	Who will be doing this?
<i>i.e. Book venue</i>	<i>15th August</i>	<i>David</i>
<i>i.e. Invite Mayor and MPs</i>	<i>30th September</i>	<i>Fred</i>

CONTACT FORM



Full name

Address.....

..... Post code

Home phone Mobile phone.....

Email.....

Do you have diabetes? Type 1 Type 2 No
(Diabetes UK and its local groups exists to support all people living with diabetes including its relatives and carers)

Are you a member of Diabetes UK? Yes No

Where would be a convenient place for you for future meetings?

Would you be interested in serving on the committee? Yes No

Please list any relevant skills, experience or interest:

How often would you like the group to meet?

Once a month Every other month

Other (please state).....

What day would suit you best?

Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat

Would you prefer evenings or daytime meetings?

What topics would you like covered in future meetings:

This information will be used solely for administration purposes of the local group and will not be passed to other organisations.