

The Practicalities of Setting up a Diabetes UK local group

What is this guide for?

This resource is designed to support you with practical guidance when you are setting up a local group. You can use it when you are forming your committee, thinking about your initial meetings and how you are going to run your group. It offers practical guidance, top tips and outlines the support Diabetes UK staff can provide.

Talk to us!

This guide will help you start thinking about practicalities of running your group. However, please do talk this through during your initial meetings with your Regional/National Diabetes UK office contact. We are here to support you.

Finding a regular meeting venue and suitable time.

Choosing a suitable venue and time for your group meetings and events is a really important factor in ensuring the success of your group. Here are a few tips to help you choose a suitable venue.

Comfortable – Choose a venue in which your group members will feel comfortable and safe.

Transport links - Are there good public transport links? Is there ample parking; is it free?

Capacity - Think about how many people you will be expecting at your group meetings, and ensure your venue can comfortably accommodate that number. Are there enough toilet facilities?

Timing - Know your audience. Ensure you think about who your group is aimed at and when your members are likely to be free. Evenings are usually a great time to have meetings, don't make the meeting too long or have it too late, this can put people off.

Cost - Remember you are operating under the Diabetes UK charity registration, so do check if venues offer discounts to charities. You can also access a list of venues that are free for charities to use by contacting Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or your Local Council.

Accessible - Does the venue have disabled facilities, such as ramps, lifts, disabled toilets, reserved parking spaces for disabled drivers? Do they have a loop system to aid the hard of hearing?

Refreshments - If you are hoping to provide catering or refreshments, does the venue provide this? Are there kitchen facilities for you to use? Are you permitted to bring your own refreshments?

Venues to consider



Staying in touch...

1. Within your committee

This may seem obvious, but it is worth discussing how you, as a committee, will stay in contact between meetings. Many committee members will have busy lives outside the group, so it is important to have a discussion about what communication works for each person to ensure everyone is kept in the loop in between meetings.

Email is a great way of staying in contact, if you use it as your main method of communication, ensure one person is designated to collect all committee members email addresses and circulates these to start an email group.

2. With Diabetes UK

The *Working with Diabetes UK* guide tells you more about who's who in the Volunteer Development Team at Diabetes UK and how we support you. You will work most closely with your main contact in your local Diabetes UK office.

In order to help us provide you with the information and support that you need please use the *New Group Information Sheet* to tell us who your committee members are, the main contact and safeguarding officer details. This will help Diabetes UK provide information to the relevant persons within the group. It will also ensure that we are not bombarding your committee with information, and that we are being efficient with the use of charitable resources when sending out communications.

3. Set up a generic email address.

We would strongly recommend setting up a generic email address (for example, groupname@gmail.com) for members and potential members to communicate with you. This is much more useful than using the personal email address of a group member. If your designated committee member, who oversees and manages email enquiries is not available then other committee members can still access the generic email account and respond to enquiries.

Diabetes UK can also ensure that this is the email address that we use to promote your group on our website and when enquiries come to us centrally.

Money matters

Your group will fundraise for operating costs and many groups also raise funds for Diabetes UK projects. We provide support to enable you to manage group finances:

- **Diabetes UK bank account.** Diabetes UK supports all local groups to set up a bank account with Barclays under the Diabetes UK umbrella. Once you have signed the *Local Group Agreement* and have a group treasurer, our Central Volunteering Team will be in contact with more information and to guide you through the process.
- **£250 Starter grant.** We offer all new groups a grant to get started. Our Central Volunteering Team will be in contact about this alongside information about your bank account.

Tools to help you promote your group

Diabetes UK also supports groups to set up a **website** using bespoke templates specially designed for Diabetes UK groups. Our Central Volunteering Team will be in

contact about how to set up this website once we have received your *Local Group Agreement*.

Your group may also want to start communicating with potential link organisations and members. Diabetes UK can provide you with a bespoke **logo** and **letterhead** for your group. Do let us know what you require by completing the relevant boxes on the *New Group Information Sheet*. Please also see our templates and resources on *promoting your group* on the *Local Groups Portal*.