



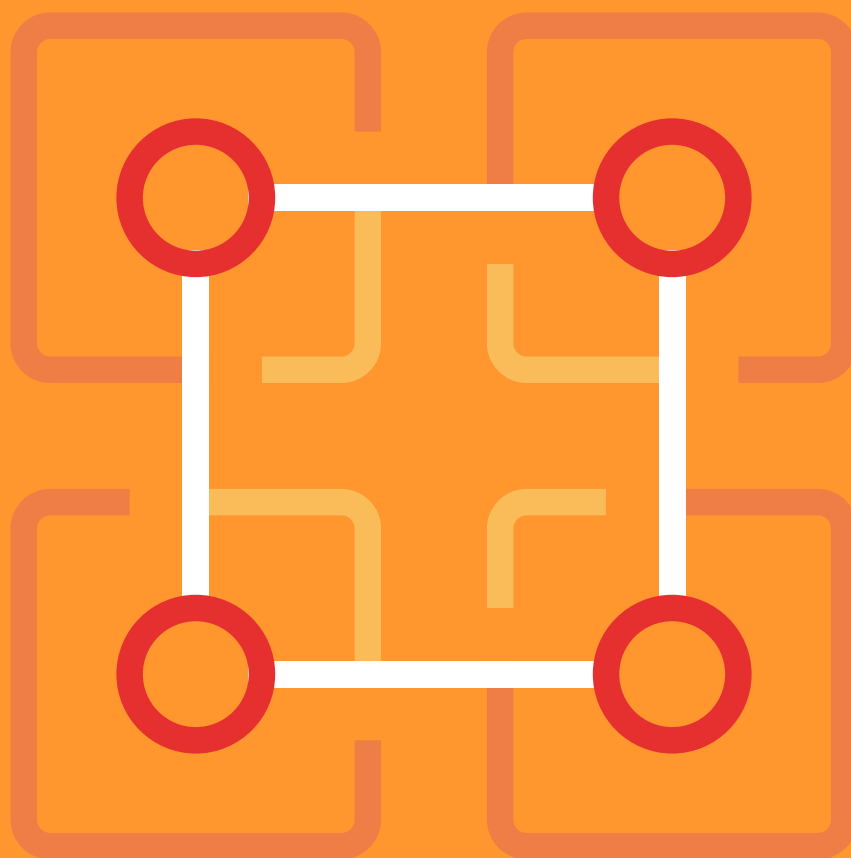
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WEST  
GLAMORGAN  
VOLUNTEERING  
SUPPORT

# Individual Action to Community Action

A toolkit for volunteers



A shared resource for  
developing knowledge





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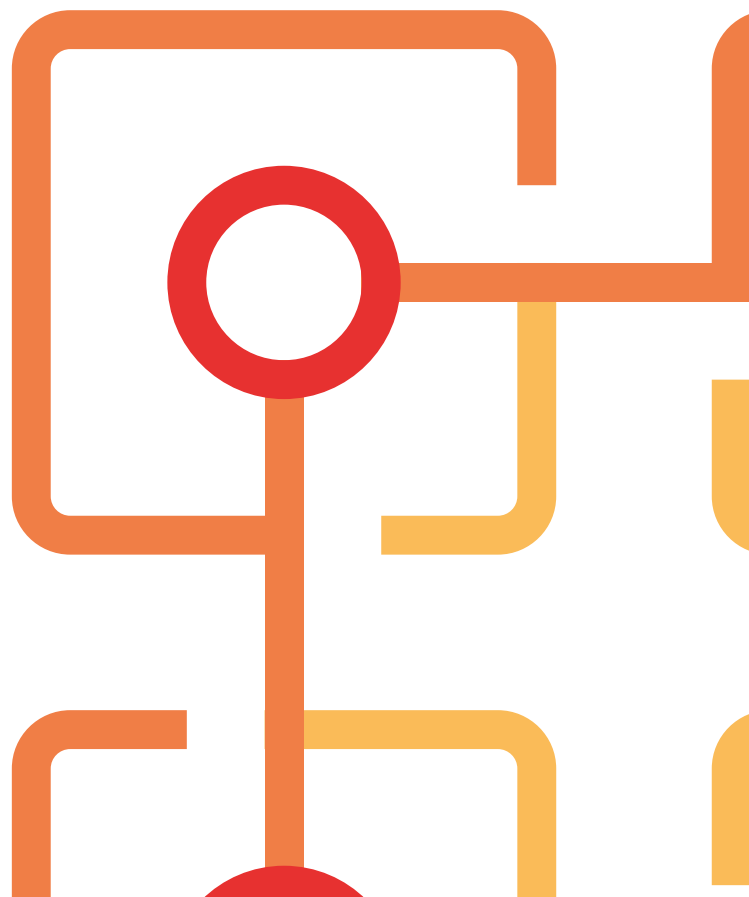
## Section 1: Purpose of the Toolkit

You've been volunteering during the Covid pandemic to help people in your community.

As things get back to 'normal', would you like to continue volunteering?

**Have you enjoyed what you're doing and caught the volunteering bug?**

There are lots of options for you – you can continue informally helping out your neighbours or others in your community. You can get involved with campaigns on different issues, like fighting food poverty and addressing loneliness. Or you could volunteer at specific events. There are also lots of existing groups that are looking for volunteers to help out. Or, it may be that there isn't anyone out there working on the specific issue that concerns you, and you're thinking of starting up a new group.





## What is volunteering?

Volunteering is activity which:

- is undertaken freely, by choice.
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit.
- is not undertaken for financial gain.

If a person undertakes activity either on a mandatory basis or under threat or sanctions, such activity is not considered to be volunteering, even where it is for community benefit and not for financial gain. Both the individual and the wider community may well benefit from such experience - in some cases it marks the start of a life-long volunteering journey and neither the person nor the activity should be denied proper recognition of their value. Nevertheless, it is very important to safeguard the principle that volunteering should be a matter of choice rather than compulsion.

## Informal Volunteering

Informal volunteering is undertaken by individuals for other people or community groups, although such individuals may not always regard themselves as volunteers. It includes:

- Help for neighbours, community action, participating in faith and community groups.
- Helping out at local events. There are no formal processes for recruitment. This kind of volunteering is largely hidden within our communities but is strongly rooted within Welsh culture. It is to be celebrated and encouraged.



## Formal Volunteering

Formal volunteering refers to situations where a volunteer's efforts are channelled through an organisation. Such organisations are sometimes described as 'volunteer involving organisations'. Many volunteering opportunities are suitable for everyone, with appropriate induction and support. Some require volunteers to be trained extensively for their role (for example in advice work, youth work including scouts and guides, or emergency services). Some may require specialist expertise or prior qualification (for example many overseas volunteering opportunities). Volunteering may be a one off event, for a short period, or a longer term commitment.



<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01/volunteering-policy-supporting-communities-changing-lives.pdf>

Volunteering can be something you commit to doing on an ongoing basis – every week or every month. But many of us have limited time available, and cannot make long-term commitments. You can still volunteer – perhaps for a fixed-term campaign, like you may have done during the Covid pandemic. Or setting up a petition to make improvements to your local school. **You can also volunteer on one-off events, such as community trips or children's fun days.**



<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/launching-a-petition/>

Click through to:



<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/app/uploads/2021/01/Getting-Your-Message-Heard.pdf>

According to the National Survey for Wales, 2016-17: Volunteering and Caring, **28% of people volunteer, either formally or informally in Wales.**



<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-02/national-survey-wales-volunteering-and-caring-2016-17.pdf>

Volunteers make a significant contribution, in unpaid hours, to the economy of Wales.

**It is estimated that approximately 938,000 volunteers contribute 145 million hours, each year, which is worth £1.7 billion.** This is equivalent to around 3.1% of the Wales GDP (Welsh Government Third Sector Scheme Report 2017-18).



## Section 2: Joining an existing group

### So, what groups are out there?

More than a quarter of the population in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot volunteers, according to the 2016-17 National Survey for Wales – 31% and 27%, respectively. In Swansea, there were 3,718 organisations in the charity/voluntary sector in June 2018, and 3,196 in Neath Port Talbot.

**In Wales, there were approximately 100,000 people employed in the charity/voluntary sector in 2017.**

(Source: WCVA – The Third Sector Data Hub)

As you can see, there are lots of groups out there already, so there's probably one that covers issues you're interested in. Talk to people in your community to see what exists and then arrange to speak with people in any groups you think may be interesting, to decide whether this opportunity is right for you. There are so many groups and so many roles. You may choose to work with children with special needs, helping them to fulfill their potential. You could help adults with their literacy – anything from teaching English to refugees, to working with prisoners to improve their reading and maths. You could befriend people who need someone to talk to. You could work with animals, helping to rehome them and keep them fit. You could get involved with after-school clubs or community centres. Indoors, outdoors, online, in your community or across Wales – the list could go on and on.

You can have a hands-on role, working directly with clients; or a more strategic, planning role as a trustee. You could even be part of a steering group, helping to shape a group's future direction.

### The possibilities when volunteering are endless!

If you would like more information on what volunteering options are available in your area, you can:



Look on the Volunteering Wales website: <https://volunteering.wales.net>



Talk to the team at the VolunteerCentre at SCVS or NPTCVS  
<https://www.scvs.org.uk/volunteercentre>



<https://www.nptcvs.wales/volunteering/become-a-volunteer/>

You'll be able to book an appointment with someone on the Volunteering team, who will go through your interests, availability etc, and look at possible opportunities.



## Section 3: Starting up a new group

Starting up a new group can be fun, but can also be a lot of work. **Don't reinvent the wheel!** Are there other groups already doing the same thing?

If not – first establish why there is a specific need for the group and its overall purpose.

**Do other people also see that something needs to be done?**

**Is there the interest, people, time and resources available to do this well? Be realistic!**

**And remember the three Ts – Things Take Time. There's a lot to do!**

Talk to other community members about what they think is needed. This may be done through social media, public meetings, consultation, questionnaires etc.

At any stage, whether you're just thinking about starting up, or if you're an established group with a particular question, your local county voluntary council can help. They can answer many of your questions – and if they don't know, they'll try to find someone who does!



Swansea Council for  
Voluntary Service  
[www.scvs.org.uk](http://www.scvs.org.uk)



Neath Port Talbot Council for  
Voluntary Service  
[www.nptcvs.org.uk](http://www.nptcvs.org.uk)



## Community Action - an example

March 2020 saw the rapid rise of Covid-19 Mutual Aid groups across the Swansea Bay region with local residents volunteering to support the most vulnerable in their community during the Coronavirus pandemic. The neighbourhood of Neath East (known locally as the Melin) was no exception, with more than 50 volunteers coming forward to offer help with everyday tasks such as shopping, prescription collection as well as offering emotional support to those feeling isolated.

This amazing voluntary effort was co-ordinated by F.A.N (Friends and Neighbours) Community Alliance, a long established residents group that promotes a sense of pride and responsibility within their community. F.A.N reports that, of the 50 new volunteers, that more than half are continuing with their volunteering journey by joining the organisation and undertaking a wide variety of roles.

“As a result of the pandemic we actually had more offers of help than we needed! Working together, our old and new volunteers have come up with some great ideas for the area.”

“Our Community Garden is looking better than it has done in years, we’re able to offer regular online events and competitions for local children, we’ve developed a community food project and we’ve got some exciting plans for the future including setting up a Good Neighbour Network. We are determined to make sure that the good will, enthusiasm and community spirit that came from a negative (the pandemic) is turned into a positive for the future of our community.”

Emma Knight, Trustee at F.A.N Community Alliance





### 3.1 Setting up as a group

If you haven't been able to find an existing group that addresses your issues, and you're thinking of starting one.

#### **There's lots to do!**

Start by gathering information about the community you are working with and its strengths and weaknesses. Remember, a 'community' can be the area where you live, but it may also be a group of people with similar interests (crafts, football, history); or identity (religion, ability, gender). Communities can be face-to-face or virtual – or both.

What concerns people? Remember, their issues may not be the same as yours. Look at any problems that are identified – what are the causes and what are the effects? What are the priority issues that can realistically be addressed?

#### **Select a starting point:**

- Set aims and objectives; initial targets – what is it, in general, that you want to do?
- Identify possible options to achieve these – whether that is activities, campaigning, networking etc.
- Look for possible resources – people, skills, venues, goods, funds, etc.

#### **Does the group/community have the ability to meet their objectives?**

It's often best to start small – within your realistic capacity and available resources – and then work to build the project up slowly so that it remains manageable.

#### **And remember – you can learn a lot from other groups doing similar work in other places or those tackling different issues.**

Make contact with these groups and ask for their top tips on what to do and what not to do. Most groups are very happy to help new groups avoid the mistakes they have made! Their experience and advice will be incredibly useful to you.



## 3.2 You're not alone – finding people

You could try to do things on your own. But there are strong advantages to working as a group:

**By working together**, it is possible to achieve things you couldn't necessarily do alone.

- The whole can be more than the sum of its parts, by using the skills, experience and learnings of all its members.
- Groups can be more imaginative than individuals – talking ideas through together will enable new initiatives to take shape and actions to happen quicker, whilst having the added benefit of learning from each other.
- Group members can support each other – remember you are not alone, when a problem arises or when there is something to celebrate. All these experiences can be shared.

**Remember – The most important resource for any group is its people.**

Before involving other volunteers, it is worth spending some time considering how they can be best included in the group. It is essential for you to identify tasks that are appropriate for the volunteers to undertake, prior to the recruitment and selection process.

### So, how do you find people?

Volunteers – you may be starting the group up with a couple friends, but it's always good to have more people in your network. Having a wide range of people means you also have a greater collection of talents and skills than can be found in a single individual – which also means you could work more efficiently. Different people bring different ideas – which may include wonderful things you'd never considered!

Click through to:



<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/recruiting-selecting-and-inducting-volunteers/>



### 3.3 Your trustees

In a charitable or voluntary group, there are people who share responsibility for governing the group and directing how it is managed and run. They may be called 'trustees', 'the board', 'the management committee', 'directors'. Within the group, people take on different roles. These can be the formal roles we're familiar with – chairperson, treasurer and secretary. Different groups may have additional roles that are specific to them – youth coordinator, bookings officer, building manager etc.

Recruiting, selecting and inducting the people who sit on your board or management committee is one of the most important processes that a voluntary organisation can undertake. A well balanced and diverse board will provide direction and possess the skills that are needed to develop the organisation.

### 3.4 We're all singing from the same hymn sheet – Induction

An induction is a 'welcome' and a preparation for the role, combined with communicating key information group members need to be aware of. It may form part of an assessment process where you mutually agree with a group whether this opportunity is right for you. This includes topics such as the group's purposes, financial position, work programmes, structure, policies, complaints procedure, current issues, current challenges faced and covers who to approach with any queries or issues.

Click through to:



<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/recruiting-selecting-and-inducting-volunteers/>



<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/recruitment-selection-and-induction/>



### 3.5 Accessibility/inclusion

Making sure that all community members are free to contribute to the group, should they wish to do so, brings together the range of skills, experiences, approaches and opinions that exist among us. Your group needs to be both accessible and inclusive. **Accessible**, so that people aren't excluded if your meetings or activities aren't at a time they can attend, or in a place they can't get to, or makes allowances if their English is only at basic level. **Inclusive**, so that no one is made to feel like they don't belong.

### 3.6 Governance – possible structures

There are several possible structures for voluntary/3rd sector organisations; from a basic set of rules (constitution), to a registered charity or charitable company. You may also consider setting up as a Community Interest Company (CIC).

For more information about different structures (and to ensure you choose the best one for your specific group) speak to your local county voluntary council.

#### Swansea CVS

Email: [scvs@scvs.org.uk](mailto:scvs@scvs.org.uk)

#### Neath Port Talbot CVS



<https://www.nptcvswales.org/get-help/help-for-organisations/developing-running-an-organisation/>



### 3.7 Information

You need to keep an eye on what's happening in your community, around your particular interest area and with third sector/voluntary groups in the locality and within Wales.

#### **A good start is the website from your local county voluntary group:**

- in Neath Port Talbot:  
[www.nptcvs.wales](http://www.nptcvs.wales)

Monthly e-bulletin of news, funding, training etc.

[www.nptcvs.wales/e-bulletins](http://www.nptcvs.wales/e-bulletins)

- in Swansea:  
[www.scvs.org.uk](http://www.scvs.org.uk)

Monthly e-bulletin of news, funding, training etc.

<https://www.scvs.org.uk/resources-and-communication>

### 3.8 Being accountable

It's vital to keep everyone aware of how things are going with your plans and progress. This includes members of the group, the people you are working with/assisting, and any outside groups that are helping you including funders, local businesses, your local councillor, etc.

#### **Remember the three Ts? Things Take Time**

After reading this toolkit, you can see that there is a lot to do to set up a new group. But some people will hear about your group and think that everything is going to be up and running tomorrow – if not today! You need to keep letting people know what's going on, so they realise that, yes, something is happening, but that it might take a bit longer than they initially expected or hoped.

Keeping people informed will also help motivate your team, help to identify where changes are needed, build credibility for the group and give people you work with the opportunity to be heard. In addition, this will demonstrate to those providing resources that you are set up correctly and are trustworthy.



## Section 4: The logistics

There are a lot of operational demands when setting up a formal group, from finalising your constitution to setting up a bank account and writing policies. Really helpful advice and support can be obtained from your local CVC.



Swansea Council for Voluntary Service  
[www.scvs.org.uk](http://www.scvs.org.uk)



Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service  
[www.nptcvs.wales](http://www.nptcvs.wales)

### 4.1 Constitution

**You need to have a set of 'rules' for the group**, to say what it is you want to do and how the group will be run. This is your 'constitution' or governing document. There is some fairly standard information that needs to be included in this, but also perhaps some content specific to your group, depending on what your group is working to achieve and therefore what is essential to include. You can get support on preparing your governing document from your local CVC.

### 4.2 Bank account

**Having a bank account** is the best way to make sure the group's money is kept safely. Most high street banks and building societies offer special accounts for community groups. You will need to have at least two members of the group willing to act as signatories. Funders usually require that you have a bank account where each cheque has to be signed by two unrelated people.





### 4.3 Policies

The group needs to ensure many important things are adhered to – that volunteers are treated well; that the people you work with are kept safe; that there is no form of discrimination, etc. These key points will be covered in policy documents, which could include things like safeguarding, equal opportunities, environment, lone working, procurement, complaints, volunteer expenses and other considerations specific to your particular group.

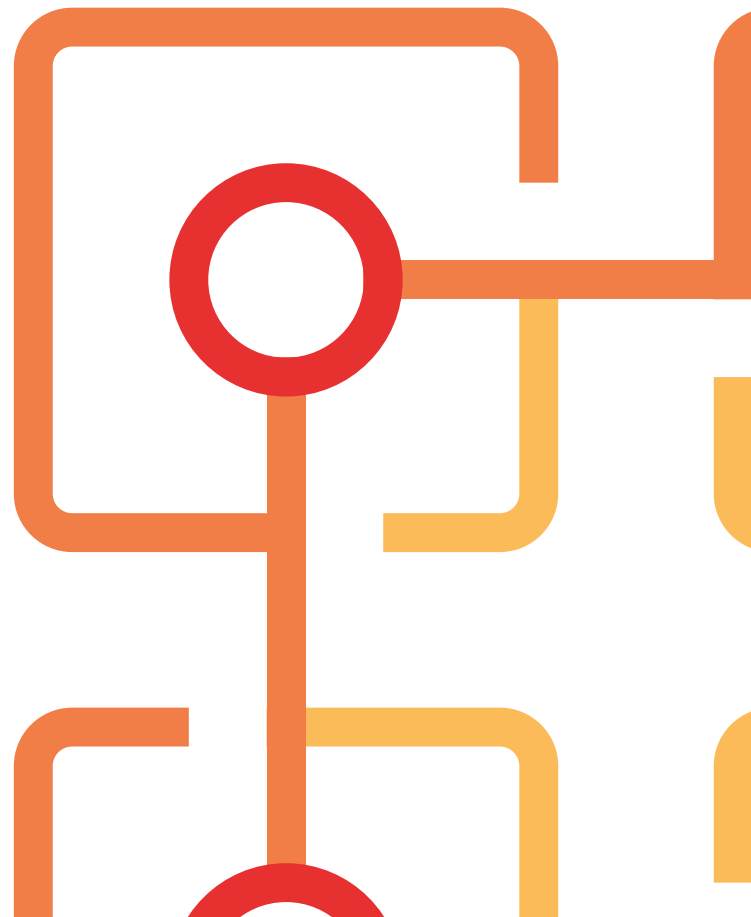
**You can get help to create these policies from your local CVC.**

### 4.4 Insurance

The members of a governing body have a general duty to protect the organisation including adequately insuring it.

The level and type of insurance your organisation needs will be determined by:

- The law – some insurance cover is required under statute and to not have the right type of insurance when you should is a breach of the law.
- The governing document (constitution) – it may include a positive duty to purchase particular insurance and at a specific cover value.
- The range and type of activities undertaken by your organisation – such as the assets it owns or manages and whether it has staff and/or volunteers.





## 4.5 Health & Safety

You must ensure, to the best of your ability, that your volunteers, staff, visitors and users are all safe.



<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/health-and-safety/>

## 4.6 Safeguarding/DBS

Safeguarding is everybody's legal responsibility. All volunteers and workers must have a basic understanding of the legal and procedural framework that underpins safeguarding, and know what abuse/harm is and how to identify the potential signs. Volunteers/workers should also know what their responsibilities are to the individuals that they support, and how to report any concerns. They must also understand the correct procedures to follow.

**Training on safeguarding is available through your local county voluntary council.**

If any of your team – volunteers, staff and trustees – are working or volunteering with children or adults or carry out roles set out in legislation as requiring a DBS, you may need to consider conducting a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Checks should only be carried out where the role is eligible. This uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS – formerly known as CRB). There are different levels of checks which can be run according to the role being applied for. More information and assistance with this can be obtained from your local county voluntary council (CVC).

## 4.7 Data protection

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) legislation of 2016, we all have the responsibility to ensure the data we hold about individuals isn't misused or mishandled. This includes information about people's name and contact details, date of birth, activities and any other personal data about them. If you hold any sort of data about individuals, you will need to be GDPR compliant.





## Section 5: Getting help

### 5.1 Training

There is training available specifically for third sector/voluntary groups, through your local county voluntary agency. Bursaries are available for new groups.



Swansea Council for Voluntary Service  
<https://www.scvs.org.uk/training-programme>



Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service  
<https://www.nptcvs.wales/get-help/help-for-organisations/access-training/>

Relevant training is also available from WCVA, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action. This is the umbrella body for all the local voluntary councils in Wales:



<https://wcva.cymru/training-info/>

### 5.2 Funding

Your local county voluntary council can help find appropriate funders and assist you with creating a good application.



Swansea Council for Voluntary Service  
<https://www.scvs.org.uk/funding>  
or email [funding@scvs.org.uk](mailto:funding@scvs.org.uk)



Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service  
<https://www.nptcvs.wales/get-help/help-for-organisations/find-funding/>

You can also access Funding Wales which is a funding search platform created by Third Sector Support Wales. It allows charities, community groups or social enterprises in Wales to locate and identify suitable funding using a free online search engine.

You can search hundreds of grant and loan finance opportunities from local, national and international sources, from small grants to large capital projects.



<https://funding.cymru/>



## 5.3 Monitoring & evaluation

### So, how are you doing?

**Are you achieving what you set out to do?**

**What's going really well and what could you do better?**

It's important that you have definite ideas, aims and objectives from the start. That you are fully aware of the current situation in your community, what you want to achieve, how you can work to achieve these goals and by when.

**If you don't know where you're starting from, how can you possibly know that you've reached your destination!**

Equally, you need to look at how you're doing, on an ongoing basis. Are you carrying out the activities you'd planned?

Have you attracted as many people to the project as you'd hoped?

Are your activities making an impact? If not, what changes do you need to make to improve things?

**Periodically, you need to stop, take a breath and review from a high level perspective how you are doing and how you feel things are progressing.**

Have you achieved what you set out to do?

Have you used your resources well?

Is what you're doing what people in the community actually want?

What have you learned from this?

If you were to do it all over again, would you do things differently?



## 5.4 Co-production

“Co-production is a relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support – together, recognising that both have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities.”  
(National Co-production, Critical Friends Group)

### **Co-production is underpinned by 5 principles:**

1. Value all participants, and build on their strengths.
2. Develop networks of mutual support.
3. Do what matters for all the people involved.
4. Build relationships of trust; share power and responsibility.
5. People can be change makers, and organisations enable this.

**The Co-production Network Wales knowledge base is at**  
<https://info.copronet.wales/>

## In conclusion

We wish you the very best of luck in setting up your new group or organisation. Meeting an unmet need is an extremely rewarding thing to do, but it can be hard work. There are highly experienced people in Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot who can help you every step of the way, so please don't be afraid to ask – we are just a phone call away!



## Section 6: Further Reading

### Setting up a charity

GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

### Being a good trustee

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

### Recruiting, selecting and inducting volunteers

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/recruiting-selecting-and-inducting-volunteers/>

### Recruiting, selecting and inducting trustees

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/recruitment-selection-and-induction/>

### Accessibility/inclusion

<https://www.disabilitywales.org/resources/way-go-toolkit/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/app/uploads/2021/03/Volunteer-Expenses.pdf>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/app/uploads/2021/03/Volunteers-and-Welfare-Benefits.pdf>

### 'Governance' – possible structures

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/principles-of-governance/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/charitable-status/>

### Community links/information distribution/feedback

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/getting-your-message-heard/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/guide-to-raising-awareness-growing-a-network-promotion-strategy/>

### Being accountable

<https://howcharitieswork.com/transparency-and-accountability/>

### Constitutions

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/model-constitution-for-setting-up-a-small-charity/>

<https://www.gov.uk/setting-up-charity/governing-document>



## Policies

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/safeguarding-policy-guidance/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/safeguarding-policy-template/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/creating-a-volunteering-policy/>

<https://wcva.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Equal-Opportunities-policy.pdf>

## Insurance

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/insurance/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/volunteers-and-insurance/>

## Health & Safety

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/health-and-safety/>

## Safeguarding/DBS

<https://safeguarding.wales/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/safeguarding-self-assessment-tool/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/dbs-and-safer-recruitment-2/>

<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-applicant-criminal-record>

<https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>

<https://wcva.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/How-to-access-DBS-checks.pdf>

## Data protection

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/data-protection-gdpr/>

## Funding

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/fit-for-funding/>

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/online-fundraising-guidebook/>

## Information

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/app/uploads/2021/01/Getting-Your-Message-Heard.pdf>

## Monitoring & Evaluation

<https://wcva.cymru/impact-evaluation/>

**West Glamorgan Volunteering Support** is a multi-agency project creating shared resources to develop the knowledge, management and coordination of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas. It has been funded through the Welsh Government Volunteering Recovery Fund.

**The project partners are:**

Neath Port Talbot Council, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Swansea Council, Swansea Council for Voluntary Service and West Glamorgan Regional Partnership.

**For more information visit:**  
**[www.westglamorgan.org.uk/wgvs](http://www.westglamorgan.org.uk/wgvs)**