

Form a working group

A committee is required to take on the responsibility of managing and leading your community group to set up your community co-op; it's effectively the management group of an unincorporated organisation.



Consider your vision and how best to explain what you are trying to do

Your committee will need to have clear aims and objectives from the outset and set out roles and responsibilities.



Identify and consult with your community

By consulting with the immediate community and surrounding area, you will be able to gauge the level of support there is for the project.

It will also help you to establish whether the community are willing to invest in the project, and if they are, how much. By consulting with the wider community, you are creating the opportunity to get feedback on your ideas and the inclusion of new ones not yet considered.

It will also give you the opportunity to identify people with relevant skills to get involved. Questionnaires and public meetings are good ways to consult with your community, and remember to share your results with everyone.



Visit Other enterprises to get inspiration

Talk to people who have already gone through the process, and learn from them about what – and what not – to do.

Design and illustration by Emma Charleston for stirtoaction.com

Contact a support organisation initially

Setting up a community co-operative can be daunting, but the great news is that there are experienced organisations out there ready to help. Organisations like Co-operatives UK, Plunkett Foundation and others have a range of support and advice on offer, so contact them first to find out what help is available.

How to set up a community co-op

Kat Darling
Plunkett Foundation

Review original plans and determine whether to proceed



Secure Premises and Plan for Opening



Celebrate your success with an opening event!

The official opening day is a celebratory event that all of the community should be invited to and encouraged to attend. This is your opportunity to show off all the hard work that has been going on, and the ideal opportunity to market the co-op to your local community and the wider services you now offer.

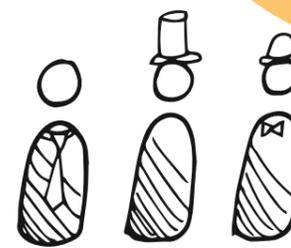


Consider your operating structure

- Community Owned Premises, enterprise managed by the community
- Community Owned Premises, enterprise managed by commercial operator
- Privately-owned premises, leased by community co-operative, and managed by community.
- Other Community premises (church or village hall), enterprise managed by the community.

Consider finance options and raise capital

Community fundraising events and requests for donations are an important way of engaging with the community and raising finance. You can also apply for grants and sell community shares.



Formalise your working group

Committees should consist of a minimum of three people, and a maximum of twelve.

At the very least, a committee should consist of a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. It is also good practice to have 4-6 others with specific roles to lead sub-committees, with experience such as marketing, fundraising and business planning.

Constantly review and engage with your members and customers

Determine start-up costs and consider business plan

A business plan is a valuable tool for setting out your aims and objectives for your community co-op. Your business plan will also include financial forecasts, including the initial set-up costs and on-going costs and from this, determine how much money the business needs to raise through initial fundraising and future sales in order to be a viable and sustainable business.

Research and Decide on your Legal Structure

What kind of organisation are you? Would incorporation be beneficial? If so, find the legal structure that works best for you. Co-operatives UK has a great Select-a-Structure tool that can be downloaded from their website.