

STARTING YOUR LOCAL GROUP

 THE EQUALITY TRUST

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Starting a group can seem daunting. There might only be you—or there might only be two or three of you. Don't panic—most of our groups have started from such numbers and this guide will help you work out a way forward—so you are already in the right place and doing the right thing!

Below is a suggested guide to starting your local group. It is only a model and conditions will vary from area to area. Feel free to skip certain steps or come up with your own distinct path.

1 CONTACT THE EQUALITY TRUST

Email info@equalitytrust.org.uk to ask for some initial advice.

2 HOLD AN INITIAL MEETING

Find two or three people who would be interested in meeting or chatting over the phone or online to discuss starting a local group about inequality.

Arrange a suitable time and discuss:

- **What is the group about?**
- **What is the issue that motivates you to act now?**
What are the reasons why you are all concerned about inequality? This may include a local issue, the scale of inequality in the UK, what effect inequality has on society, why this bothers you, or grounds for hope of change. See [About Equality](#) for more information.
- **What is this group for?** Are you hoping to persuade your local government, a local employer or another decision-maker in your area to adopt

policies and practices that reduce inequality? Or are you hoping to spread awareness among people in your area of the scale and effects of economic and social inequality?

- **What sorts of activity do you think the group could usefully be involved in to achieve the above?**
You could brainstorm the types of events and activities you might organise.
- **Who else might you want to involve in your group going forward?** Other local organisations and groups, local councillors, for example. See below for other ideas.
- **How would you like the group to function?** Agree how often you would like to meet for the first three months - remember you can always revise this at a later date.

3 IDENTIFY AND MAP YOUR GROUP'S ALLIES

At this point, start to map out all the local groups and leaders who may want to join your group to reduce inequality. Consider:

- other local campaigning groups (disability groups, race equality and BAME rights, women's rights and advocacy, LGBTQI, living wage groups)
- local political groups
- co-operatives
- faith organisations
- charities such as food banks and advocacy groups
- trade union branches
- student groups
- green or climate groups
- local business groups
- local universities
- local schools, colleges and sixth forms
- your local citizens advice office

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GET YOUR GROUP ORGANISED

The core group should continue to meet regularly, develop its plans, get to know each other better and grow in confidence.

During this period it is quite common for a group to think about issues such as setting up a website or a social media account to help in reaching out to new volunteers. This is also a great opportunity for your group to create some original content which gives new people an overview of your purpose and objectives.

Many groups also decide to create mailing lists. There are several services available for free for small groups, such as [Mailchimp](#), which will allow you to email your

supporters and also embed processes to ensure that you are [GDPR compliant](#). While regular emails are great for keeping people informed, emails are often only a one-way communication, so it's important to follow up with your group members via other methods such as phone, online, face-to-face and direct messages via social media.

You may want to set up a formal structure. Some groups will select a Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, but we also recommend you delegate the more practical aspects of your group, for example, social media coordinators, outreach, liaison with The Equality Trust.

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BUILD TOWARDS A CAMPAIGN OR EVENT

It's helpful if your core group (hopefully slightly larger by now) sets some short-term objectives, including what campaigns or events you want to organise. Options explored previously by local groups have included:

- Hold a public meeting to launch the group.
- Campaign for your local authority to adopt the [Fairness Fifteen](#).

- Hold a community activist workshop to develop a local manifesto for change—see [London example](#).
- Hold a seminar on an inequality issue of relevance to your area or which is current in the national debate, such as inequality and education, inequality and mental health or inequality and local transport.

TIPS FOR ORGANISING EVENTS

- Set a date far enough in advance that will allow time for planning and publicity. Two months is usually sufficient for a physical event and 1 month for an online event.
- Ensure your members agree on the focus of your event and share responsibilities for the different tasks and actions among your local group members.
- Invite interesting speakers from a diverse background. Suggestions include local community leaders, academics, staff or Trustees of The Equality Trust or from other local groups affiliated to The Equality Trust.
- Draft and publish simple publicity text to be used for online and offline promotional materials. Use these to create posters, leaflets and social media posts to promote your event.
- Explore different ways of fundraising, such as asking for donations through eventbrite.
- Book a suitable venue and plan out the logistics for the event such as audio-visuals, any catering, briefings for speakers, etc.
- Ensure you hold a pre-briefing meeting for your volunteers and team members so that everyone is confident about the agenda and their role in making the event a success. For online events, this may include allocating people to manage the video and audio of speakers. For offline events, this may include someone to carry a roaming microphone during a Q&A.
- Invite your local media.
- Invite your local MPs and Councillors.
- Invite other potential allies, such as faith groups, local campaign groups, food banks, trade unions, co-ops, community groups.
- Organise a leafleting session in your town to promote your event at a popular place - for example outside a busy university, train station or in the town centre.
- Ask your attendees for anonymous feedback, including whether they now have a better understanding of the issues and if they are more motivated to take action on fighting inequality.
- Debrief with your group members to celebrate your success and take away any learning for the future.

WHAT HELP DO WE PROVIDE ALONG THE WAY?

- The Equality Trust provides the following support to the affiliated local groups:
- A dedicated Local Groups Organiser—contact info@equalitytrust.org.uk to get in touch.
- Advice and guidance on running and growing a group, persuading decision-makers, organising events, working with media, etc. This includes putting you in contact with other groups which have experience of this.
- Targeted postcode mailings to those people in our database that live in your area to help you grow your core group of activists.
- Regular opportunities to support and get involved with TET campaigns.
- Regular newsletters, including news from the affiliated groups and all the latest news and research relating to inequality.
- Regular opportunities to meet up with the other affiliated groups in the UK at training workshops.
- Varied means of connecting with the other affiliated groups in the UK.

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