

Carers Group Toolkit

What is a family carers group?

A carers group is a collection of family carers with common goals or similar concerns. The purpose of the group is to provide its members with an opportunity to connect with others in similar situations. Being part of such a group can help people like carers gain support and know that they are not alone through sharing experiences and resources, conversing with or simply listening to others.

Working together, the members of the group can identify what information or support they need and invite professionals and other organisations to help them access this. Groups can also have fun by organising social events and activities as part of their journey together.

Carers groups can take many different shapes and sizes; ones that meet informally in a hotel lounge area for coffee and a chat to others who have an organised programme of events including guest speakers, social outings and activities.

Suffolk Family Carers are partnered with many family carers groups across Suffolk and are provide help and information in setting up new groups. This toolkit provides guidance on how to start up a new group and factors that need consideration.

Before starting up a group consider the following:

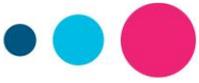
- What groups already exist in your area?
- What sort of group do you want it to be?
- Where do you want to meet?
- How often do you want to meet?

Then you can hold an initial meeting to gauge level of interest and if others are willing to help you. At this meeting you could agree the group's purpose and discuss its aims and objectives. (see separate aims and objectives document)

Once you have set up a group you will also need to consider:

- Keeping appropriate records
- Meeting any legal requirements such as Public Liability insurance and safeguarding if the group supports young people or adults at risk.

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- Establishing ground rules – simple ground rules such as listening to others, respecting confidentially, sharing responsibilities.
- Advertise – let Suffolk Family Carers have the details of your group so that we can promote it on our website and social media accounts.

For more advice and help setting up a family carers group please call our Information line on 01473 835477.

Below is a useful checklist covering the key points in setting up a new group.

Things to think about...	Things to do...
Is there a group already active in the area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research what groups already exist. • Visit similar groups to find out what works well.
Who could you ask to help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with professionals who may be aware of others with similar concerns. • Approach those people you've identified.
Where, when, and how often will the group meet? Are potential venues convenient and accessible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide on the group's purpose and frequency of meetings. • Identify suitable venues.
What would you like to achieve from an initial meeting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a planning meeting to finalise the above and decide on things like the name of the group and who can join.
How will group responsibilities be shared?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider forming an organising group / committee.
How will the group be structured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop terms of reference.
What community resources or possible sources of financial support are available?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open a bank account. • Create a simple budget. • Fundraise, apply for funding etc..
How will you advertise the group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise publicity.
What admin procedures need to be put in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create simple systems for keeping appropriate records.
What legal requirements need to be met?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange public liability / other insurance as necessary.
How will you welcome and include new members?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear ground rules. • Integrate practices that set the right tone for the group.
Is your programme relevant to the group's members?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get regular feedback from those involved in the group. • Change and adapt as necessary.