

Starting a Facebook group

Decide on the who, what, and why of your group

When starting a Facebook group, you need to think about who it is for, what you are going to provide in the group, and why you're starting one in the first place. The group members should have a specific need in common. Maybe they all do the same job, volunteer for the same charity or are interested in the same cause. Knowing that everyone in the group has a shared and specific need will help you to create engaging content or posts for the group and promote the group in the right places.



Think about what you are providing the group with. Is it a place to share information about upcoming events, are you wanting to seek people's views on specific topics, or are you providing a virtual space for like-minded people to come together and support each other?

Finally, you need to consider why you are starting the group. Is it because you are in a position of authority, are you wanting to connect with people like yourself, or are you wanting to promote or sell products or services.

Being clear about why you are setting up a group will really help to make sure your group is successful in the long term. Setting up a group is quite easy, but running a successful group does take time and commitment.

Set up your group

Facebook has a [guide](#) that covers the technical aspects of how to set up a new group; you will need a [Facebook account](#) before you can set up a group.



Closed or Open access

When setting up a new group you need to consider if the group will be an open or closed group, and if it's a closed group if it will be private. An open group is easily accessible and anyone can join. If you are creating an open group, think about how it will differ from your main Facebook account page.

If it is a closed group it means that the content within the group is only accessible to people who are a member of the group, and only members of the group can post content. You can also make the group private. This means that people can only find out about the group if you tell them about it and share the link. It will not be discoverable through the search function. Many groups operate closed groups but allow the name and an image or logo to appear in a search.

If you are operating a closed group, it is a good idea to set entry questions for any new members. This gives you the opportunity to find out a little bit more about them and is important, as the account name of their Facebook account may not match the name you know them by. You can ask up to three questions and it is a good practice to include a question about who they represent or what their interest is in the group, and how they heard about the group.

Create a group description

The group description should include who you are, what the group is for, who the group is for and who it's not for if relevant, your rules and expectations and very brief details of any regular events, such as monthly live Q&A sessions, if you intend to have any.

Including guidelines within the description

It is a good idea to have some guidelines about the group that cover its purpose, such as who can become a member and what, if any, rules there are about posting content. You should also consider if it is appropriate for people to advertise events or services in the group to other members. The guidelines should make your position clear. If you don't want promotions, include that in the group description. If you want people to share freely, let them know. Be as clear as you can in defining what is and isn't acceptable behavior. When it comes to setting expectations, be clear and specific.



Pinned Post

A pinned post is the first thing people will see when they visit the group, it is where you welcome new members and also acts as a reminder to existing members every time you visit. Whatever you choose to use for your pinned post, it should be welcoming and make members feel like part of a community.

Inviting people to join

There are number of ways to promote the group and ask people to join. You can directly invite people from your Facebook account, you can send an invite asking people to join directly from within the group, you could send an email with an embedded link to join and you could promote the group on your other social media accounts and newsletters.

Top Tips for managing your group

- You can save time by using the schedule a post function to write posts or share events in advance.
- Set the example of how you want your members to engage. Is the group a professional space or is it purely social?
- Always try to respond to posts, comments, and questions.
- Create content specifically for your group, and don't just repost the same content from other social media accounts you use or from your webpage.

- Use the Insights and Admin functions to monitor the group. You can find out when people visit the group, what content people are engaging with, track member numbers and track posts, likes and comments.



How to manage conflict within your group

Sometimes, people can clash and it's important, as a group admin, to manage conflict if it occurs. Facebook has some [advice](#) on how to help moderate a group and when to step in to resolve any problems. Respectful discussion and disagreement can be part of a healthy group but, if discussions stray out of this field, it's your role as admin to step in and steer the group back on track. If your members don't feel that your group is a safe and open space in which to connect, they will leave so it's up to you to make it welcoming, friendly and respectful.

Further information

- Facebook guide to [getting started with groups](#)
- Charity Comms blog on [How to build to create inspiring Facebook communities](#)

Visit our [website](#) or contact us on communitysupport@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk or 01904 704177