

How to set up and run a Community Sharing Shop

Resource pack

By Manage Money Wales

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Introduction

The aim of this guide is to help you set up and run a Community Sharing Shop.

What is a Community Sharing Shop you ask?



A Community Sharing Shop uses the concept of 'Give what you can, take what you need'.

It relies on people donating what they do not need, and others taking what they do need.

It can be run by anyone, from, family and friends sharing their unwanted items, a local upcycling group, or employees of a company.

Items can include clothing, shoes, sports equipment, furniture, plants, books, games, toys, school uniforms, tools, food and so much more!

You could also have themes such as Christmas items just before Christmas.

A Community Sharing Shop is a great way to strengthen the local community as it encourages sharing and helping one another.

Setting up a Community Sharing Shop: Things to consider



Benefits

- Saves people money
- Diverts waste from landfill
- Provides a space for the local community to meet and socialise
- Volunteers gain skills

Choosing your venue

- You will need a space that fits the capacity you require.
- You may also need storage space to store your items and access to setting them up and taking them down.
- You may want tables to display the items, clothing rails and hangers or boxes to have things in.



Planning

- Failing to plan, is planning to fail.
- The more you prepare, the less things can go wrong at the event.
- Thoroughly plan the steps you need to take and how long each step requires.

Accessibility

- Does the venue have toilet facilities? a ramp? enough space for a wheelchair or pram to get through? kitchen if needed?
- Does it have ample parking or good public transport links?



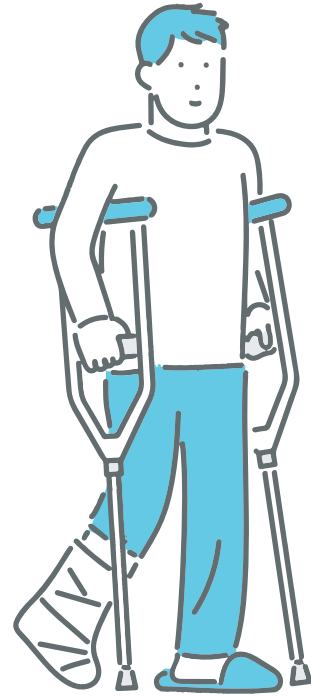
Legalities

- Check that your group or the venue has public liability insurance and is able to host the Community Sharing event.
- GDPR and Data protection. Only collect information that you require with the consent of the attendee.
- Publicity. If you are taking photographs or filming the event, ensure you have written permission.



Covid 19

- If you are running the event during the Covid 19 period ensure that you are allowed to run it by checking the government website and the community hub hosting it.
- Make sure you have posters up with information such as social distancing and wearing face masks.
- Open doors for ventilation and provide free PPE
- Ensure you are adhering to the number of people allowed in the space at a time



Health and Safety

- Ensure that you have done a risk assessment and have procedures in place. You can find risk assessment templates online, ask the venue if they have one that you can use or create one using the knowledge you know of the space that you will be using.
- Have a First Aider and First Aid Kit at the event or at the community centre. There are often free First Aid courses run by the local Council.
- Use common sense and walk through the set up to see what accidents may occur and minimise the risk.
- Know where the fire exits are and assembly points and let people know as they arrive.



Funding

- Some suggestions on reducing your costs are;
- If you are a constituted group, you may be able to access grants such as The National Lottery Awards For All grant.
- Local Councils or CVC's sometimes have small pots of funding to run community events.
- Ask for donations to help run the event or pay for coffees.
- Charge an entry fee.



Unexpected Costs

- You need to watch out for costs such as fuel if you are collecting the donations, PPE, clothes rails and hangers, advertising, venue hire, storage boxes to keep stock, volunteer expenses such as subsistence and travel and so forth.
- In your planning, write down the whole process and costs you may incur and work out how you will pay for them.



Hints and Tips

- Ask businesses to sponsor the event e.g., pay for your banners with a section displaying their logo or donate their products for the event. They get good publicity and you get freebies.



Complimentary activities

- You could have a children's area with some toys and a child minder so that parents can have time to go through items without interruption
- Provide coffee, teas and biscuits so that people can relax and chat.
- Invite local groups, clubs, charities and employers to have a presence and offer their services which may benefit attendees.



Sustainability

- A Community Sharing Shop is a great way to lower carbon footprint.
- A good efficient way to measure the impact you are making is by weighing every item donated which you are saving from going to landfill.



Marketing

- Publicise in advance to reach more people.
- Use free advertising methods first before spending, such as social media, local media and radio stations.
- Target your audience. If you have specific themes such as school uniforms, target parents and schools.



Volunteers

- The larger the event, the more help you will need.
- You can ask for volunteers to pick up donations, sort donations, make coffees and teas, host the event, market the event. The list is endless.
- If you have funding, don't forget to pay them subsistence and travel.
- If not, think of a way you can help them in kind e.g. write a thank you letter, teach them skills such as project management, offer them first choice on items.



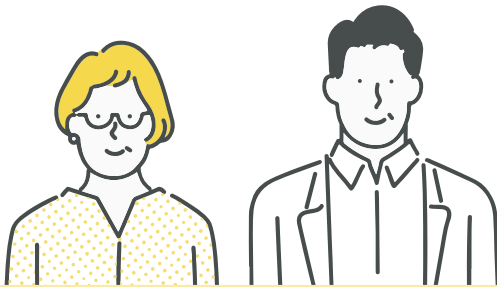
Donations

- You can choose to collect donations, have them dropped off at certain places or at your venue, anytime or at specific times.
- The easier and less work donors have to do, the more donations you are likely to get, but this means the more effort, money or time you may need. Weigh out how much you are able to do.
- Decide what you want to keep and what you don't want. This can be due to the quality of items received or items you cannot display/ accept such as electrical items if you cannot PAT test them. If you can go through the donations at the time of drop off, then you can reject items that you do not need. Alternatively, you can pass them on to a charity that may accept them or a group that can make use out of them such as sewing group or upcycling group.



Laying out items

- How you lay out items can have a big impact on how many are taken.
- The easier one can see and sift through items, the more chance they may go.
- Use clothes rails and tables if possible, for ease of access.
- You can specify that people can take a certain number of items or not have any limits.



The event

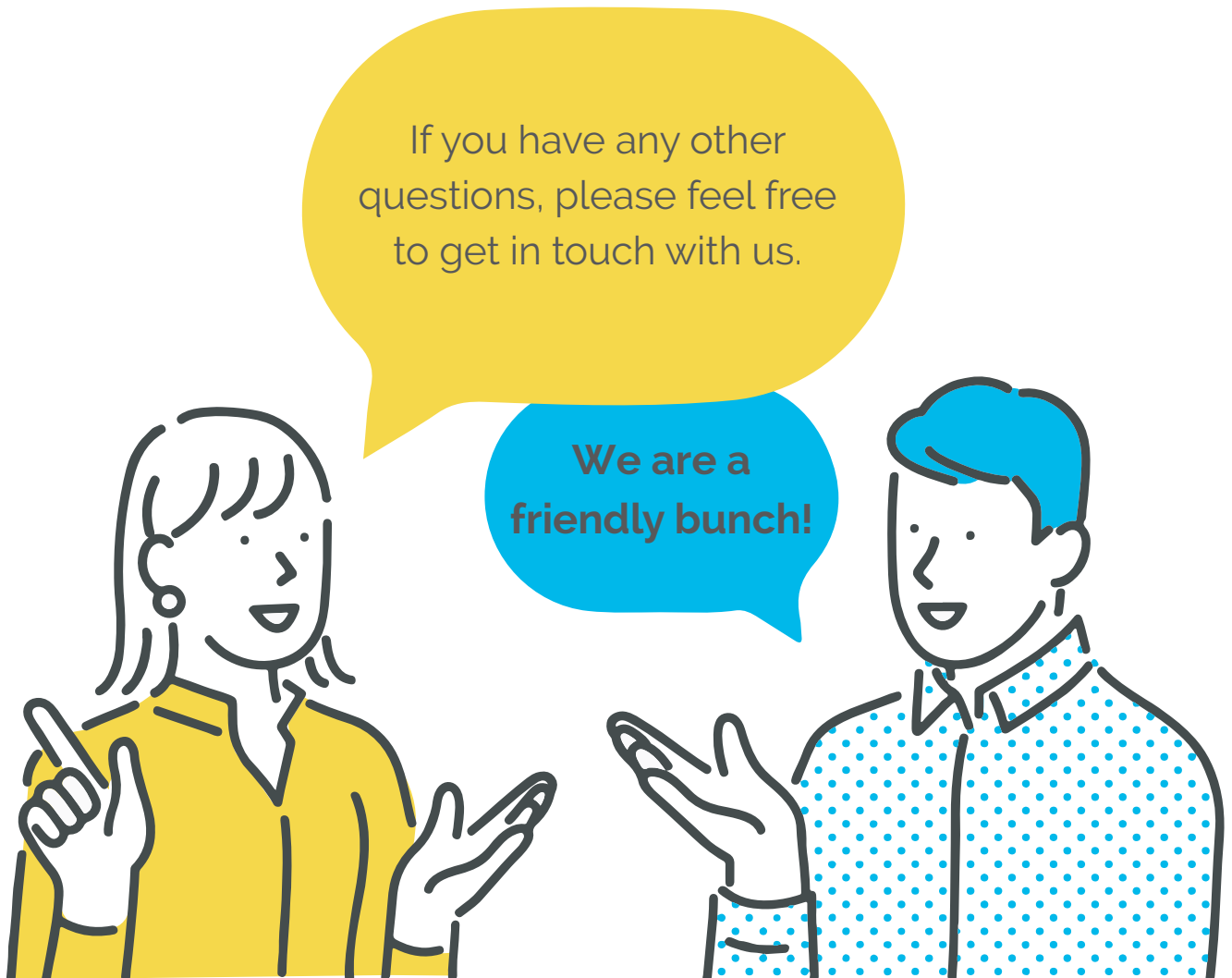
- Ensure you get enough rest the night before.
- Arrive early to open up and go through one last check.
- Take registers for record keeping and health and safety.
- Smile and welcome everyone.
- Make it an experience they enjoy and want to come back to. Word of mouth is the best form of marketing.
- Have volunteers and yourself help out if needed.
- Thank attendees for coming.
- Ask for feedback or recommendations so that you can build up your profile.

After the event

- Organise items left over so that you do not need to sort through them again and pack them up for the next event.
- Clean up and leave the space better than you found it.
- Thank and reward (if possible) your volunteers.
- Take items to storage.
- Have a lie down! You did a great job!
- The more often you do them, the easier they get and the more people know about it, the more donations you get and the more attendees at the event you get.
- Remember, have quality items only, your reputation goes hand in hand with this. No one wants to get junk, even if it is free!



Our experience comes from running Community Sharing pop up events around South Wales, United Kingdom.



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