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Recovery Community Organisations Toolkit

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Rights Advocacy **Recovery** Voices Rights

MAKING OUR VOICES COUNT

Introduction

In many cases, recovery voices are marginalised and ineffective when the work is shouldered primarily by lone individuals. As we know from the great social movements that precede ours, the public, policy makers and the media can easily ignore individual voices.

The reality of long-term recovery is often overshadowed by media and public fascination with active addiction and popular myths - supported by stories of celebrities' very public struggles with the dark side of addiction.

Long-term recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs is real for hundred of thousands of people across the UK. And thousands more get well every year, benefiting individuals and their families and all the communities we live in.

There are as many different paths to recovery as there are different people in recovery. Regardless of how people achieve recovery, they are the living proof that recovery happens and that there are real solutions to the problems of addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

Building strong Recovery Community Organisations (RCOs) is one way to tackle feelings of isolation and shame, build strong relationships and advocate for the solutions that we know work.

Grassroots organisations help develop recovery leaders, offer an opportunity to express a collective voice and provide a forum for community service.

Coming together to build ***a constituency of consequence*** means acting together to bring about positive changes in community life through public action.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

Recovery Community Organisations are usually created by people in personal and/or family recovery in response to unmet needs in their communities. Often, they exist as voluntary advocacy and service organisations for some time before they have funding to support their activities on a more formal basis.

They have learned that deliberate effort and regular adjustments to their plans and activities is required to strike a balance between building an organisation that has the capacity to bring about real change and keeping an agenda focused on making a real difference in the lives of people in the Recovery Community.

We know that when the Recovery Community works together and **organises** we have the ability to improve all of our lives.

“Many of us have carried a message of hope on a one-to-one basis; this new recovery movement calls upon us to carry that message of hope to whole communities and the whole culture. It is time we stepped forward to shape this history with our stories, our time and our talents.”

William White, Recovery Historian

Recovery Community Organisations

Across the world organisations that are independent, non-profit, led and governed by people in recovery, family members, friends and allies are mobilising the resources of the Recovery Community to make it possible for those still struggling with addiction to find long-term recovery. Each organisation has a mission that reflects the issues and concerns of their community.

Recovery Community Organisations: Core Principles

All groups share three core principles: Recovery Vision, Authenticity of Voice and Accountability to the Recovery Community.

Recovery Vision

RCOs focus on the reality of long-term recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs for millions of people across the world and their families.

An RCO, its leaders and members have a single goal: enhancing the quantity and quality of support available to people seeking and living long-term recovery from addiction.

Faces and Voices of Recovery UK envisions a day when public policies have been implemented at local, regional and national level to help individuals and families get the help they need to recover. This includes access to effective care - encompassing treatment and peer and other recovery support services. Policies that discriminate against people in recovery will have been reversed and removed.

The focus is on the solution, and that involves mobilising individual and community resources to promote recovery, not a particular service or model of care.

One of the founding principles of RCOs is embracing all pathways to recovery. While RCOs form strategic alliances with like minded partners, this vision is distinct from that of faith-based and other community organisations, professional addiction treatment and mental health treatment and primary care providers.

Authenticity of Voice

Authenticity of voice means an organisation represents the interests of communities of recovery. Guiding principles are self-governance, mutual aid and support. RCOs are developing to serve communities, with leadership by, and for, community members.

RCOs must have a majority of board members, managers, staff and volunteers drawn from the community. This strong connection is the source of an RCO's strength and ensures the voice of the Recovery Community takes precedence over other interests.

By developing and nurturing strong grassroots networks, RCO's develop leaders, offer opportunities for people to make their voices heard and provide a forum for community service.

Vibrant Recovery Community Organisations ensure that the voices of people who have the lived experience of recovery are heard and that the organisation's public education, advocacy and recovery support services respond to the broadest spectrum of local recovery needs.

Accountability to the Recovery Community

An RCO's credibility and effectiveness depends on its ability to be accountable and responsive to the community they work in - and with.

In most cases, this means being an independent, stand alone, non-profit organisation.

For example, an RCO may work closely with treatment providers, criminal justice or the NHS - but must be independent of them in terms of their governance.

Independence allows an organisation to bridge the gap between the Recovery Community and government agencies, the criminal justice system and the larger network of health and service providers.

The RCO's real strength is drawn - not from its links to other service organisations - but from the authentic voice of the individuals in the Recovery Community who relate to and actively support it.

RCOs recruit and engage people in recovery, family members, friends and allies to advocate on behalf of their own, identified interests.

Wherever possible, RCO's use participatory processes - methods employed to achieve active participation by all members of a group in a decision making process.

RCOs provide an organised way for people to give back to their communities through volunteering and paid service to others seeking recovery.

They also provide a basis to work with allied organisations by offering recovery support services, advocating on public policy agendas and broadening public understanding of the reality of recovery - while remaining accountable to the Recovery Community.

Recovery Community Organisations: Core Strategies

RCOs use three primary strategies to achieve their mission to promote recovery-focused and oriented values and communities.

Each organisation determines the mix and priority given to each of these core strategies:

Public Education and Awareness

Putting a face and a voice on recovery to educate the public, policy makers, service providers and the media about the reality of recovery offers hope and raises awareness of the reality of long-term addiction recovery. It also draws attention to the social and policy barriers facing people in and seeking recovery.

Growing numbers of individuals are speaking out publicly and sharing their experience as people in recovery - and as friends, family and allies of people in recovery.

Recovery Messaging aims to make sure our messages are consistent and also enables those in The Fellowships to take part in advocacy activity while respecting the anonymity traditions of 12-step programmes - *Advocacy with Anonymity*. *Go to the Faces and Voices of Recovery UK website to find out more about Recovery Messaging.*

RCOs support people in recovery to bring recovery to the broader community. One well-known national awareness effort is the annual September Recovery Month. Groups across the UK, and worldwide, organise local walks and other events to focus attention on the reality of recovery.

Faces and Voices of Recovery UK brings people together each year for a national event. Alongside other events throughout the year these activities help to challenge the perceptions of the general public.

Policy advocacy

To build recovery-oriented and supportive communities, RCOs need to address the public policy barriers that keep people from sustaining their recovery.

While Public Health England recognises the political importance nationally of recovery, at a local level Health and Wellbeing Boards have many competing priorities and disinvestment from drug and alcohol services and recovery support is a real possibility.

That recognition for recovery at a national level is shared in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, familiarise yourself with the local strategic partnerships and influencers in your own area and build relationships with them.

People in recovery can have influence, they can shape, inform and help deliver the ambitions for recovery, nationally and locally. We need to work together to make sure our voices are heard at all levels across the UK.

There is a growing local movement, nationally there is a need to build and sustain a strong, collaborative and inclusive UK wide voice.

Peer-based and other recovery support services and activities

RCOs are innovating and delivering a variety of peer recovery support services and places to deliver those services, building a lasting physical presence in communities.

Recovery coaching, recovery support, meetings and other activities are being organised and delivered by trained volunteers and/or paid staff.

In addition to these three core strategies, RCOs can also:

Develop Leaders, offering opportunities for people in recovery, family members, friends and allies to express their collective voice, learn new skills and responsibilities and provide a forum for community service

Assess strengths, assets and resources available in the community to support recovery

Educate the public, policy makers and service providers about the prevalence and multiple pathways of addiction recovery

Develop human and financial resources by expanding philanthropic and public support for addiction treatment, recovery support services and recovery advocacy. And cultivate volunteerism within local communities of recovery

Support research that illuminates effective strategies and the processes of long-term recovery and establishes an evidence base for peer and community supports

Learning From Experience: Keys to successful Recovery Community Organisations

Here are some critical elements for building a strong RCO:

Taking time to develop a shared vision and mission

An organisation's **vision statement** offers the hope of the future and is something that will serve as your organisation's compass.

A **mission statement** is the path that your organisation will follow, identifying who you are representing and serving - and how you will get there.

Boards, staff, and members use these statements to make sure that all activities are recovery-focused and that the organisation is staying true to its mission.

See page 19 for more information on developing a vision and mission statement.

Maintaining organisational independence, ownership, and control

Many RCOs are launched under the umbrella of another group that serves as its financial agent before obtaining independence.

Others are able to build a relationship with a host organisation that allows them to retain ownership and control of organisational resources, agenda and activities.

Some RCOs struggle with their “parent” organisations and need to work towards establishing an independent structure, or change their host organisation when their ability to operate independently is threatened.

Diversifying funding streams

Generating income is more than fundraising. It is about making an organisation sustainable by establishing a range of funding - diversifying your sources of income - so that you are not dependent on one source.

Funds received from funders for a specific purpose are known as **restricted funds**, you are legally obliged to use them only for the purpose for which the funder gave them to you.

In contrast, **unrestricted funds** can be used for any purpose that helps you to achieve your charitable objects.

The more unrestricted funds you have, the more freedom of action you have. You can, for example, choose to cover costs that funders are reluctant to fund, like core costs. *See page 25 for more information on funding.*

Making advocacy a part of an RCOs agenda

Although most people use the words interchangeably, there is a difference between **advocacy** and **lobbying**.

When non-profit organisations advocate they seek to affect some aspect of society, whether they appeal to individuals about their behaviour, employers about their rules or government about its laws.

Lobbying refers specifically to advocacy efforts that attempt to influence legislation. This distinction means that laws limiting the lobbying done by RCOs do not govern other advocacy activities. It's important that unrestricted funds are used for these activities and that proper reporting is done.

Maintaining a recovery focus

There are hundreds of thousands of people across the UK in recovery. Growing numbers are beginning to think about creating RCOs and building a force for changed attitudes and policies.

Their primary emphasis is on **recovery** - rather than treatment, prevention or active addiction.

Having a clear vision and mission is very important. RCOs need to ensure that their mission resonates with the Recovery Community and is recovery focused.

Recognising and embracing diversity within the recovery community

“Cultural responsibility,” is being able to engage and involve people with diverse cultural, economic, gender and other backgrounds, and should be a goal for all RCOs. Organisations that value the recovery and other life experiences of all, enrich their ability to serve and to advocate.

Some organisations develop with a focus on a particular community and have philosophies and practices specific to that community's experience, but they may have applications across many cultures.

RCOs should make sure that their materials, resources and ideas are made available to the wider recovery community - the more we share the more we learn.

Valuing and respecting diverse pathways to recovery

The Recovery Community is as diverse as our society as a whole, and that diversity is reflected in the multiple pathways to recovery that people around the UK follow.

Each individual's personal recovery should be able to reflect their individual experiences, strengths and values. These diverse pathways include medical, public health, faith and social support approaches.

From 12-Step programmes to cognitive behavioural approaches and medication-assisted treatment and recovery, how a person finds and maintains recovery is not at issue.

What is important is that everyone has the right and opportunity to find a recovery path that works for them.

To ensure that opportunity, RCOs should value and respect all of the diverse pathways to recovery that people in their communities are following whenever possible.

RCOs may want to think about hosting **All Recovery Groups** which are open to all people in recovery - and their families, friends and allies - for people who want to come together irrespective of pathway to recovery, addiction history or relationship to recovery.

Family-focused activities, dances, art shows and other activities are another way that RCOs strengthen communities while respecting and valuing the diverse pathways to recovery.

Empowering existing leaders and developing new ones

Successful organisations invest in current leaders and always nurture future leaders because strong leadership is a necessary ingredient.

There need to be clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities that empower RCO members and staff to carry out the organisation's mission.

As in all organisations, leaders, whether volunteers or paid staff, current or future, must have the best interests of those they serve in mind.

Building relationships with local, national and international recovery community organisations

Successful RCOs learn from one another and build networks of support.

RCOs may choose to focus their energies on their local area but need to recognize that they are part of a much wider Recovery Movement here in the UK and across the world.

As noted at the very beginning of this guide lone voices are very easy to ignore - the same applies to RCOs who do not build links outside their own community. As ever there will always be strength in numbers.

RCOs should consider whether there are other groups in their area that they can link up with to undertake mutually beneficial activities. They may wish to build regional forums and to consider becoming part of the ***UK Association of Recovery Communities (ARCO)***. *For an application form please go to the FAVOR UK website.*

Building alliances with allied organisations and movements

Just like addiction, recovery affects individuals, families and

advocacy and recovery support issues.

Treatment providers and health care professionals are the most obvious allies, but others include employers, teachers, the faith community, child welfare service providers, criminal justice, unions and elected officials.

Organising and building a Recovery Community Organisation is a process, not an event

The process of forming an RCO is ongoing and evolutionary - you will need to make time for this to occur.

Initially, it is important for the leadership group to meet as often as possible and a strong focus is necessary to keep the process moving along.

Thriving organisations are ones that take advantage of opportunities and have the ability to adapt and adjust. As you develop, you will be learning new ways to carry out your mission. You will also have set backs and learn from them as well.

Developing membership structures that fit your organisation's needs

There are many different types of membership. Some RCOs define members as individuals who participate in their activities while some organisations have annual fees that its members pay to belong, whether they are individuals or other organisations.

In their early stages of development most RCOs have a small number of members who fundamentally build the organisation. As time progresses they may want to consider different structures.

Educating the public by putting a face and a voice on recovery

As the UK Recovery Movement gains momentum, many people in recovery and their friends and family members, are beginning to talk

about their experience of recovery in public.

Our stories have power. They can help convince the man or woman who is still sick to take the leap of faith and be inspired to try recovery for themselves. But they can also help us reach policy and decision makers; educate the public and recruit new members to our growing movement.

Whether we are sharing at a local community group, a conference, a service provider event or even in everyday conversations there are some useful things to remember and to be aware of when we are talking about recovery.

How we tell our stories, and in particular the language we use, can directly affect how people feel, think and act towards us. And perhaps more importantly to those who are still caught up in active addiction.

Too often the focus is on the negative, we need to work on giving a message of hope and long-term recovery. We need to be able to advocate for policies at local and national level that work for us all.

We need as many families, friends and allies of recovery to share their experience of witnessing recovery too, and how that has had an impact on them.

Recovery Messaging Training helps people to learn how to tell their recovery story in the most positive, informative and influential way. It includes how to use recovery messages in all parts of your life, including representing the Recovery Community in the media and other public arenas.

Go to the FAVOR UK website to find out more about Recovery Messaging. <http://www.facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org/our-stories-have-power-training/>

Steps for creating a Recovery Community Organisation

The organised Recovery Movement is growing out of a need to bring recovery out from behind closed doors. Just like advocates in other social movements, there are specific steps that recovery advocates can and are taking to find a unified voice on behalf of recovery rights.

Independent Recovery Community Organisations have a central role to play in this process.

Visioning

The first step in establishing an RCO is **community visioning** - finding out what the priorities are for the Recovery Community you are aiming to serve.

Visioning is a process that aims to articulate an RCO's hope for the future and includes examining who will be involved, how it will be structured and operate. The visioning process can take some time to carry out.

Many RCOs start with a core group of dedicated and committed volunteers. These individuals will need to formalise their relationship as a steering committee or planning group. This allows them to divide up tasks and move the process forward.

They should always be transparent and accountable to the larger group of individuals whom they are involving in the process of getting the group off of the ground.

Ideally, they will have demonstrated leadership, communication and listening skills. The most important thing is that they are able to put aside personal agendas and work together towards a shared vision and goals.

Members of the steering committee should represent the diversity of the Recovery Community. If you are forming a regional RCO geographical representation is particularly important.

Because building an RCO is a process, not an event, the steering committee will need to set up times to meet and plan, as well as times for the larger community to participate in the planning process.

Steering committee meetings can be held by conference call, Skype or in-person. If you're organising a regional RCO planning meetings can be held in various locations across the area. In this case transport and timing are important considerations.

To attract and involve people who are working it may make the most sense to hold meetings in the evening or at weekends. It's important to design meeting times and locations that make it as easy as possible for people to attend.

The most important thing is for the steering committee is to set up a schedule of meetings so that people know what to expect and where and how they can participate.

Having Good Meetings

For each meeting, there should be an agenda and ground rules. This is important because you want to make progress and keep people involved and engaged.

It's easy to forget that everyone is donating their time and talent and you don't want to lose their investment and commitment to moving forward together.

Some organisations establish ground rules or working agreements as one of their first orders of business.

Here are some that have been used successfully:

- Respect
- Openness
- One person speaks at a time
- Practice good listening skills
- Strive for consensus
- Confidentiality
- Other agreements that the group feels are important

Here are some other tips for a successful meeting:

1. Always designate someone to chair the meeting and someone to take notes
2. Always have an agenda that is sent out to all participants a few days before the meeting
3. At the beginning of the meeting, ask for additions or changes to the agenda
4. Have a set amount of time for the meeting and agenda items
5. Report on what happened and who will take responsibility for next steps by sending out meeting notes

Developing a Shared Vision

There are many ways to find out what's on the minds of the Recovery Community and to make sure that your organisation reflects the priorities of people in the community.

It's important to gather divergent views and ideas and encourage ongoing involvement in your organisation. One way is by holding **Community Listening Forums** or open meetings to gather input from people and take a community pulse on current issues. Another way is to use online surveys.

Whatever the format, the process of listening is critical to an RCO's ability to thrive. It's a process that should be ongoing - to make sure that the organisation prioritises its activities to reflect the views of the Recovery Community and attract community membership and participation in its activities.

Of course, it's impossible for a new organisation to do everything that needs to be done at once. This process of touching base with the community will help to determine priorities, build relationships, develop programmes and set your agenda.

Creating Mission and Vision Statements

A mission statement will be your organisation's compass, outlining your fundamental purpose. It is the path you will take to realise your vision or dream.

A good mission statement means that anyone in the organisation can always judge if you're moving in the right direction. It also serves as a guide to help decision making about specific projects and policies.

A mission statement tells us who we serve, what needs we are trying to satisfy and how we will serve our constituents. It must express an organisation's purpose in such a way that inspires involvement, commitment, and loyalty.

Creating mission and vision statements is a process that will help both clarify what you are doing and bring together the group of people you are working with.

These statements are not set in stone, at some point you may want to refine or change your mission and/or vision statements. Especially if they were developed by a smaller group of key leaders/founders in the early stages of your organisation's life.

It can be helpful to look at the mission and vision statements of organisations that have similar aims as yours to get some ideas on where to begin.

Building an Organisational Structure

It takes time, resources, and energy to build a strong organisational infrastructure that will support your organisation.

A solid infrastructure defines governance roles and processes and establishes authority and decision making procedures that help RCOs be accountable to the community and their funders.

In England and Scotland The National Council for Volunteering Organisations (<http://www.ncvo.org.uk>) or (<http://www.scvo.org.uk>) **NCVO** champions and strengthens volunteering and civil society, with over 10,000 members, from large charities to small community organisations. They are an excellent source of advice and support and provide a good starting point to decide on the structures that will best suit your organisation.

Many people starting a new organisation automatically think of becoming a charity. You should first think about whether being a charity would stop you doing things you want to do.

For example:

- charity trustees are normally unpaid volunteers – they can only be paid with our approval in certain situations
- charities can't usually benefit anyone connected with the charity, for example giving work to a trustee's family member or company
- charities can only do things the law recognises as being charitable – they can't do a mix of charitable and non-charitable work

- charities can't take part in certain political activities, such as campaigning for a change in government
- registered charities must provide public, up-to-date information about their activities and finances

Setting up and running a charity takes a lot of work. If you haven't yet recruited any trustees, you could think about joining forces with an existing charity instead.

There are different types of charity structure. It's important you choose the right structure for what you want to do.

Unincorporated associations

Unincorporated associations can be simpler to set up than other forms of charity and typically include membership charities and local branches of national organisations.

You might set up this kind of charity if you are a group of people working together for one or more charitable purposes and you expect to stay small.

Unlike charitable companies and CIOs (see page 22), you and the other trustees will be liable for what your charity does. This is because unincorporated charities don't have legal status, so your charity may not be able to employ staff, own land or hold investments in its own name.

Charitable companies

The law considers a company to have the same legal status as a person. So a charitable company, like an individual, can own land and enter into contracts in its own name.

These charities also have 'limited liability' for debts or lawsuits. This

means their members or trustees are generally only responsible for a limited amount, such as £5.00.

You might set up a company charity if your organisation will:

- be quite large
- have employees
- enter into commercial contracts, including contracts to deliver services
- own freehold or leasehold land or other property

Charitable incorporated organisations

Charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs) or in Scotland (SCIOs) are like companies in that they have the same legal status as a person. This means they can enter into contracts in their own name and their trustees normally have limited or no liability for the charity's debts. However, they are not companies and do not have to register with Companies House.

Social Enterprises

There are alternatives to charities and these are social enterprises. "Social Enterprise" describes the purpose of an organisation, not its legal form. It is defined (by Government) as "a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the organisation or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners".

Unincorporated Forms

If a social enterprise remains unincorporated, as ***sole trader or partnership***, its profits will be taxed as income of the individuals involved. They would normally be treated as self-employed and be required to use self-assessment for their income tax and national insurance.

Unincorporated associations (an organisation set up through an agreement between a group of people who come together for a reason other than to make a profit) may be treated in a similar way for tax purposes, although they may be liable for corporation tax (a tax on a companies profits) and must register with HMRC for this purpose.

All businesses, whether unincorporated or not, must register with HMRC for VAT if their taxable turnover exceeds £70,000.00 per annum. And for PAYE and employer national insurance contributions if and when they decide to take on employees.

Certain other legal requirements apply to all social enterprises, such as those governing business names and record keeping.

Incorporated Forms

There are some advantages for RCOs in choosing an incorporated legal form as they have a separate legal personality and limited liability.

Incorporation is advisable, and often necessary, if RCOs are going to deliver services or try to raise funds. There are several types:

Limited Companies

The most common form for business is the private company. This type of company has more regulatory requirements than unincorporated organisations.

To establish a limited company the organisation must register with Companies House and with HMRC for corporation tax. The process is quite straightforward and involves submitting a form to Companies House with details such as the organisations name, registered office address and company officers.

Organisations also need to submit a **Memorandum of Association** and **Articles of Association** - Companies House provide models of these for you to use.

Limited companies offer flexibility and it is quite possible for the members of the organisation to include provisions in its Articles of Association which define its social purpose.

Community Interest Companies (CICs)

A CIC is a form of company specifically created for social enterprises.

CICs are required, by law, to have provisions in its Articles of Association to enshrine their social purpose - in particular an “asset lock” which means funds can’t be transferred out of the CIC - to ensure that they continue to be used for the benefit of the community.

CICs are a clear signal to funders that the organisation operates for the benefit of the community.

The process for setting up a CIC is relatively simple. It is essentially the same as a limited company except that you will need to submit a **Community Interest Statement** providing evidence that that the CIC will meet the community interest test defined in law.

The **CIC Regulator** also provides a series of model Articles of Association to ensure the process is as straightforward as possible.

A CIC can convert into a charity (or voluntarily dissolve) but it cannot turn into a limited company. This means it can be a good starting point for small RCOs who are working towards becoming a charity.

There are some other types of social enterprise forms that may apply to RCOs. For more information on any of these see **Setting Up A Social Enterprise** (<https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise/>).

For charities there is lots of information on the **Charity Commission** website (<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/>).

Funding and Resources

There are a range of way to raise money such as asking the public through mailings or street collections, charging for things or services you deliver, contracting with the local authority to deliver a particular service, going to grant-making trusts etc.

But while there are many ways to actually raise the money there are basically only five sources to get money from:

- General public/individuals (including the National Lottery): 38%
- Public or statutory sector (Local authorities, NHS etc): 36%
- Voluntary sector (particularly grant-making trusts): 8%
- Commercial sector: 6%
- Trading and investments (trading, rent, investments): 12%

It is wise to have more than one income source or method. If an RCO relies on only one and it dries up, then the RCO is in difficulties.

The smallest organisations tend to get a greatest proportion of their income from individuals and trusts and the least from the statutory and private sector.

Although we often think of resources in terms of money, RCOs can access some of the resources they need from other sources such as:

- Volunteer help: volunteer service workers, fundraisers, committee members etc
- Gifts in kind: free accommodation, computers, furniture, free adverts etc
- Gifts of services: legal advice, personnel/HR support etc

Choose methods which fit your circumstances and strengths and plan well (for example, if you are a local RCO, go to local trusts and companies; if you have a membership go to them for help – either money and/or introductions).

When you are formulating your 'ask', choose important aspects of your organisation's work that you know the donor/contributor rates highly, not the ones you are most proud of - put yourself in their shoes.

KnowHow Notprofit (<http://knowhownonprofit.org/>) is NCVO's main advice and support website and has bite-sized how-to guides and online training courses on any area of voluntary sector management. Their section on Funding and Income offers useful information.

Communications

As your organisation gets up and running, you will want to keep track of the names and contact information of everyone you come in touch with.

If you have a meeting, Recovery Month event or other activity make sure you keep a record of who attended so that you can build a network of advocates who you can keep in touch with on a regular basis. Never miss an opportunity to have sign-in sheets. Build and develop a database of members and supporters, making sure to ensure the confidentiality of their information.

Social media describes websites that provide user-generated content. Whereas traditional media is controlled by editors, social media allows its users to dictate the agenda. It is therefore no surprise that with community involvement and public support at the heart of what RCOs do, engaging with social media is a must

Top considerations when choosing which social media to use:

Target audience - make sure you choose a social media platform that is used by the people you're targeting. For example, It is no good spending time building a profile on LinkedIn (used as a professional networking tool) if the majority of your audience are heavy Facebook users. Do some research and have a look at who uses the various social media sites.

Popularity

Social media platforms that have millions of users such as Facebook or Twitter will mean more people are likely to see your organisation and therefore should drive more traffic to your website.

However, there may be smaller, more niche outlets that are used by people with a specific interest in your cause. Above all, make sure you choose outlets that are popular with your intended audience.

User-friendliness

You don't want to spend hours and hours getting to grips with a site only to find it's too complicated for your colleagues or supporters to engage with.

Think about how easy it is for your intended audience to use the methods you choose; and how easy it is for you to manage it.

Two-way communications

Sites that have comment and discussion boards, forums or the ability to leave messages are good for building dialogue between you and your supporters.

Be careful about how many of these sites you choose to be involved in though. If you invite people to join debates or ask you questions, you'll be expected to respond!

The table below shows some common activities and suggestions for which social media sites could be used.

Your aim	Sites to consider
To get people to sign up to a campaign	Facebook, Twitter, FAVOR UK
To attract donations	Facebook, Twitter, FAVOR UK
To show progress/demonstrate impact	Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, Podcasts
To alert people of events or activities	Upcoming, Meetup, Twitter, In2recovery, FAVOR UK
To build communities	Facebook, My Space, Bebo, Twitter, In2recovery, FAVOR UK
To share knowledge	Wikipedia, blogs, WordPress, in2recovery, FAVOR UK
To get feedback	Web feedback forms e.g Survey Monkey
To recruit volunteers	Facebook, Twitter
To recruit staff	LinkedIn

Building Your Agenda

In the process of developing your vision and mission, your RCO will have built a picture of your Recovery Community and its priorities. Some RCOs undertake **asset mapping** (referring to the process of identifying opportunities in local communities for people in recovery to take up and occupy valued social roles in educational, vocational, social, recreational, and civic, spiritual life) of community resources as part of their ongoing work to develop programmes, advocacy

campaigns and assist in their strategic planning.

As your group is developing, you won't be able to take on all of the issues that have been identified at once. Instead, you will have to set priorities for programmes and activities. For example, many groups are interested in opening Recovery Community Centres (see below).

Part of the agenda building process is assessing what opportunities there are for moving a recovery agenda forward.

Given your organisation's capacity, is there an issue that you can work on, make a name for yourself and build a broader constituency base?

Your organisation's leadership will need to decide how decisions will be made and how you are going to get things done.

Recovery Community Centres are:

- A recovery-oriented sanctuary anchored in the heart of the community
- A visible, physical location where RCOS can organise the local Recovery Community's ability to care, by providing a variety of recovery support services and putting a face on recovery
- A recovery resource for the local community, serving as a place where people still struggling with addiction and family members can enter and receive help in navigating the systems and services to get the help they need
- A recovery resource offering a structured schedule of recovery-related workshops, trainings, meetings, services and social events

Recovery Community Centres are places where people actively work on their recovery, or help other groups and RCOs carry out their

programmes and activities. They are not treatment agencies because clinical services aren't offered, and they're not 12-step or SMART drop-in centres.

Recap: Steps to building a Recovery Community Organisation

- Establish the core group
- Establish leadership and/or champion(s) for the cause
- Determine vision, mission, and purpose
- Establish working infrastructure (Board of Directors?, staff?, volunteers?)
- Recruit, engage, retain more people
- In early stages, pick one or two projects and do them extremely well to establish credibility
- Make sure these early stage projects are “right-sized” – not too small or too big
- Build on successes, strengths
- Market; promote successes with constituency, stakeholders, possible funders
- Share and be aware of opportunities as they arise,
- Establish a system to prioritise, be conscious of what you can do and do well

And finally....

Your RCO's success will depend on your ability to develop and nurture relationships of all kinds. The most important relationship is with the Recovery Community – people in recovery, family members, friends and allies.

Within the community are future leaders of the Recovery Movement. They are people who have retired from their professions as well as young people who can be nurtured to take on leadership positions in organisations and the community. We look forward to the day when candidates for public office are campaigning on a “recovery agenda.”

Celebrations are a very important part of sustaining the Recovery Movement. Publicly thanking and acknowledging volunteers who are the living proof of your organisation’s commitment to recovery-related social change is one way to honour individuals and bring forward the recovery message.

Celebrating addiction recovery as part of Recovery Month is educating the public about the reality of recovery. Celebrating hard won victories is a way of educating the public about the reality of recovery and the strength of the organised Recovery Community.

As your organisation develops, one of the best resources at your disposal are the organisations that have gone before you, who are ready to share their experiences as well as learn from you as you go forward.

By building a network of local, regional and national organisations, we can demonstrate helping our friends, neighbours, co-workers and loved ones who are still struggling with addiction benefits the entire community. We are promoting widespread understanding that long-term recovery is a process that takes time and support.

Only when people across the UK have a sound appreciation of recovery, and fully understand the recovery process, will laws and policies be effectively changed to reduce discrimination and lower barriers to recovery.

Useful Contacts

Faces and Voices of Recovery UK

<http://www.facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org>

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

<http://www.ncvo.org.uk/>

<http://www.scvo.org.uk/>

KnowHow NotProfit

<http://knowhownonprofit.org/>

The Charity Commission

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/>

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

<http://www.oscr.org.uk/>

Setting Up A Social Enterprise

<https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise/>



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