



Could you run an Enterprise Club?

jobcentreplus

Department for
Work and Pensions

Contents

What are Enterprise Clubs?	2
Could you run an Enterprise Club?	
1. Finding a venue	3
2. Getting started	4
3. Preparing a programme of activity	4
4. Getting help from other organisations and volunteers	5
5. Preparing a local marketing plan for the club	5
6. Sourcing members through other networks	6
7. Sustaining the Enterprise Club	6
Where to get more help	7

Legal information

Enterprise Clubs are private organisations and are responsible for all matters relating to their establishment and running, including:

- any issues or complaints about the Enterprise Club
- ensuring the Enterprise Club complies with legal requirements, such as the Disability Discrimination Act, Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act and the Data Protection Act
- maintaining health and safety standards at any Enterprise Club
- the cost of any checks, such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

DWP and Jobcentre Plus are not liable for any issues arising from an Enterprise Club.

This document is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have tried to ensure that the information is correct as of December 2010.

It is possible that some of the information is oversimplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

What are Enterprise Clubs?

Enterprise Clubs are clubs set up and run by local businesses and partnerships for people who are out of work and are considering starting their own business or becoming self-employed.

They will complement the support offered through the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA).

What is an Enterprise Club?

Enterprise Clubs can come in all shapes and sizes, but they essentially provide a place where unemployed people who are thinking about setting up their own business can meet, share ideas and receive expert advice and support from local business people.

No two Enterprise Clubs will be the same as they should reflect the needs of the members and their community but amongst the services they might offer are: the opportunity to network with other entrepreneurs and self-employed people; financial, legal, market and business advice; office services (including internet access); and advice about benefits and in-work support.

Enterprise Clubs are completely voluntary but Jobcentre Plus will promote them to customers who are interested in self employment

Could you run an Enterprise Club?

If you are committed to supporting your community, working in partnership with other supportive organisations and feel that you could play a role in helping local people who are out of work, the answer could be 'yes'.

If you think you or your organisation have the relevant skills and experience to help unemployed people who are thinking about setting up their own business, then you could set up an Enterprise Club. Perhaps you have experienced unemployment yourself or set up your own business or maybe your organisation has experience of supporting people who have? Enterprise Clubs should address the needs of unemployed people in the community. These needs will vary from one area to another. Combining existing expertise within a community could help identify local needs and lead to the development of a successful Enterprise Club.

Whatever you feel you might be able to contribute, getting involved in a local Enterprise Club offers the perfect opportunity to share your experience and support your community. Pooling local knowledge and resources is a great way to help people to set up their own business.

Why should I set one up?

You would be helping local people into self employment and could have a really positive impact on their lives and others by helping your local community to become more prosperous. By giving up as little as a couple of hours a week you could help people work towards financial independence by building their confidence and increasing their chances of establishing a successful business.

Your business may also benefit from establishing links with new and growing businesses and raising the profile of your business.

What do I need to do?

This document provides some basic advice on some of the steps you might take to establish an effective local Enterprise Club. Working with other groups and organisations in the community you will be able to determine much of the detail to ensure that the Enterprise Club addresses the needs of local people.

Remember these are only suggestions about how an Enterprise Club might be run.

1 Finding a venue

A venue that's free of charge would be ideal. It should be somewhere that doesn't have too many distractions, such as a public building like a library, community centre or place of worship. Anywhere with a reasonable sized room/area could be suitable.

You might also ask the local council or a local employer to offer the use of a room on their premises to host your meetings. You should stress that Enterprise Clubs are not for profit and aim to provide additional support for local jobseekers, helping them. You might also like to do some research on local employers to identify if any have Corporate Social Responsibility policies or play an active role in supporting the community already. Supporting a local Enterprise Club might well fit with this type of policy and these employers are likely to be the most receptive to approaches for support.

You might want to consider if you will need any IT equipment when sourcing a venue.

Could you run an Enterprise Club?

2 Getting started

At the start regular meetings will be important to members and leaders and will help to build rapport and team working. Once the Enterprise Club is established the group could meet less often and make use of email or telephone to keep in touch.

You might even explore the possibility of setting up an online forum for your Enterprise Club in order to stay in touch.

Co-ordination of the group might involve arranging meetings, promoting the Enterprise Club and keeping things moving. One person in the group could be the co-ordinator or the role could be shared or rotated.

3 Preparing a programme of activity

Each Enterprise Club will operate in a distinct way according to the needs of the community it supports. Working with local partners and participants will enable you to capitalise on local knowledge and resources when developing an Enterprise Club that meets the needs of the members.

These are just a few ideas on how you might want to run an Enterprise Club session but remember it is the needs of the participants and the local community that should drive how they are run.

The club should meet to enable members to share each other's career experiences, skills and to encourage each other to work through their business ideas. Meetings could be structured as follows:

Beginning: members spend a few minutes sharing the results and achievements of the previous week's business planning or progress.

Middle: members ask for support from each other in specific areas, which could result in a themed session (e.g. finance, writing a business plan, legal requirements).

End: members each set a goal to be achieved by the next meeting (e.g. research on the local economy).

This is just one example of a possible meeting structure. Individual Enterprise Clubs will develop their own structures that may change over time to reflect the needs of the participants. There are a wide range of events and activities that you may wish to incorporate into your Enterprise Club.

Some topics that you might want to cover are:

- Financial management
- Sales and marketing
- Taxation and Trading Standards
- Access to specialist advisors and/or organisations
- Business related information packs
- General Business Advice such as writing a business plan

The GOV.UK website, www.gov.uk, is a great source of information about setting up a business and you could use it for ideas for useful sessions

4 Getting help from other organisations and volunteers

Fostering links with other organisations, education providers and businesses could enhance the Enterprise Club offer. You could contact the managers of local organisations to see whether they could be interested in getting involved with the Enterprise Club. You may find that they are very supportive of any social action initiative aimed at getting people into self employment.

Any local people you know with professional or business experience could prove very helpful in setting up the Enterprise Club or by being guest speakers or helping with business planning, research and financial advice.

- Local businesses may be keen to support the Enterprise Club by either providing speakers and meeting room space.
- Other Enterprise Clubs might also be useful sources of information and may well be able to help you in developing one. Sharing best practice will contribute to the development of a strong network of Enterprise Clubs.

5 Preparing a local marketing plan for the club

Alongside this guide there are some templates that might be helpful for promoting the Enterprise Club.

- A positive solution to local unemployment is likely to be very newsworthy. You could talk to a journalist on your local paper, including the free ones, about what you are trying to achieve and give them plenty of advance notice when you are launching an Enterprise Club. It could be worthwhile suggesting that they run the story the same day they carry job vacancy adverts.
- You might want to use the press release template (that we've supplied), and think as widely as possible about where you could send it. Local papers, including the free ones, are a good place to start.
- Target local message boards and websites as they could be a good place to post information about your Enterprise Club for free, as are message boards in local shops and supermarkets.
- You could think about where people who are out of work and thinking about setting up their own business might go and consider trying to get your publicity materials into those places. Local businesses, libraries, shops and takeaways will often let you put up posters for free if you're running a community venture.

Could you run an Enterprise Club?

6 Sourcing members through other networks

Losing a job can make even the most confident person feel vulnerable. Considering self employment and joining an Enterprise Club may not be an easy thing for many people to do. Encouraging people through personal and business networks is one of the most effective ways of initially attracting participants.

Jobcentre Plus will also make people, who they think could benefit, aware of Enterprise Clubs in their area so it will be worthwhile keeping in touch with them about the details such as the venue and times. Even if the Enterprise Club starts with only a few people it could grow steadily through word of mouth and sustained local marketing. Building links with Jobcentre Plus, the Citizens Advice Bureau, and other local organisations could provide a steady stream of Enterprise Club members.

The services offered by local Enterprise Clubs should reflect the demand in the community for this type of support. Enterprise Clubs are intended to provide additional support to that already offered through Jobcentre Plus and other agencies and organisations. The aim is to support the community and meet its needs and these may change over time.

Enterprise Clubs and the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA)

Both the NEA and Enterprise Clubs will support customers interested in moving into self-employment or setting up a business.

The NEA is available to people who have been unemployed for 6 months or over and is designed to help people set up businesses which have growth potential. Participants will have access to a business mentor and may get financial support.

Enterprise Clubs could be an important resource for NEA participants, providing them with the opportunity to receive valuable advice and network with other NEA participants and local business people. To make the most of the help and advice they could provide NEA participants will be signposted by Jobcentre Plus to their local club.

7 Sustaining the Enterprise Club

Once the members of your Enterprise Club have connected, leadership could come from within the group. Natural leaders may shine through and leadership can be passed on when members leave to start new jobs. The role of the organiser might be to maintain momentum and raise continued awareness of the Enterprise Club in order to keep attracting new members.

Where to get more help

If you are interested in setting up an Enterprise Club in your area or feel you could contribute to the development of one and would like further information then please get in touch:

East and West Midlands, East Anglia

Candice Danleigh

☎ 07971 995078

✉ candice.danleigh@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

North West

Jackie Mason

☎ 07795 224513

✉ jackie.mason@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Scotland

Stephen McConnachie

☎ 0141 636 8351

✉ stephen.mcconnachie@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

North East and Yorkshire

Sheila Stowers

☎ 0191 215 2077

✉ sheila.stowers@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

London and Home Counties

Derek Harvey

☎ 0207 342 3854

✉ Derek.harvey@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Wales

Huw Thomas

☎ 02920 804055

✉ Huw.Thomas2@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Southern England

Lynda Jones

☎ 01483 442550

✉ lynda.jones4@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

jobcentreplus

Department for
Work and Pensions