



Formalising, incorporating and obtaining funding Community Thriving Together CIC



Community Thriving Together CIC are a south Manchester based organisation which supports people from disadvantaged communities who are from migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. They provide support primarily to women by facilitating a range of activities aimed to empower, educate and bring joy.

Through hosting weekly coffee mornings Community Thriving Together CIC have created a space where women can come together, build their social networks, practice English and gain confidence. The sessions include a range of activities such as arts and crafts, sewing. Sometimes sessions involve talks from speakers about topics such as mental health, women's health and local services. Additionally, Community Thriving Together CIC host larger one-off events for families and the wider community to celebrate cultural festivals and to provide a space for the community to come together and support each other.

Community Thriving Together CIC came to Macc when their activities were becoming increasingly popular, with over 60 women attending their regular coffee mornings. The group knew they needed to make steps towards formalising to ensure they had proper governance and procedures in place. As the activities became more popular Community Thriving Together CIC knew they needed to develop to obtain the funding needed to keep the project going and growing.

Community Thriving Together CIC had been operating as an unincorporated constituted group but they wanted to find a suitable structure and incorporate. They had done initial research into structures and wanted to understand their options better. The group were apprehensive about committing to a legal structure without fully understanding the legal requirements and wanted someone to guide them through the process of choosing and registering. They knew they needed some policies and procedures in place to follow but were not sure which ones or where to start.



The group is led by women who speak English as a second language and who have migrated to the UK, and who were not confident in navigating the process of incorporating, writing policies and applying for funding. There were additional challenges for the group who had limited access to digital tools and lacked confidence in some digital processes. The group was looking for in-person support to help them practically in incorporating, writing and implementing policies as well as guidance to help them grow in confidence to navigate funding criteria and applications and overcome some of their digital and cultural challenges.

Macc worked with Community Thriving Together CIC over a period of several months to meet their support needs. Support began with helping the group to develop the policies that needed to be in place for their regular activities. With Macc support, the group developed a suite of policies needed including safeguarding for adults, safeguarding for children, health and safety, equality and diversity, GDPR and appropriate risk assessments. Macc encouraged and supported the group to obtain its own Public Liability Insurance, helping them to identify suitable funding to cover the expense.

A Macc Development Worker helped the group to understand their incorporation options. Macc shared information on the main legal structures for the group to consider, ensuring they had the time and resources they needed to make their decision. Once Community Thriving Together CIC decided to become a Community Interest Community (CIC) Macc broke down the process of registering with Companies' House, identifying where the Development Workers could support and advise, such as reviewing and supporting the draft of the CIC36 form and the Articles of Association. The Development Worker answered queries about incorporation, trading and trustee responsibilities. The Development Worker helped the Directors to submit their CIC application in March 2023.

Throughout the process of supporting the group to create policies and to incorporate, the Development Worker supported the group to apply for several funding opportunities, many of which were successful. Macc supported the group to gain confidence in reviewing and understanding funding guidelines to ensure they were applying for appropriate funding and using their time wisely. Alongside this support the Development Workers supported with the writing of applications. The group quickly gained confidence in understanding the language used by the funders and learnt how to ensure they were answering the questions asked. The group have



become pro-active in finding funding, confident to communicate with funders, and have developed their efficiency when applying for funds. Macc signposted the group to further training on the subject and one of the group directors attended and benefitted from Macc's Bid Writing webinar.

The group have successfully registered as a CIC, allowing them to apply for larger pots of money, limiting their personal liability. Building on this, the group hopes to develop further to hire staff in the future once they have generated enough funds.

In the time Macc has worked with the group, Community Thriving Together CIC has been successful in applying for funding, including: We Love Manchester, Macc's Volunteer Expenses Fund, the National Lottery Awards for All and MCC Neighbourhood Investment Fund. Many of these applications have been supported by the Development Worker. The group has gained great confidence and independence in finding funding opportunities and writing strong applications as a result of the support from Macc. Macc also supported the group to put basic financial processes in place so that they are confident in managing these multiple pots of funding.

'My experience with Macc was a really amazing one. From the first call to Macc I started feeling inspired. They encouraged me and empowered me to go on with setting up the group.

The team of Macc are all brilliant, but my experience was mostly with Helen. I should say that Helen did her best to not only help and support me, but to also encourage me along the way. I don't remember that I had to ask her for anything twice or even need to remind her of any bit of the work. I was surprised of her cleverness in reading all the details; however tiny they were.'

Wardeh, Director of Community Thriving Together CIC

April 2023