



Development and sustainability

Higher Blackley Community Organisation CIO



Higher Blackley Community Organisation is a long-standing charity supporting its local community for over two decades. Registered as Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in 2015, the Centre hosts a range of activities for local people including creative and artistic classes, medical drop-ins, councillor surgeries, toddler groups and groups for people with disabilities.

During a time of change and some significant challenges, the group came to us for support via Manchester City Council's Our Manchester Team.

We worked together with Our Manchester and Higher Blackley Community Centre to devise a support plan to address immediate needs and longer-term development and sustainability. In the short-term, monitoring and evaluation practices needed to be developed and embedded. The long-serving Chair of the board was retiring and there was a need to expand the board to add capacity and skills. The group needed support in recruiting new trustees. In the longer-term the group needed to consider refreshing their strategy, policies and financial procedures and to consider diversifying their funding income streams.

We supported the board of trustees to meet more regularly, enabling the board to gain a better understanding of the financial and procedural situation of the Centre and to create a development plan.



We supported the group to collate data about the activities already taking place in the Centre. With this data, the group was able to improve and standardise its reporting practices. This had an immediate impact in securing funding and the group gained better insight of who was using the Centre; this was useful information for their strategic planning. Our support helped the group to prepare for new trustees, to consider what skills to seek to best strengthen the board and what to include in role descriptions. The group promoted their vacancies and successfully recruited a new Chair, a Treasurer and a third trustee.

We then supported the group to refresh and write several policies including a key financial procedures policy. Working closely with staff and the treasurer, the group was able to embed simple practical financial practices and reporting methods. Support and guidance was provided to staff and new trustees throughout this process.

We supported and led the Board through two strategy sessions. These were key in helping the new trustees understand the work of the centre and shaping a strategic vision together. Within this work the trustees were able to consider priorities, new grant opportunities and other income streams.

With a full and competent board meeting regularly, the Centre is now thriving and continuing to develop. The staff and board have developed a positive and pro-active relationship and have been networking and connecting with other groups in the area. They have improved the physical centre significantly: painting, refurbishment of facilities, installing security cameras, and the group has secured corporate support to refurbish their kitchen area.

“Thank you so much for the support you and Rick gave us. We wouldn't be where we are now without your guidance!

The involvement of Macc has been a really valuable part of getting things back on track at HBCO, and Rick in particular has provoked us to address the core issues facing us. Whether we are up to the challenges remains to be seen, but we've made a start! Thanks to all the Macc team!

We still have things we need to do and aspects of our work we need to improve, but we have made it through the hard phases due to the support we've had. We wouldn't have survived without you!



I have never considered being a Trustee prior to becoming involved out of necessity. The availability of the support on the phone and face to face has allowed, in my opinion a good working relationship to develop. The support and guidance on policy issues has been really supportive.”

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