



Incorporating as a Community Interest Company

Lithuanian Community Zemyna



The Lithuanian Community Zemyna CIC is a North Manchester based group which has been running for about 5 years. With approximately 5,000 Lithuanians living in Manchester, the group's purpose is to preserve and celebrate Lithuanian culture, traditions and celebrations. Although primarily for Lithuanians, Latvians and other local people also join activities which serve to share information about culture and to bring people together.

The group holds events where the members, their children and other people in their communities have the opportunity to showcase their national costumes and perform music and dancing which are typical of the Lithuanian culture. Members also make and share food which is traditional in Lithuanian culture and encourage the non-Lithuanian attendees to sample these dishes so as to get a flavour of another country and encourage community cohesion. They also deliver arts and crafts sessions for children and their parents. These activities are to support health and wellbeing, connection and build friendships; they help people from a similar background to connect and feel a sense of belonging and it gives people something to look forward to. In addition, the group provide language classes for the children of their members so as to keep their native language alive for the next generation.

Zemyna initially contacted us as The Lithuanian Society; they wanted to incorporate as a CIO but weren't sure if this structure would be most suitable. They also needed help in sourcing an alternative venue in another part of Manchester in the hope that they could have a further reach and engagement with those wishing to take part in their activities. At this point they were operating as an unincorporated constituted group led by a team of 10 volunteers and had been generating income from



donations from members attending their events and those whose children took part in the language lessons.

Support was delivered at the pace of the group and included time for the group to recruit new people and capacity to the board. During the support process, the group received funding to help support their language school and this was an added reason to prioritise clarifying their governance structure and deciding whether it was appropriate to pursue CIO or CIC registration.

The group attended Macc for a strategic planning session to help clarify their vision and inform their decision on adopting a suitable legal structure. This included helping them create a theory of change.

The focus shifted from charity to registering as a Community Interest Company as the most appropriate structure for the group. Macc supported the group in drafting a Community Interest Statement and completing the other CIC forms and then we guided them through the online application.

The group's CIC application was successful and they are able to continue their activities as a formalised group with a legal structure to help manage risk. Zemyna are now better able to seek further grant funding to support their activities.

The group also accessed Macc support through the alternative venue discussion group and virtual noticeboard (to help them source another venue for their activities) and attended Macc's Get to Know Trusteeship/trustee recruitment event.

“We are very grateful to the MACC for their help, advice and care in registering the community. We are sincerely grateful to them.”

Diana, Director of Lithuanian Community Zemyna CIC

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