



Incorporation as a CIO with Association Model

Syrian Community Council

مجلس الجالية السورية



The Syrian Community Council is a registered charity based in South Manchester supporting migrants, all refugees and asylum seekers from Syria and other nationalities from different backgrounds. There is a large Syrian community in Manchester, some who have been living in the city since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011 and others who are newer to the city. This community is often marginalised due to challenges with language, culture, education employment and navigating national systems. The Syrian Community Council charity is run by a Syrian board of trustees who understand these challenges. The charity aims to empower the community and to encourage integration and support for a positive thriving community who feel a sense of belonging in Manchester. The Syrian Community Council host a range of activities and support including English classes, social events, signposting to services and providing advice.

When the Syrian Community Council first contacted Macc they were working on a small scale and without funding. A lot of people in the Syrian community look to them to expand their activities and support. The group came to Macc with great ambition and drive to grow their operations and activities. The support requested was help to register as a charity, writing and adopting appropriate policies, and applying for funding.

Meeting with a Macc Development Worker identified that the charity would also benefit from support to understand the incorporation options and the responsibilities of the trustees running the organisation. Macc suggested that the charity would also benefit from some strategic planning. The CIO model was a good fit for the group and the next step was for them to decide whether foundation CIO or association CIO was the best fit. Macc also offered support to identify suitable funders and support the group with policies and procedures.



Firstly, Macc worked with the group to develop several key policies to ensure their activities were running with proper procedures and policies in place. The Development Worker shared templates and examples of several policies and provided feedback on draft documents making sure they were appropriate their activities and ensuring that the group was confident to implement the policies in practice. The group was supported to develop a suite of up-to-date policies and a risk assessment for their activities.

Macc also signposted to resources and provided advice and guidance on opening a bank account, connecting with potential venues, connecting with other similar groups and sharing training opportunities.

Macc facilitated a strategy day with the Syrian Community Council, after which the trustees were able to confidently choose the CIO association model legal structure. This session provided the trustees with a strategic plan and basic funding strategy, both of which were used as additional documents on their CIO application, strengthening their case. These documents would also help the group with future funding applications. Once the strategy was completed Macc supported the trustees to edit their constitution, using the Charity Commissions template for the association model CIO. The trustees then worked with Macc to complete and submit the CIO registration. The application was accepted by the Charity Commission shortly afterwards.

Once the policies were in place and the CIO application was in progress, the Development Worker suggested that the group consider growing the board of trustees, to add further capacity and skills. The Development Worker shared relevant resources with the group such as template roles descriptions and best practice for recruiting trustees. The charity was connected to Macc's Volunteer Centre for further support on recruitment.

Another priority area of support was to help the group obtain seed funding. In December 2022 Macc supported the group to successfully apply for a micro fund of £100 to host a Christmas Get-together. Macc subsequently supported the group to apply for the Spirit of Manchester Fund, the Social Prescribing Fund, Asda foundation, Local Giving Grant and We Love Manchester. After providing support and feedback in writing these applications the group's confidence and ability to write applications independently has grown significantly. Additionally, Macc worked with the group to



help them identify further suitable funding options and to better understand eligibility criteria and funder guidelines. Macc provided the group with a list of future potential funders and where to go to search for future funding themselves.

The Syrian Community Council is now a successfully registered charity (CIO) with a clear strategic plan, a basic fundraising strategy and a suite of relevant useable policies. The charity successfully obtained funding for its Christmas Get-together from Forever Manchester and a larger grant of £3,000 from the Social Prescribing Fund, and £380 from Asda foundation and received support in applying for several pots of funding, all of which has enabled the charity to gain connections with funders and confidence in applying for funds.

The charity has been supported to access multiple training opportunities and is better connected in the sector and to other groups who can provide peer support and networking opportunities.

“It was an honour working with Manchester Community Central and the great support we had from you all. I would like to thank everyone at Macc for the amazing support and efforts. All of you were absolutely amazing and stars. No words could be found to describe our thanks to you.

We much appreciated your advice, your experience and suggestions. We have made it now. Our organisation has been officially approved under the name of Syrian Community Council and we would like to be the best in Manchester and become the most trusted organisation, share and work with everyone round the city of Manchester to make it stronger and a better place for us all.

I genuinely appreciate how incredible you are and your work! Thank you for a job well done!” Syrian Community Council



June 2023