



How to apply for Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status

If you run a community group, voluntary organisation or social enterprise, you can apply for CIO status from the Charity Commission - this gives you charitable status and the ability to trade and apply for grant funding. All the information, guidance and forms you need are [here](#)

Hive can offer support with your application or answer any specific questions you have, this is **your** application and you are the best person to talk about your vision and passion for your work!

Collecting your information:

Governing Document or Constitution (*prescribed by Charities Act 2011*):

- Keep as close to the Charity Commission [templates](#) as possible - Hive can help with explaining this
- Decide if you want just the Trustees to be voting members (foundation model), or if you want a wider voting membership (Association model)
- The constitution includes your [Charitable Purposes](#), where you set out what your CIO will do, who it will help and how - keep these concise!
- *The Charity Commission needs to approve any changes made to your Constitution*

Trustees:

- Choose trustees wisely, they need to understand, support and promote your charitable purposes
- It is good to have a minimum of three and probably not more than twelve to aid decision making
- When asking people to be a trustee, a good document to give them is the [Essential Trustee](#)
- Each trustee needs to sign and date the [Trustee Declaration form](#) and this needs to be included with the application
- Each trustee is to be named on the application form and for each one you need:
 - name;
 - address inc postcode;
 - date of birth;
 - telephone number and email address;
 - if they have ever been known by another name;
 - if they are or have been a trustee of a charity before
 - if applying to HMRC, you will also need their National Insurance number
- You can nominate an organisation to appoint a representative as a trustee and that organisation can change their representative without notifying the Charity Commission

Other information needed:

- You will need an address that the CIO operates from, this is displayed on the charity register so you may not want it to be your home address - you can apply for a PO Box number or mailing address, there will be a charge for this
- It is good to have an organisation email, website and telephone number - now might be the time to set those up to strengthen your application
- You will be asked for a bank account, if you have an existing treasurers account for your group you can use that or this can be left blank if you do not have an account yet. Most banks will not give you a charity account without a charity number.

Starting the application:

The CIO application is all online - start [here](#) to register as a new user, the Charity Commission then send you log in details for your application - you can save and close and come back to the application, you will have a set time to apply

The Charity Commission will acknowledge receipt and then contact you again when they have assessed your application

- They may approve the application straight away, but more likely
- They will usually ask for clarification on specific points
- They may refuse the application - it is good to read the feedback and you can re-apply with updated information

Points to note:

- There is no fee at present to register
- You can upload supporting information during the application - the form prompts you when to do this
- A business plan or activity calendar is useful supporting information to demonstrate how you are meeting your charitable objects
- If you are working with children or vulnerable adults, you will need to supply the relevant policies and procedures - as your organisation grows, there are other policies you should consider and Hive can direct you to templates
- All documents to be submitted need to be in PDF format - Hive can help
- You can register your charity's details with [HM Revenue and Customs](#) (HMRC) to get tax back on things like Gift Aid donations
- You must hold an annual general meeting to vote on any new trustees, re-elect any trustees at the end of their term and present your annual report and accounts - this information must be submitted to the Charity Commission
- If you are setting up the CIO as the founder, you can be fully involved in the direction and activities of the CIO but if you wish to take a salary, you need to step down from the Trustee Board and become a paid employee of the CIO as the manager or chief executive - it is important that your trustees share your vision as you are now accountable to them

We wish you success with your application and can introduce you to a thriving network of charities, community groups and social enterprises in Portsmouth!