



Setting up a service

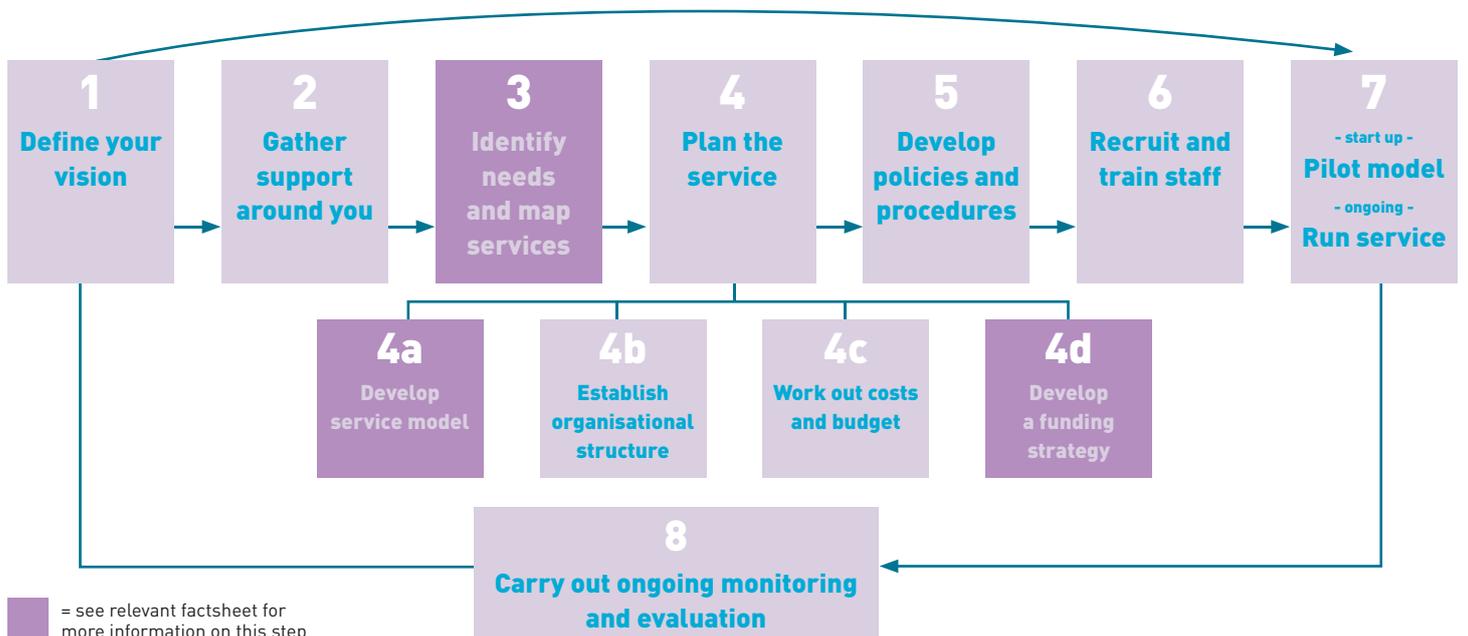
This factsheet provides a short guide to the steps involved in setting up a community-based childhood bereavement service. It draws on the experiences of numerous subscribers to the Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) and shares some hints, challenges to be aware of and suggestions for other useful sources of information.

Taking things one step at a time

There are eight main stages in developing a bereavement support service, as illustrated in the diagram below. Remember this is just a guide to the steps most services will go through – you might end up doing things in a slightly different order and you may have other things you need to think about. Some stages will take longer than others.

Writing down the outcomes of your discussions, decision-making and research for each of these steps will form the basis of your first business plan – an important document that will give you, your staff and funders a clear picture of how your service will develop. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) advises that this kind of strategic planning is the key to a sustainable future for voluntary organisations. It provides a brief guide and other resources in its 'sustainable funding project' section at ncvo-vol.org.uk

i The Childhood Bereavement Network is a multi-professional, national federation of organisations that work in various settings with bereaved children and young people, their families and other caregivers. We provide information, networking opportunities and good practice guidance to our subscribers, and signpost bereaved families and others to sources of information and support. In this series of factsheets we have gathered information and practical advice on key topics, to support those interested in developing childhood bereavement support services.



Step 1. Define your vision

A vision is a clear, aspirational statement of the impact your service will have on the community it works with. It serves a number of purposes:

- It communicates quickly and effectively what your service is aiming to achieve.
- It encapsulates outcomes for children and families – i.e. the difference the service can make to their lives – which can then be used as the basis for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the service.
- It gives everyone involved a common sense of purpose.

“A vision gives everyone involved a common sense of purpose”

Your vision might come from a personal conviction about the benefits of your service, because families have told you about things that are unsatisfactory about current provision or because a need has been identified at a more strategic level. An example of a vision for a bereavement service for children and young people might be:

“Our vision is to ensure that children, young people and their families in this area are better able to cope with the impact of death on their lives.”

Once you have established a vision, you can identify some specific outcomes that flow from it, and which you believe the service could achieve. For example, in relation to the vision statement above, some outcomes might be:

- children and their families say they feel more confident about coping with bereavement
- children remain engaged with their schoolwork and school life following a bereavement.

See **Step 8** for information on building these outcomes into your monitoring and evaluation.

Resources

Your Project and its Outcomes. This Big Lottery Fund guide helps you describe what you want your project to achieve. Search under publication title at:

biglotteryfund.org.uk

Step 2. Gather support

Setting up a service is a big job and it helps to have a steering group or working party of people who can share the work and the experience with you. There are a range of skills it is useful to have access to – think about who fits the bill regarding:

- business management
- accounting
- research
- administration
- experience of working with children
- knowledge of local bereavement services
- good communication skills
- knowledge of statutory systems (e.g. schools, health and social care)
- creativity
- experience of community and voluntary activities
- championing the service.

Check that these people can show the kind of commitment necessary to get the service off the ground, for example by attending meetings in the evenings or at weekends when needed.

“There are a range of skills it is useful to have access to”

You may find supporters among your colleagues at work, friends or bereaved families known to you. Approach your local volunteering bureau if you are looking to access particular skills through volunteers. Involve representatives from other local services who you identify through your mapping exercise (see **Step 3**).

In gathering support, you may find that you attract people who want to work directly with children and young people. So, be clear about the roles that are available at this stage of your development, and manage people’s expectations about how they can get involved.

If you are thinking about developing a service as a new part of an existing organisation, get the support of your manager or someone senior who will be able to champion your plans. Involving them early on will be very important later.

Resources

You can obtain details of your local council for voluntary services at navca.org.uk

Step 3. Needs and services

This step involves identifying and describing – in factual terms – the gap between your vision for your community and the reality of current service provision and outcomes for children and families who have been bereaved. In other words – is there a real need for your service?

It involves two sorts of information gathering:

1. informal evidence gathering about existing service provision in the local area, based on conversations, anecdotes and case studies
2. structured research, for example gathering statistics or consulting with a wide range of agencies and individuals who can give you factual information about current levels of provision.

And it is made up of two stages:

1. understanding the ‘map’ of services in your local area
2. clarifying the level of need for bereavement support that your service will have to meet.

If you are approaching another service for tips in getting established, prepare a list of questions in advance so that you are able to use the meeting productively.

All of these processes are described in more detail, with accompanying case studies, in the factsheet *Identifying Needs and Mapping Services*.

Remember...

Don’t worry if your vision and project outcomes need adjusting as you gather support around you (**Step 2**) and collect more information about the needs of your local community (**Step 3**). These activities will help you refine your vision, and in the long term this will make your service more sustainable.

Take time to think about what your needs assessment and mapping exercises tell you. For example, if you felt there was a lack of support available to bereaved families, but your mapping exercise showed that there were several, unpublicised services, consider helping existing groups with their publicity instead.

Step 4. Planning

4a. Develop service model

This step is about deciding what your service will actually do to achieve the outcomes you have set as part of your service vision. This will depend on the needs of your community, the existing services on offer and your available resources. There is contextual and practical information on different service models, along with suggested reading and resources, in the factsheet *Working with Children and Families*.

4b. Establish organisational structure

This step is about deciding how to provide the framework for your service to be delivered. Childhood bereavement services are based in a range of settings across the voluntary and statutory sectors. Community or voluntary organisations need an appropriate governance structure with a board/management committee and a governing document (often called a constitution).

A charity is a type of voluntary organisation with its own legal structure and special tax status. The Charities Commission recommends considering the following questions before registering as a charity:

- What will you call your charity?
- How will you raise money?
- Is there another group you could join or work with?
- How will you recruit trustees to administer the charity?
- What type of governing document will you need?

In small organisations, founding members sometimes have to act as board members, staff and volunteers. Be aware that there are restrictions on trustees being employees and seek advice if this affects you.

Resources

Advice and guidance on setting up a charity is available at: charity-commission.gov.uk

There are four national councils for voluntary organisations which can provide guidance on trusteeship and governance: ncvo-vol.org (England), nicva.org.uk (Northern Ireland) scvo.org.uk (Scotland) wcva.org.uk (Wales).

4c. Work out costs and budget

Before you apply for funding it is important to know how much the service will cost. Your major cost areas are likely to be: staffing, supervision and training, accommodation, office equipment, insurance, lighting and heating, administration (e.g. postage, stationery, phone calls), publicity, hospitality and children's resources.

4d. Develop a funding strategy

A funding strategy sets out how you will cover the costs identified above. This is just a brief outline of things to think about. More detailed information is available from other sources. The factsheet *Securing Funding for Your Service* contains tips for accessing different funding streams.

First, you need to identify your most likely income sources. Talk to similar organisations operating in a different locality, to get an idea of how they raise funds and what proportion comes from where.

Fundraising can be time-consuming and may divert resource and attention away from other aspects of the service. This needs to be planned for. Once someone has been identified to raise funds, a key task is researching why funders give to a particular cause or service. This will enable you to tailor your applications to maximise your chance of success. Remember to monitor and review your strategy against your original aims and expectations.

Resources

The professional membership body for UK fundraisers is:

institute-of-fundraising.org.uk

Remember...

Don't be disheartened if funding bids are turned down. Ask for feedback whenever you can, to help you prepare a stronger case next time. If you are unsuccessful in a number of bids, it might be time to consider other ways to meet your outcomes. For example would a smaller, pilot service be easier to fund? Are there items in your budget which could be donated in kind? Could you work in partnership with other organisations to realise your vision?

Step 5. Policies

Policies and procedures provide the framework for you to promote safe, fair, sustainable and reflective practice. You might need to develop a policy or procedure because:

- the law says you must have it
- it will save your organisation time and improve staff confidence if it is written down
- a funder has asked to see it
- you want to make it clear to service users and people referring them to you that your service is trustworthy and transparent
- it will help you keep children, families and staff safe.

Key areas in which policies are commonplace are: child protection, health and safety, confidentiality, staff welfare and diversity.

Once you have identified an area in which a policy or procedure is needed, the next steps are to:

1. research the area
2. draft the policy in consultation
3. communicate and implement the policy
4. review the policy.

Some funders will ask you to submit particular policies as part of your funding proposal. Some policies and procedures need to be in place before you recruit any staff, and others can be developed by staff themselves before they start to deliver the service.

Several CBN subscribers have shared their policies to help others review and develop their own (see **Resources** below). But remember that looking at sample policies is not a substitute for following the steps outlined above. It is essential that your policies meet the unique needs of your organisation. Adapt samples thoroughly, or better still, look at several examples and combine the relevant elements from each of them with your own ideas.

Resources

A Guide to Developing Good Practice in Childhood Bereavement Services, available from CBN, provides detailed guidance on developing policies and procedures. Download sample policies at: childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Step 6. Staffing

Around three quarters of childhood bereavement services rely on both paid staff and volunteers.

Paid staff: A number of sources provide helpful summaries of the legislation which covers recruiting and employing paid staff (see **Resources**). Training should be delivered to ensure that staff can meet the objectives set out in their job description, and to keep them up to date.

Volunteers: The role of volunteers is often vital. They should complement the work of paid staff. You are likely to get more committed volunteers if you ensure they are integrated into the organisation and protected by policies and procedures to ensure fair treatment. Recruitment tips include:

- draw up a role description and a selection process to ensure that people are suitable for your volunteering opportunity
- provide induction, training, supervision and support
- ensure policies are in place to protect their health and welfare and to ensure fair treatment
- talk about 'expectations' rather than 'duties' – and remember their role is different to that of paid staff.

Young people and families who have accessed your service may want to offer themselves as volunteers. Think about whether you want to set a minimum period since bereavement before they start volunteering.

Remember Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are required for anyone working with children, whether volunteers or paid staff. You should also ensure that all paid staff and volunteers receive regular supervision appropriate to their role.

Resources

Workforce Hub has a range of employment factsheets available to registered members: ukworkforcehub.org.uk

For equalities issues: acas.org.uk

UK Volunteering Forum has guidance on volunteer management and policy: ukvf.org.uk

Criminal Records Bureau: crb.gov.uk

Step 7. Piloting and delivery

Running your service on a pilot basis can help you check that you have got your model right without creating undue expectations in the community. Most pilots focus on a small geographical area with a smaller resource and staff base. The advice from people who have been in this position is to:

- start small
- don't get disheartened if things don't always go to plan – piloting is about identifying what does and doesn't work
- work out the resource implications of the pilot for a full service.

When the big day comes and you are ready to deliver a full service model, keep following the service process outlined here, to help keep your service sustainable. Other suggestions include:

- liaise with users, referral agencies, staff and other professionals when proposing new service developments
- liaise with other local and national organisations offering similar services
- regularly review your plans, policies and vision and update if necessary
- incorporate the principles embodied in the CBN's belief statement into your practice.

Resources

childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

View the CBN's belief statement (see 'about us') and order *A Guide to Developing Good Practice in Childhood Bereavement Services*, which contains more on sustainable practice.

Further help

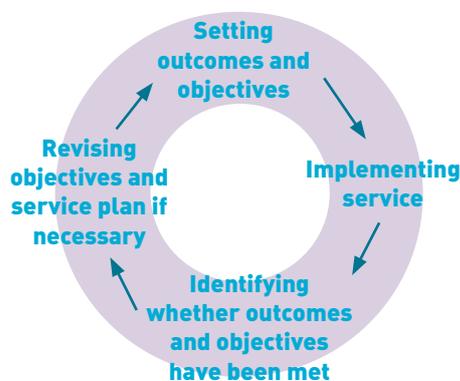
CBN regional meetings provide an opportunity to network with other subscribers. Many CBN subscribers offer training in aspects of setting up a service. Search the calendar of events at childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

St Christopher's Hospice Candle Project and Help the Hospices run an undergraduate diploma/postgraduate certificate in childhood bereavement which include the context and framework for delivering a service. See helptehospices.org.uk

Step 8. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring keeps track of and accounts for the activities your service undertakes. Often, funders will require certain data. But more importantly, effective monitoring helps you demonstrate the quality of your practice.

Evaluation judges how well the service is being delivered and its impact. It is likely to draw on monitoring data to do this – as well as information from other sources. The starting point for deciding what you want to monitor and evaluate should be the **outcomes** you have defined for your service. This will ensure that your service operates in a positive cycle of:



Information gathering: Monitoring information should be identifiable through routine data collection processes which you will need to set up in advance. This typically includes:

- gender, age and ethnicity of service users
- the relationship to the person who died
- the nature of the death
- how the family find out about the service
- how long they are involved with the service.

For evaluations, you may also need to carry out non-routine information gathering, such as interviews, consultations or self-assessments.

Resources

Find more detailed guidance on monitoring and evaluation in *A Guide to Developing Good Practice in Childhood Bereavement Services* from: childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

The Charities Evaluation Service provides guides to monitoring and evaluation for the voluntary sector. See ces-vol.org.uk