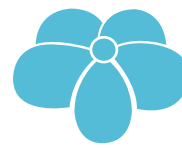


### DEVELOPING CHILDHOOD BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

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 members of the Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) and shares some hints, challenges to be aware of and suggestions for other useful sources of information.



Childhood Bereavement Network

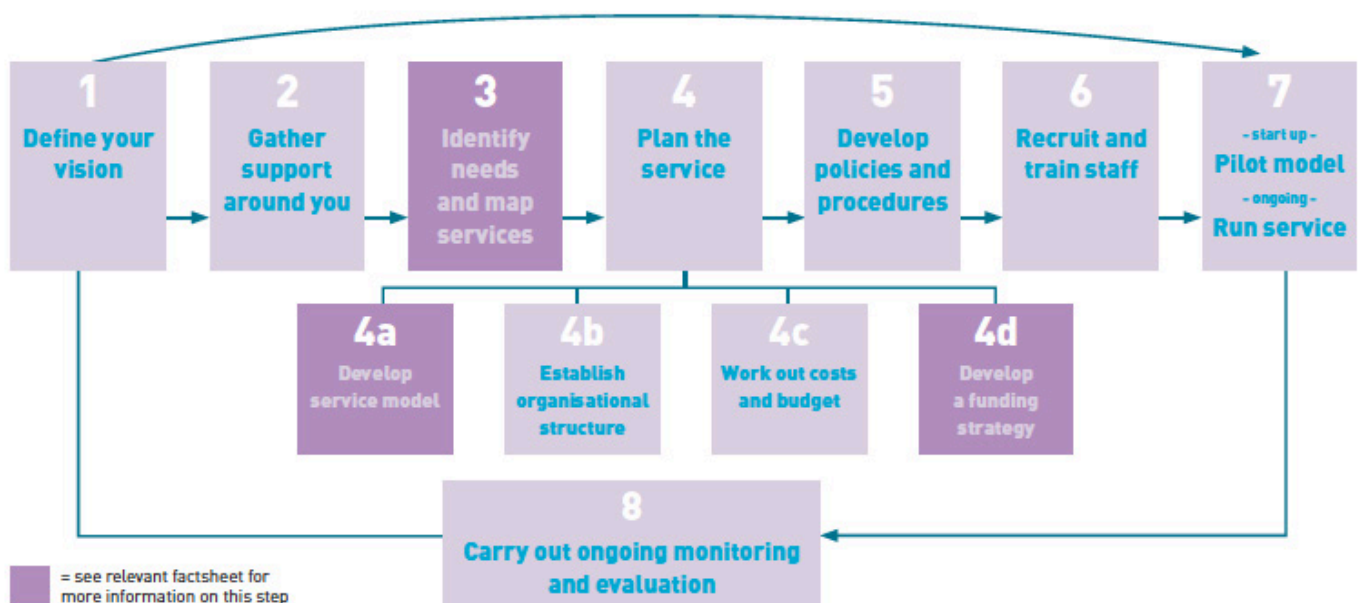


### Taking things one step at a time

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 resources and tips at [knowhownnonprofit.org](http://knowhownnonprofit.org)

The Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) is the hub for those working with bereaved children, young people and their families across the UK. We underpin our members' work with essential support and representation: bringing them together across localities, disciplines and sectors to improve bereavement care for children. Collectively, we share a **vision** that all children and young people in the UK, together with their caregivers, can easily access a choice of high quality local and national information, guidance and support to enable them to manage the impact of death on their lives. See [childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk) for more information and details of how to join. In this series of factsheets we have worked with local services and other stakeholders to gather information and practical advice on key topics for those interested in developing childhood bereavement support services.



**Further help** CBN regional meetings provide an opportunity to network with other members. Many CBN members offer training in aspects of setting up a service. Search the events calendar at [childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk) St Christopher's Hospice Candle Project and Hospice UK run an undergraduate diploma and postgraduate certificate in childhood bereavement which include the context and framework for delivering a service. Search 'childhood bereavement' at [hospiceuk.org](http://hospiceuk.org). CBN Members receive a copy of *A guide to developing good practice in child bereavement services* in their Welcome Pack and can access a range of other information. CBN regional meetings provide an opportunity to network with other members. The website has more information.

## 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.

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 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** The Big Lottery Fund website has several guides to help you describe what you want your project to achieve and how to set about it. [biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://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 at this stage – think about who fits the bill regarding:

- business management
- accounting
- research
- administration
- experience of working with children and young people
- knowledge of local bereavement services
- ability to communicate with adults
- knowledge of statutory systems (e.g. schools, health and social care)
- creativity
- experience of community and voluntary activities
- championing the service.

You will also need to be confident 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.

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 someone senior/your manager to champion your plans. Involving people early on will be important later.

**Resources** National Association for Voluntary and Community Action [navca.org.uk](http://navca.org.uk)

National Council for Voluntary Organisations [ncvo.org.uk](http://ncvo.org.uk)

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action [nicva.org](http://nicva.org)

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations [scvo.org.uk](http://scvo.org.uk)

Wales Council for Voluntary Action [wcva.org.uk](http://wcva.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?

This step involves two sorts of information gathering:

- informal evidence gathering about existing service provision in the local area, based on conversations, anecdotes and case studies
- 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.

It is made up of two stages:

- understanding the 'map' of services in your local area
- clarifying the level of need for bereavement support that your service will have to address.

These processes are described in more detail, with case studies, in the CBN factsheet **Identifying Needs and Mapping Services**

## 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, in the CBN factsheet **Ways of 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:

- 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, the reality is that founding members sometimes act as board members, staff and volunteers. Be aware that there are restrictions on trustees being employees of an organisation and seek advice if this affects you.

**Resources** Charity Commission (E & W) [charitycommission.gov.uk](http://charitycommission.gov.uk)  
Charity Commission NI [charitycommissionni.org.uk](http://charitycommissionni.org.uk)  
Scottish Charity Regulator [oscr.org.uk](http://oscr.org.uk)

## 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), travel, publicity, and children's resources.

## 4d. Develop a funding strategy

A funding strategy sets out how you will cover the costs identified in Step 4c. This is just a brief outline of some of the things to think about. More detailed information is available from other sources, and the CBN factsheet *Securing Funding for Your Service* provides hints and tips for accessing different funding streams.

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

The Institute of Fundraising recommends that organisations should aim to develop a coherent 'fundraising mix' that takes into account long-term, medium-term and short-term needs and does not rely too heavily on one or two sources of funding.

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 take on the work, a key task is researching why funders give to a particular cause. 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 the Institute of Fundraising [institute-of-fundraising.org.uk](http://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 funding bids, it might be time to consider whether there are 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 or someone else 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: safeguarding, 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:

- research the area
- draft the policy in consultation
- communicate and implement the policy
- 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.

**Resources** *A guide to developing good practice in child bereavement services*, available from the Childhood Bereavement Network provides detailed guidance on developing policies and procedures. The NSPCC provides tips for organisations on developing a safeguarding policy, which is one of the key documents you should have in place. [nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.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. Training should be delivered where

necessary to ensure that staff can meet the objectives set out in their job description, and to keep them up to date. See CBN's *A guide to developing good practice in child bereavement services*.

**Volunteers:** The role of volunteers should complement that 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 their bereavement before they start volunteering.

Remember Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)/criminal record checks are required for anyone working in 'regulated activity' with children, whether volunteers or paid staff. You should also ensure that all paid staff and volunteers receive regular supervision which is appropriate to their role.

**Resources** There is a range of information and guidance on staffing, volunteering and other issues in running a service at [knowhownonprofit.org](http://knowhownonprofit.org) and [acas.org.uk](http://acas.org.uk) Access NI [accessni.gov.uk](http://accessni.gov.uk) Disclosure Scotland [mygov.scot/organisations/disclosure-scotland/](http://mygov.scot/organisations/disclosure-scotland/) Disclosure and Barring Service (E & W) [gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](http://gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

## Step 7. Piloting and delivery

Running your service on a pilot basis can help you check that you have got your service model right without creating undue expectations in the community. Most pilots focus on a small geographical area and involve 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 work out how you planned – piloting is about identifying what does and doesn't work
- work out what resources you would need to scale up from a pilot to 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 and you will help to ensure that your service is sustainable. Other suggestions include:

- liaise with users, referral agencies, staff and other professionals when proposing new service developments
- liaise with other local, regional or 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** View the CBN's Belief Statement and join CBN to get a copy of *A guide to developing good practice in child bereavement services* with more on sustainable practice [childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

## Step 8. Monitoring/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 what you want to 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 has 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 child bereavement services*.

NCVO provides guides to monitoring and evaluation for the voluntary sector [knowhownonprofit.org.uk/impact](http://knowhownonprofit.org.uk/impact)

**Remember...** Don't worry if your vision and project outcomes need adjusting as you gather others 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 exercise tell you. For example, your mapping exercise might reveal existing services that could benefit from help with publicity and awareness-raising rather than a need for a new service.