



# The Digbeth Trust

Active in Turning Community Ideas  
Into Community Action

## RESOURCE SHEET 1 – free professional help and support

### FREE PROFESSIONAL HELP AND SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

This sheet provides information about free professional help and support available to voluntary and community groups from a wide variety of organisations.

Some of these organisations work as brokers – that means they will match you with a professional from a private sector company who wants to give their service free to the voluntary sector. It is important that you agree with the person or organisation at the outset exactly what they will do for your organisation, over what time period and to what standard.

Before approaching the organisation you should be clear what kind of help you need so the organisation will be able to know whether they can help you.

The type of help each organisation provides can vary – and you should always check with the organisation to find out what they can currently offer and whether they have introduced any fees or charges.

Support and advice is available from a range of other organisations – such as local councils for voluntary service (CVS). To find your local CVS check your phone book or see:

[www.navca.org.uk/liodir/telephonenumberlist.htm](http://www.navca.org.uk/liodir/telephonenumberlist.htm)

**For details of many other organisations providing help and support please see our website.**

### ABOUT THE DIGBETH TRUST

The Digbeth Trust is a development support organisation offering services to **voluntary and community groups** and **public and charitable funders** across the West Midlands.

#### Our Mission

The Digbeth Trust exists to enable the development of an influential, effective, independent and sustainable voluntary and community sector across the West Midlands through the influencing of policy and the provision of expertise.

#### Our Services

We provide specialist support to voluntary and community groups through our register of quality-assured consultants, links to other sources of support and access to funds.

We are a not-for-profit charitable company and a membership organisation.

**To find out more about The Digbeth Trust and the services we offer please contact us at:**

Unit 321 The Custard Factory  
Gibb Street  
Birmingham B9 4AA

Tel: 0121 753 0706  
Fax: 0121 248 3323

email: [info@digbethtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@digbethtrust.org.uk)

**website: [www.digbethtrust.org.uk](http://www.digbethtrust.org.uk)**

**REACH** matches the skills of experienced people to the needs of voluntary organisations. They support voluntary organisations and charities across the UK, helping them attract volunteers with a wide range of skills and professional experience. They place people of all ages and backgrounds in organisations near where they live.

[www.volwork.org.uk/](http://www.volwork.org.uk/)

### **REACH**

89 Albert Embankment

London SE1 7TP

Tel: 020 7582 6543

Fax: 020 7582 2423

Email: [mail@reach-online.org.uk](mailto:mail@reach-online.org.uk).

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**ProHelp** (part of Business in the Community) is a national network of 1,000 professional firms who make a difference in the local community by offering free advice and support to local community groups and voluntary organisations. ProHelp is delivered through 33 local groups across the country with member firms, both large and small, undertaking one-off projects and contributing to advice surgeries and workshops.

[www.bitc.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/where\\_we\\_work/west\\_midlands/getting\\_involved/prohelp/](http://www.bitc.org.uk/what_we_do/where_we_work/west_midlands/getting_involved/prohelp/)

John Guilford

### **Business in the Community - West Midlands**

c/o Jaguar Cars Ltd

B/7/006 Browns Lane

Coventry CV5 9R.

Tel: 02476 203717 or 07786 800124.

Email: [john.guilford@bitc.org.uk](mailto:john.guilford@bitc.org.uk)

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**The Cranfield Trust** provides free management consultancy support to the voluntary sector through a national register of highly skilled volunteers from the commercial sector. The Trust's volunteers provide consultancy on a friendly one to one basis across a wide range of management fields. Each project is individually tailored to meet the particular needs of the organisation that the volunteer is working with. Through this method, Trust volunteers have successfully worked with client organisations on more than 1,000 consultancy projects.

[www.cranfieldtrust.org.uk/](http://www.cranfieldtrust.org.uk/)

### **The Cranfield Trust**

Amanda Tincknell – Chief Executive

Court Room Chambers

1 Bell Street Romsey

Hampshire SO51 8GY

Tel: 01794 830338

Email: [admin@cranfieldtrust.org](mailto:admin@cranfieldtrust.org)

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**iT4 Communities** introduces IT professionals who wish to volunteer to charities and community and voluntary organisations who are looking for help, advice and guidance in their use of technology. They can:

- Talk to you about your IT needs and help find support
- Describe your volunteer opportunity in technical terms to potential volunteers
- Offer useful resources
- Be available to offer support, advice and guidance
- Provide regular newsletters, annual awards, workshops

[www.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/home/index.jsp](http://www.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/home/index.jsp)

Nigel Davies  
**iT4Communities**  
45 Beech Street  
London EC2Y 8AD

Email: [info@it4communities.org.uk](mailto:info@it4communities.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7796 2144

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**Media Matching - The Media Trust's** matching service brings together media and communications professionals with charities and voluntary organisations that would like to improve the way they communicate. The service is free and aims to match skilled advisors to a charity or voluntary organisation requiring help with a specific need. With more than 2,000 registered advisors a wide range of skills are covered from PR and marketing through to design and web services and strategies. Many volunteers also offer to speak at training events and Speedmatching evenings are organised where advisors and charities get the opportunity to meet face-to-face.

Tel: 0207 874 7610  
Email: [mediamatching@mediatrust.org](mailto:mediamatching@mediatrust.org).

[www.mediatrust.org/](http://www.mediatrust.org/)

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**The Bar Pro Bono Unit** is a charity which helps to find pro bono (free) legal assistance from volunteer barristers. They can assist with:

- advice, representation and help at mediation
- cases in all legal areas
- cases where proceedings have not yet been started
- cases in all tribunals and courts in England and Wales

Pro bono assistance is only available to those who cannot afford to pay and who cannot obtain public funding (Legal Aid).

**Bar Pro Bono Unit**  
289-293 High Holborn  
London WC1V 7HZ

Email: [enquiries@barprobono.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@barprobono.org.uk)

Online application process at:

**LawWorks for Community Groups** provides free legal advice to small charities, voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises in England and Wales via a network of volunteer lawyers. They have over 50 law firms and in-house legal teams participating in the project. With an award from the Big Lottery Fund of almost £190,000 over three years they are focused towards helping community groups benefiting deprived communities.

They can help with:

- Company law advice: advice on contracts; how to incorporate the organisation as a company limited by guarantee; updating and amending the organisation's constitutional documents.
- Employment law advice: drafting, reviewing and updating employment contracts and staff handbooks.
- Intellectual property law advice: advice on registering a trademark and data protection issues.
- Property law advice: advice on lease terms; assistance with negotiating tenancy agreements.
- charity law; tax/VAT law; insolvency and help in drafting contingency plans; insurance law; health and safety law; general contractual / commercial matters etc.

**LawWorks**

10-13 Lovat Lane  
London EC3R 8DN

Tel: 0207 929 5601

Apply online at:

<http://lawworks.org.uk/?id=lcg>

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**Planning Aid** provides free, independent and professional help, advice and support on planning issues to people and communities who cannot afford to hire a planning consultant. Planning Aid complements the work of local authorities but is wholly independent of them. In most UK regions Planning Aid is run by the Royal Town Planning Institute.

Sheena Terrace – Coordinator  
**West Midlands Planning Aid**  
Unit 319 The Custard Factory  
Gibb Street  
Birmingham B9 4AA

Tel: 0121 766 8044

E-mail: [wmcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:wmcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

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**Business Link West Midlands** provides comprehensive information and advice to help businesses, including voluntary and community groups such as social enterprises, make the most of their opportunities, putting people in touch with the expert help they need. Business Link is available locally and quality assured by the regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands to clear national standards. It is primarily funded by the Department of Trade and Industry, supported by a number of other government departments, agencies and local

authorities.

They offer information and services tailored to your needs, working with you to help you achieve your business objectives.

Including these areas:

- People skills and workforce development
- Innovation and new product development
- Diversification and international trade
- Access to finance, investment and ICT
- Process and supply chain development
- Sales and marketing
- A Gateway to Expert Information and Advice

To see what we can offer, speak to one of their advisors by calling 0845 113 1234 who will talk through your needs and opportunities. They can put you in touch with suitable and reliable sources of advice available across the West Midlands.

Website contains information and resources for organisations covering a wide range of issues such as health and safety, employment and premises.

[www.businesslinkwm.co.uk](http://www.businesslinkwm.co.uk)

**Helpline:** 0845 113 1234

**Email:** [info@businesslinkwm.co.uk](mailto:info@businesslinkwm.co.uk).

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**Arts for Business** provides a range of services for arts organisations. These include:

**Skills Bank** provides free access to business skills by arts managers. A business person will be matched with your organisation to work with you on a specific project, with the emphasis on the transfer of skills from the business adviser to the arts manager.

**Board Bank** is a service recruiting experienced business people to serve as non-executive directors on the boards of arts organisation.

[www.aandb.org.uk/render.aspx?siteID=1&navIDs=1,4,27](http://www.aandb.org.uk/render.aspx?siteID=1&navIDs=1,4,27)

### **Arts & Business West Midlands**

Suite 16-18  
21 Bennetts Hill  
Birmingham B2 5QP

Janice Moraitis – Assistant Professional Development Manager

Tel: 0121 248 1200

Email: [janice.moraitis@AandB.org.uk](mailto:janice.moraitis@AandB.org.uk)

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connecting the  
voluntary sector with  
consultants' expertise

## PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL AID SERVICE (PTAS)

PTAS offers:

- to voluntary and community groups: access to quality-assured consultants who can help you to improve your services and organisation;
- to consultants: access to a wide range of opportunities to make a difference to voluntary and community groups;
- to other partner organisations (including funders and statutory authorities): access to our database of quality-assured consultants to help with needs assessments, service evaluations, etc.

PTAS is a **free** service for voluntary and community organisations in the West Midlands. Currently we can only fund a small number of consultancy each year. However, for every group that contacts us we will:

- Assess your needs;
- Help you write a consultancy brief;
- Help you find a quality assured consultant;
- Give you advice about how to manage the consultancy.

If we cannot fund the consultancy ourselves we will signpost you to other sources of possible funding or organisations that might be able to help free of charge.

For more information please contact us or see our website.

[www.digbethtrust.org.uk](http://www.digbethtrust.org.uk)

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## OUR APPROACH:

We aim to deliver real outcomes for the groups and partners we work with. Our approach is to:

- tailor our support to the specific needs of individual groups;
- work with groups to transfer skills to build their capacity;
- focus on sustainable development – so that groups and projects develop realistically;
- facilitate links between groups and the wider policy and funding environment in which they are working.

## OUR IMPACT:

Recent evaluations show that the Trust is:

- Effective at reaching marginalised communities and groups;
- An effective administrator of grant funds – delivering positive outcomes for groups, individuals, communities and funders;
- Effective at helping groups to build their own capacity – thereby having a lasting impact on the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the groups we work with;
- Effective at helping to lever-in additional financial and non-financial resources to the sector.

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**The Digbeth Trust Limited is a  
company limited by guarantee  
registered in  
England No: 1985299  
Registered charity No: 517343  
Registered Office:  
Unit 321 The Custard Factory  
Gibb Street  
Birmingham B9 4AA**