

# The Hive application guidance – support for existing co-ops

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## Application guidance

This guidance is for people who are applying for [The Hive support for existing co-ops](#) – specifically support regarding:

- Sustainability and growth.
- Trading difficulties.

### PLEASE NOTE

The Hive programme in its current form is having a facelift. We are launching a new, improved support programme the week of 16 January 2023 which will continue to support new and existing co-ops and conversions.

To give us time to transfer to the new programme, we are taking a short break from taking applications under the existing Hive programme.

If you have started and saved an application using the 'save my progress and resume later' function:

- You should have an email with a link to continue and complete your application
- If you don't have an email, please contact [support@uk.coop](mailto:support@uk.coop) with any details of your application, including the email you used for your application and we will help you access your application
- For any incomplete applications, the deadline for submitting is midnight, Sunday 29 January – please contact [support@uk.coop](mailto:support@uk.coop) if you have any questions

### Not an existing co-op applying for support?

If you need application guidance for other Hive support, click on the relevant link below:

- [Support for start-up co-op businesses.](#)
- [Businesses looking to convert to worker or community ownership.](#)

This guidance takes you through the questions you will be asked in the application form – it is most useful to have this information with you as you complete the application.

You can have this guidance open in a separate tab or window, or click the download button at the top of this page to download a pdf copy of the guidance.

## There are two steps when applying to The Hive

## **Step 1: Eligibility checker**

You should have already completed the initial [eligibility checker](#). If you are able to demonstrate that you meet our minimum eligibility, you will have been directed to a page ready to complete the full application form. PLEASE NOTE: As we are closing this application form, if you have not already completed the eligibility checker and started an application, you will need to wait until the week starting 16 January. [Read more >>](#)

## **Step 2: Application form**

Applicants complete a full application form – questions will relate to your support needs.

The following pages outline the information you need to successfully complete the online application form – including any documents you should attach in support of your application.

We will assess your application based on the information you provide.

## **The Hive is open to applications all year round**

Applications are reviewed at monthly panel assessment meetings. We aim to notify applicants of the outcome within two weeks of a monthly panel meeting. This means that the maximum amount of time an applicant will have to wait for a decision following submission is eight weeks.

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## Application questions – contact information

### Organisation details

- Organisation name
- Job role within organisation
- Have you applied to The Hive before?
- Are you currently a member of Co-operatives UK?
- Contact details
- Address
- Region

### Social media

Co-operatives UK would like to follow/engage with you on your journey through this process. Please help us do this by providing as many of the below social media links as you can. These links will also help us to assess your application and understand more about your group/business

- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

### Other funding and support

Have you received, or are you currently applying for, support or funding over the past 12 months?

If so please provide details of the funder, the name of the programme and the value.

For example: *Power to Change, More than a Pub, £10,000.*

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## Application questions – about your co-op

### Organisation aims/brief description

Tell us about your co-op and how you currently trade.

- Briefly describe the co-op – aims and purpose.
- Tell us about your business.

Products, services & customers.

- What are your products and services?
- Who are your customers, users and members? Are they individuals or businesses? Try to be specific e.g. numbers, demographics, where located, what is their interest in the co-op, are they individuals, local community or businesses?
- How do you engage with existing customers and members (e.g. social media, surveys, events, meetings, subscribers)?
- How do you actively demonstrate your co-operative values and principles?

### If your co-op is applying for support regarding sustainability and growth.

- What are your ambitions for the business?
- If available, please attach a copy of your current business plan and / or strategic plan at the end of the form.
- If available, please attach a copy of your most recent annual accounts at the end of the form.
- What are your likely risks, challenges and barriers?

### If your co-op is applying for support regarding trading difficulties

- Explain your current trading circumstances
- Are you having to make a significant, rapid change to your business?
- Are you having to adjust or 'pivot' the business model to respond to changing circumstances?
- Is there a risk of insolvency?
- If available, please attach a copy of your current business plan and / or strategic plan at the end of the form.
- If available, please attach a copy of your most recent annual accounts at the end of the form.

### Governance

#### How are you organised?

- Which of your board members / management team will participate in the reviews, support?
- Who is responsible for enacting any actions that result from the support?
- Tell us about your ownership model, legal and governance structure and decision-making

process.

## **Social and environmental impact**

- Tell us how your co-op supports, serves or benefits under-represented or hard to reach communities and demographics, e.g. Black, Asian & minority ethnic communities (BAME), or young people.
- What are your social or environmental aims? Tell us about how you are creating or delivering social value and impact.

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## Application questions – what support you need

We offer a bespoke support package, which will include some or all of the following:

- One-to-one direct advice: Delivered by experienced support providers
- Peer mentoring: Working with an existing co-op
- Bespoke skills training: Delivered to your group by experienced trainers. It will be helpful to indicate what kind of support you require and how these elements will help you to achieve your intended outcomes.

### About your support needs

Which of the following support needs do you require? You can select more than one:

- Business plan / model review
- Financial review and planning, new systems
- Community shares
- Strategy development, change management
- Succession planning
- Marketing (new products, new markets, customers)
- Governance review, membership
- HR / redundancy
- Other (please specify)

### Briefly explain how this support will help you?

- Tell us how bespoke skills training will help you. This might involve skills training for your steering group or board around strategic planning, change management, governance, membership, communications, HR or finance etc.
- Tell us how peer mentoring support will help you.
  - Are you looking to learn from an existing trading co-op in a similar sector, same type of business and/or ownership model?
  - Are you looking to learn from their experience around their governance arrangements, member recruitment and engagement, strategic planning

### When do you want the support to commence and over what period?

The Hive is open to applications all year round with applications reviewed at monthly panel assessment meetings. We aim to notify applicants of the outcome within two weeks of a monthly panel meeting, which means that the maximum amount of time you will have to wait for a decision following submission is eight weeks.

Please tell us if you require urgent support due to current trading difficulties. In these circumstances we will aim to respond more quickly.

The Hive expects the delivery of the support to be completed within a period of six months, please

be sure to let us know if you anticipate requiring a longer duration.

Please provide us with more information.

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## Application questions – additional support questions

### Support providers, mentors and trainers

#### Do you have a specific provider in mind to deliver the direct one-to-one support?

- You are able to indicate a preferred support provider for all aspects of the support available as part of your application. If your application is successful, we will make every effort to allocate you your preferred support provider. However, we reserve the right to offer an alternative based on availability, geography, skills and experience.
- You can see a list of The Hive Support Providers here:  
<https://www.uk.coop/start-new-co-op/find-adviser?f%5B0%5D=programme%3A1>
- Do you have an existing working relationship with the selected provider? You will be asked to select the provider from a drop down list.

### Peer mentoring

#### Do you have a specific mentor in mind to deliver the peer mentoring support?

- If you would like to be mentored by an existing trading co-op or have a pre-existing relationship with a co-op that you wish to continue, you will be asked to provide details of the co-op.
- Please provide information regarding your relationship with the support mentor you have indicated

### Training providers

- Do you have a specific organisation or training provider in mind to deliver bespoke in-house skills training? If so you will be asked to provide details.
- Why have you indicated this training provider?
- How will you benefit from the training?



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## Application questions – additional details

### Industry sector

#### Which sector do you operate in?

- Community energy, sustainability and environment
- Community retail, wholesale
- Digital, creative and media
- Employment, training and education
- Agriculture, community supported agriculture
- Finance
- Health and social care
- Housing
- Manufacturing
- Food services, accommodation, pubs and brewing
- Sport and leisure
- Tourism, arts, heritage and community hub
- Transport

### Legal form

#### What is your organisation's legal status?

For companies, societies and charities we need a registered number.

- Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Community Interest Company
- Company
- LLP
- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Society
- Unincorporated
- Don't know

### Number of staff

#### How many employees, volunteers or members do you currently have?

Part time / Full time staff; Volunteers; Members; Board members.

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## Application questions – final details

### How did you hear about The Hive?

- Co-operative development body / adviser; Co-operatives UK mailing list or e-bulletin; Co-operatives UK website,
- The Hive website; Event; Social media; Word of mouth; Other (please specify)

### Supporting documentation

You may attach supporting documents, please name these clearly, e.g. *Co-operatives UK 2020 Business Plan*.

### Commitment fee

By submitting this form you agree that if your application is successful you will pay a fee of £100, or £75 for Co-operatives UK members (including VAT).

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## About The Hive support delivery

### Roles and responsibilities

Co-operatives UK created and manages The Hive support programme.

The Hive has a 'preferred provider' list of co-operative development bodies who deliver support on behalf of The Hive.

You can view this list in our [practitioners directory](#).

Support providers have been selected based on their skills, knowledge and experience and have also agreed to abide by a Code of Conduct.

### Privacy notice

By completing the Hive application you agree that the information is a fair and accurate reflection of your organisation and support needs. By completing the application form you also agree with our privacy notice below.

The information captured in your application form will help Co-operatives UK and our funding partner The Co-operative Bank to review and make a decision on your application for support.

Co-operatives UK is committed to processing information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and in line with our [privacy policy](#).

The personal data collected on this form will be held securely and will only be used for administration purposes. You are welcome to contact us to discuss the data we hold on you at any time.

If your application is successful, we will share your personal details with relevant third parties who will deliver the programme of support.

All our third-party support providers are required to take appropriate security measures to protect your personal information in line with our privacy policy and they are only permitted to process your personal data for specified purposes and in accordance with our instructions.

### Allocating support packages

A bespoke package of support will be agreed for successful applicants based on the needs identified in application as well as further dialogue with The Hive team.

### Reporting

Co-operatives UK will agree milestones for the support delivery with the applicant and the support provider and will contact support providers at regular intervals to check against progress.

When the support package has been completed, the support provider will inform Co-operatives UK. Both the support provider and the applicant will be sent an email containing a unique URL to complete an online survey.

This is your opportunity to advise how the support was delivered – what went well, what could have been better and the impact of the support including reporting against agreed outputs.

## **Additional support and resources**

We've listed additional paths of funding and support via Co-operatives UK and other organisations.

<https://www.uk.coop/resources/application-guidance-support-existing-co-ops-hive>

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