

Start a co-op – application form preview

Before you start

Information required

Please note that you will be asked to include in your application a **short biography and motivational statement by at least two team members**, so please prepare this in advance.

If you are an organisation that is already incorporated, you will also need to provide your:

- **Registration number:** This is the number your organisation was given when it registered with the relevant registration body, i.e. Companies House or the Financial Conduct Authority
- **Legal form**
- **Date of incorporation**

Eligibility

This programme is for start-ups. To be eligible for this programme you must fall into one of the following categories:

- A group of people aiming to register as a co-op in the UK within 12 months
- An existing organisation aiming to convert to a co-op in the next 12 months, that has been incorporated for less than 18 months and/or has not started trading
- An existing co-op incorporated in the UK less than 18 months ago and/or has not started trading

If you have been incorporated for more than 18 months and have started trading, you will not be eligible for the start-up programme. Instead, our advice team can offer or you can apply for the following programmes:

- For an established co-op, apply to our [programme for existing co-ops](#)

- For an established organisation or business wanting to convert into a co-op, [apply to our programme for conversions](#)

[] I have read the guidance and I am ready to apply

1. Eligibility check

To be eligible for the programme you should meet all the conditions listed below.

Please select all that apply to your organisation:

- **We are a group of people aiming to setup a co-op in the UK within 12 months.** This can include a recently incorporated co-op, or a business wanting to convert to a co-op, as long as you have not been incorporated for more than 18 months and/or have not started trading.
- **We have a founding team of at least two people.** To set up a co-op you will need at least two founding members. We cannot accept applications from individuals for this programme.
- **We are available to start the support package within the next six months.** If not, please apply at a later stage. Please note, it usually takes 6-8 weeks to allocate a support package.
- **Our team has capacity to conclude the support package within six months of starting.** If not, please apply at a time that you can guarantee you have capacity to make use of the support package. Please note, it usually takes 6-8 weeks to allocate a support package.
- **We are aware that if we are awarded the support package, we will be asked to contribute a £100 (£75 for Co-operatives UK members) commitment fee.** Should you be awarded a support package, you will be asked to pay a fee to ensure your commitment. Co-operatives UK reinvests the funds into future support provision. If this is a barrier to your participation in the programme, please let us know in your application and we will consider waiving the fee.

2. Privacy notice

By completing the application, you agree that the information is a fair and accurate reflection of your organisation and its 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 about you at any time. If your application is successful, we will share your personal details with relevant third parties who will be delivering the support.

All our third-party support advisors 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.

Please note that your consent is considered valid from the moment you check the box below and start your application, not when you submit your finished application.

To proceed with the application you must consent to this use of your information. *

I consent []

3. Primary contact

First name*

Last name*

Email address*

Phone number*

Please include national prefix for non-UK numbers.

Your organisation's registered address

Your organisation's registered address, or, if it is not set up yet, an address for the primary contact.

Address line 1*

Address line 2

Address line 3

Postcode*

Town/city*

4. About your co-op

Name of your co-op *

Please use the name you intend to use for your co-op, even if it might change in the future. If you are already incorporated, please use the exact name that is registered with the relevant regulatory body, for example the Financial Conduct Authority or Companies House.

What is the purpose of your co-op? *

Summarise in one sentence the purpose of your co-op. (Max 25 words)

Which sector does your organisation operate in? *

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

- Tourism, arts, heritage and community hub
- Transport
- Other, please specify

Who is the co-op for? *

Please indicate the group of people the co-op is being set up for. It could be workers, consumers, online users, the local community, etc.

If there are multiple groups, please list them all, and indicate if there are priorities within the list. (Max 150 words)

What needs or issues is the co-op aiming to address? *

(Max 150 words)

What are the main activities, products or services of your co-op?

(Max 150 words)

In the first three years of activities, at what geographical level will your activities, products or services be delivered? *

- Neighbourhood
- Local authority or city-wide level
- Regional or single nation (England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland)
- UK-wide or multiple regions/nations
- International

Where will your co-op be based? *

Please indicate the primary region where the co-op will start operating from.

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and Humberside

- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- London
- East of England
- South East
- South West
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- The Channel Islands

Why do you want your organisation to be a co-op? *

(Max 150 words)

Are you already incorporated? *

- Yes
- No

If you are not incorporated, skip to question 7. Your organisation's finances. The following question are only asked if you selected yes to the question above.

5. Your organisation's structure

Understanding how your organisation is structured, and its scale, will help us identify the co-op experts best suited for your organisation.

What is your organisation's registration number? *

This is the number your organisation was given when it registered with the relevant registration body, i.e. Companies House or the Financial Conduct Authority.

What is the legal form of your organisation? *

- Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Community Interest Company
- Company
- LLP
- Society
- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Unincorporated
- Limited Partnership
- Act of Parliament
- Royal Charter Company

What is the legal form subcategory for your organisation?

This question only appears if you select Company or Society from the list above.

- Company Limited by guarantee
- Company Limited by shares
- PLC
- Registered Society
- Co-operative Society
- Community Benefit Society
- CIC Ltd by guarantee
- CIC Ltd by shares

What date did your organisation incorporate as this legal form? *

On the form, use the double arrows (<<) to jump to previous years.

How many people are involved in your organisation? *

Please indicate the total number for each category. Type 0 if a category is not applicable to you.

Board members**Employees – total number**

Including board members that are employees.

Employees – Full Time Equivalent

Including board members that are employees.

Volunteers**Is your organisation incorporated as a co-op? ***

- Yes
- No

If you are not incorporated as a co-op, skip to question 7. Your organisation's finances. The following question are only asked if you selected yes to the question above.

6. Your co-op structure

How many members does your co-op have? *

Please indicate the number of members you have in the categories that are relevant for your co-op and indicate 0 in those that are not relevant.

Worker members *

Can also include volunteers and/or contractors.

User members *

For example, consumers or receivers of a service.

Supporter or investor members *

Other 1 (please specify)

Other 2 (please specify)

Other 3 (please specify)

Is your organisation a member of Co-operatives UK? *

This is not a requirement to participate in this support programme.

- Yes
- No

7. Your organisation's finances

Understanding your organisation's finances and its scale will help us identify the co-op experts best suited for your organisation.

What has been your turnover in the last 12 months? *

If you have not started trading, just indicate 0.

Please indicate which type of external finance you have received up to now.

Provide an approximate amount for each type or indicate 0 where the funding type is not applicable. *

- Donations (including crowdfunding) *
- Grants and sponsorships *
- Investment in the form of community shares *
- Investment in the form of equity (not community shares) *
- Loans *
- Bonds *
- Other (please specify) *

Are you expecting to raise more external finance in this financial year? *

Please indicate what type:

- Donations (including crowdfunding)
- Grants and sponsorships
- Investment in the form of community shares
- Investment in the form of equity (not community shares)
- Loans
- Bonds
- No external funding
- Don't know

8. Your support needs

Understanding your needs and the steps you have already taken to address them will help us identify the co-op experts best suited for your organisation.

How have you tested your business idea? *

For example, have you interviewed users? Have you undertaken any research? Have you started trading? (Max 150 words)

What do you aim to achieve in the next 18 months? *

Please indicate some milestones you would like to reach. (Max 150 words)

What are you hoping to achieve through this support package? *

How can the support help you achieve your goals? (Max 150 words)

Which of the following support activities would you like to receive as part of this package? *

We cannot provide all the activities below as part of your support package, so please indicate your top three priorities.

- Choosing the right legal form for our co-op
- Reviewing or developing our organisational strategy
- Testing the business viability and feasibility
- Reviewing or developing a business plan
- Financial planning
- Market development (user research, marketing and customer engagement)
- Reviewing or developing a membership strategy
- Defining our democratic processes (can include sociocracy)
- Defining a fundraising strategy (can include community shares)

Have you applied to other business support programmes in the past 12 months? *

If so, please indicate the name of the programme, the type of support it provides and if you have been awarded the support. (Max 150 words)

To help us understand the steps you have already taken, please indicate if you have done any of the following. *

These activities are strongly encouraged but are not a requirement to receive this support package.

- Watched a webinar to [understand if a co-op is right for you](#)
- Used Co-operatives UK's [step-by-step tool](#)
- Explored Co-operatives UK's [including the different legal forms](#) and [model rules](#)
- None of the above

Have you already spoken about your co-op idea with someone at Co-operatives UK or a co-op advisor? If so, who?

(Max 150 words)

Is there a co-op advisor you would like to work with as part of this support package?

The support will be delivered by a co-op expert that is part of our extensive [network of advisors](#) located across the UK. You may choose your own advisor from the network, or leave it to us to choose the most appropriate for your co-op.

You can indicate more than one. Please explain why you would like to work with them. If your application is successful, we will make every effort to allocate you your preferred support advisor. However, we reserve the right to offer an alternative based on availability, geography, skills and experience. (Max 150 words)

Is there an existing co-op you would like to receive peer support from as part of this support package? Please explain why.

As part of this support package, you can receive up to half a day of peer support from another co-op. If your application is successful, we will make every effort to allocate you your preferred co-op. However, we reserve the right to offer an alternative based on availability, geography, skills and experience. (Max 150 words)

Are there any barriers to your team's participation?

Please let us know if there are any barriers to your team's participation in this programme or if some of your team members have specific needs that we need to consider when assigning the support package. For example, restrictions on time, or barriers that require the support to be delivered in person or online, etc. (Max 150 words).

9. About your team

These questions will help us understand more about your team and your motivations to set up a co-op.

Please fill in the following questions for each founding team member (or current leadership team if you are already incorporated). The form allows for a minimum of two team members and a maximum of four.

Team member information

Team member name *

Biography and motivational statement.

Please tell us what your motivation is for setting up the co-op and provide a short biography outlining the skills and experiences that you bring to the co-op. Please also mention if you have an existing relationship with potential members, users or beneficiaries of your co-op. (Max 300 words)

Age group *

- 18-35
- 36-65
- Above 65

Do you identify with any groups that you consider under-represented or discriminated against in the business sector, third sector, in the workplace or in their communities?

If so, please specify.

Completion of this question is voluntary but encouraged as it will be one of the aspects we will consider when prioritising applications in our assessment process. (Max 50 words)

10. Supporting documents

You are welcome to submit additional documentation, though it is not a requirement.

Please attach supporting documents clearly named [Organisation name-document name]. Documents can be .pdf, .doc, .docx, .xlsx, .xls. Each file can be a maximum of 25MB.

If you have a business plan or slide deck about your idea, you can upload it here.

Any other documentation you would like to share.

11. Your marketing channels.

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 marketing links as you can. These links will also help us to assess your application and understand more about your co-op.

- Website
- Facebook

- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Vimeo/YouTube
- Other 1
- Other 2

How did you hear about this support? *

Please tick all that apply.

- Co-operatives UK mailing list
- Co-operatives UK website
- Co-operatives UK staff
- Co-operatives UK event or training
- Co-operatives UK social media
- Other social media
- A co-op adviser
- Another co-op
- Word of mouth
- Search engine, e.g. Google
- Other, please specify:

Would you like to subscribe to any of the following Co-operatives UK newsletters?

Please tick all that apply.

- General news
- Policy and campaigning
- Training and events

- Co-op advice
- Support for new co-ops
- UnFound: Co-ops and tech
- Raising funds through community shares

The Co-operative Bank

Through our partnership with The Co-operative Bank, we are pleased to signpost you to the Community DirectPlus Account, which is free to co-ops.

If you are interested in hearing more about The Co-operatives Bank's offer, Co-operatives UK will share your contact details with the Bank so they can contact you directly. Co-operatives UK is not responsible for how quickly the Bank responds to you once we have shared your contact details.

Please select your preference below.*

- Yes, I am happy for The Co-operative Bank to contact me about their free business banking offer for co-op businesses
- No, I would prefer not

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).

This fee is to ensure your commitment to the support package. Please let us know if this is an obstacle to your participation in the programme as we will consider waiving the fee (max 50 words).

13. Submit form

If you are happy with the details completed on this form, you can now submit the form. To check your response before submitting you can use the 'previous page' button.

Once you have submitted you will be sent a confirmation email with a copy of the application.

If you do not receive a confirmation email, please first check your email spam or junk folder. If you've still not received an email, get in touch via support@uk.coop and we can confirm if we have received your application.