

SO, THINKING ABOUT SETTING UP A COMPASS GROUP?



Great! This is your chance to help shape the society you want to live in. By organising a Compass group you can become a part of the future of Compass and join in with creating a good society through events, debates, campaigns and feeding in to the future direction of Compass- and much more.

People set up local Compass groups for a variety of reasons- but mainly because they want to make a positive contribution to their local area. Compass groups have a life of their

own and are directed by the group itself with support from the office. The Average group has debates, guest speakers, discussions, attends local protests and links up with other like-minded groups in the area. If we really want to live in a world that is based in democracy, sustainability and equality then we have to start locally -in our communities, in our homes, our places of work- everywhere! Compass groups provide the space to work together and build new local alliances to learn from each other and work together to make a Good Society a reality.

To support you in setting up a Compass group, the Compass office, members and group organisers have created this simple guide on how to start and maintain a successful Compass group.

If you have any questions or feedback please feel free to contact [Rosie in the office](#).

What makes a successful group? (click on the title to go straight each section!)

- ❖ [Location, location, location](#)
- ❖ [Getting the word out](#)
- ❖ [Setting up for your first meeting](#)
- ❖ [Staying organised](#)
- ❖ [How to make the most of social media](#)
- ❖ [The bigger picture and other groups](#)

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

First of all, you'll need somewhere for the group to meet so you can discuss what it is you want to do and what issues are important to the group and relevant locally. Here are some tips on arranging the first meeting.

- Find a venue for the group to meet. For example, a community centre, pub, library, park or even a group member's home. Try to find somewhere easily accessible for anyone that won't put people off and is mindful to people of all backgrounds and abilities. For example a pub might not be the best place for a first meeting as many people don't feel comfortable in pubs for personal or religious reasons.



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- Contact the venue to find out if they have space for a group and what facilities they have, it's always good to go and check the venue yourself to make sure it's a suitable for example is the venue quiet enough to have a conversation! Also make sure the date doesn't clash with other local events, holidays etc.
- Arrange a start date with the venue as soon as possible so you can begin telling people when your first meeting will be (Doodle polls are great for this!).
- Try to find a time most people can make, you can't accommodate everyone all the time so perhaps think about rotating the time and place to suit everyone's needs. When setting the time you should also consider how easy the venue is to get to i.e. public transport, disabled access.

Venue Checklist

- ✓ **Have you got a venue?**
- ✓ **Is it accessible? Think about childcare needs and disabled access for example**
- ✓ **Have you booked a time for the first meeting?**
- ✓ **Have you told as many people as possible when and where your first meeting is?**

GETTING THE WORD OUT

It's really important to let people know about your group and get as many people informed about it as you can; to get you started here are some useful tips. You can always call [the compass office](#) to talk to Rosie about how to go about this and for any advice you need.

Essentials:

1. Email Rosie, rosie@compassonline.org.uk to get an email sent out to Compass members and supporters in your area to let them know about your group and when and where the first meeting will be. Rosie will also help publicise your group on social media and the Compass website.
2. Create a simple, easy to read leaflet/poster with all the key info that you can distribute around the local area. Ask if local shops, cafes and pubs will put your poster up or have a few of your leaflets for customers to take. Have a look at our example at the end of this document and feel free to use the template for your own event
3. Setting up a [Facebook](#) page or [Twitter](#) can also be useful for letting people know about your group. For more information on social media see our [Social Media guidelines](#).

Spreading the Word Checklist

- ✓ Email [Rosie](#) to get your info sent to others
- ✓ Distribute your leaflet to local business's e.g. cafes, pubs, galleries and libraries
- ✓ Social Media
- ✓ Run a stall at a fayre
- ✓ Try and get the group in any newsletters of local papers

Extra things to do if you have the time are:

- Getting involved with a fayre or stall at an event, this is a great way to talk to people directly about your group and spread the word.
- Try and get your group included on any local newsletters regularly and keep your group advertised to a range of people. Contact the publishers of any local magazines or newspapers to see about getting your leaflets included and ask the council if they have any such newsletters and if they can include your newsletter or recommend other organisations that can.

SETTING UP YOUR FIRST MEETING

There is a lot to consider when meeting up for the first time, and this are just few key things to keep in mind. Once you've all met, you can begin to decide on the future of the group. Whether you just want to meet up and have a discussion each time or if you want to do new things, have a look at some of our [suggestions](#). And of course you can always talk to [us](#) if you're unsure about anything; there is no reason that you should have to do this all by yourself.

1. Choose a facilitator for the group, this doesn't even need to be you! It could even be more than one person, maybe a woman and a man- after all we are all about equality. A good facilitator needs to be a good listener, respect all those present, have some neutrality on the issue, be able to be assertive and have good time keeping skills. A great guide for facilitators can be found [here](#). Also think about minutes- do you want notes taken of what was discussed? If so try and rotate who takes the minutes so the burden doesn't always lie on the same person.
2. It's a simple thing, but introduce yourself to those who turn up, let them know that you're the one who set up the group. It's also good to welcome everyone as they arrive and find out who they are and have a go-round with each person introducing themselves.

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3. It's good to think about the layout- maybe arrange seating in an inclusive way, so that everyone can see one another - circles are best for this, but aren't suitable for all groups.
4. Agree on a time to finish and when to have breaks. Having breaks is really important to revive people (for drinks, toilet, cigarettes) and for informal chatting, especially if the meeting lasts longer than 1½ hours.
5. If people start using obscure terms and jargon then ask them to explain it, not everyone will know what they mean and you want to allow as many people as possible to engage.
6. Try to prevent one individual from dominating the discussion, if you see that others want to say something, perhaps ask them if they want to share anything, on the other hand you need to make sure things don't get too chaotic with everyone talking over each other. Remember, people are diverse and not everyone likes talking in a big group.



STAYING ORGANISED

There are lots of ways to help keep your group organised such as social media and email lists. These are just some suggestions to try and help you stay organised.

- Keeping a mailing list is a good idea, ask for the email of anyone who is interested in the group and ask if they are happy for you to keep them updated on upcoming meetings or any changes. Please see the sign up list at the end of this document .
 - It can be useful to plan out in advance the dates of upcoming meetings if they are a regular thing, this can be decided with the group at the first meeting or a great tool for this is [doodle poll](#). It allows you to create a poll of when and where the group wants to meet next and makes sure the most number of people can always attend.
 - Another useful online tool is [Google Groups](#), which you can use if you have a [Google email account](#) (free and easy to set up). Google have a very clear [guide](#) on how to create a group and what can be done with it.
- Decide on the structure of the group, will you have a committee that makes the decisions, if so how will that committee be chosen, or you could make decisions collectively. A decision will also be needed on what topics the group discusses or what [events you do](#). However you make the decisions you need to make sure all events and decisions are based on [equality and the democratic values and the ideals of Compass](#).
 - Give some thought to upcoming topics at groups in advance so you will be able to prepare for them and facilitate the discussion. This allows you more time to prepare the meetings before hand.

Top Tip

Use the Bcc (blind carbon copy) option when sending emails because it avoids sharing peoples' email addresses without their permission.

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SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Social media can be a great tool to get your group noticed and to spread the word. It allows you to easily reach a very large audience and keep them updated on your group and upcoming events. Here are some guidelines, tips and suggestions for making the most of social media.

Tip 1:

Online safety – so read up with [this link](#).

Facebook

- Create a new email account that is specific to the group instead of using your personal account; this will make it easier to keep track of everything.
- Set up a facebook account if you haven't got one. You can use the group's email, and then create a page for your group, you can find a good guide [here](#), or watch a YouTube tutorial [here](#).
- A key point to remember with facebook is to keep it updated, this doesn't mean you need to add information every day, but if someone comes to the site looking for information and it hasn't been updated in a year they may think it is no longer running.
- You'll also need to moderate the comments; you can assign other people you trust to do this by making them an admin in your group

facebook



Social Media Top Tip

It is important to regularly interact with the people who have joined your group on Facebook or your followers on Twitter to keep them interested. You could do this by creating a poll, a group discussion or by posting interesting articles and videos relating to your campaign.

Twitter

- If you want to use Twitter, then be aware that posts (also known as tweets!) must be kept short -140 characters!
- Twitter can be really useful for spreading event information quickly and sharing updates about what the group is discussing.
- You can also follow other Compass groups (@CompassOffice and @CompassYouthUK) and tweet them to follow you. This is a great way keep in touch with other Compass groups and the office.
- You can also use Twitter to get in on lively debates by checking what people are talking about. Try searching various hash tags (#) like #banking or #democracy or whatever is currently a hot topic in the news and get involved in the debate online. See [here](#) and [here](#) for great online Twitter tutorials.

THE BIGGER PICTURE AND OTHER GROUPS

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It's also a good idea to share your views and group findings with other Compass groups; maybe put together a short pamphlet outlining some issues raised and the group's thoughts on how to tackle them. You can write a blog online about what the group is up to and how others can get involved. Compass events are a great place to share ideas and meet new people that may be interested in your group. You could also have a look at some of the [publications](#) produced by Compass for inspiration or to find new topics to discuss.

- If you're near other groups then it could be a good idea to meet up and share group ideas and discussions. You can find information on other Compass groups [here](#). You can also get in touch with other groups such as:

[Compass Youth](#)

[Friends of the Earth](#)

[World Development Movement](#)

[Transition Towns](#)

[UK Feminista/ Fawcett Society](#)

[Political parties](#)



- You could also get the occasional guest speaker to give a short talk to the group on a particular subject, there is no harm in contacting people for this, maybe try and get in touch with your local MP, or ask the Compass office for ideas.
- Help advertise other [Compass groups](#) and ask them to advertise your group; this is a great way of spreading the word to other people that may be interested in attending your group.
- Make sure to think about how you can get involved with other groups and their actions. For example a near-by anti cuts group. It is very likely that other groups such as the student movement or [UK Uncut](#) are holding demos in your area on issues your group might care about.

Icebreakers

- Have everyone swap seats half way through the group
- Ask the group to arrange themselves into height order or shortest hair
- Have a look at [these](#) icebreakers and choose one you think would work.

Future plans

- Hold a conference
 - Invite guest speakers (remember gender balance!)
 - Link up with other groups
- Take a look at some other ideas [here](#).

Things to think about

Respect

Make it clear at the beginning that everyone will be listened to and given a chance to talk. But you should also stress that any form of discrimination will not be tolerated, that if an individual does start to talk about things that make others uncomfortable or is not appropriate for the situation then they may be asked to leave. For more information on equality have a look at [this](#).

Topics

- Plan B
- Local politics
- Environment
- Have a look at the Compass [website](#) for some ideas

How will you decide on the topic? Perhaps ask the group what they would like to discuss. A great resource to help in this can be found [here](#).

If you want to have a chat about anything please call the [Compass office](#) – Rosie is here to support you but also learn from you on what works and what doesn't so we can all learn from each other.

SOME IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR GROUP...

- ❖ Hold informal discussion groups
- ❖ Attend protests or rallies
- ❖ Start your own campaigns on issues the group feel strongly about
- ❖ Have a stall at local markets to get people involved with politics
- ❖ Write your own manifestos for a good society
- ❖ Have a book club within the group or a film screening for a meeting

POSSIBLE AGENDA...

- ❖ Start with a go-round, who people are and why they are at the meeting
- ❖ Have a conversation about people's involvement in Compass and other groups
- ❖ All write on post-its your 'passion topics' i.e what issues your want to talk about, do action on etc (i.e housing crisis, NHS cuts etc)
- ❖ Have a conversation about the themes and think about what you could do (i.e getting a speaker, getting in touch with other local groups etc)
- ❖ Decide the next meeting and topic and how you want to organise
- ❖ Relax and celebrate your first meeting!

Below are some examples of signup sheets and leaflets. Make your own or feel free to use our template if it's easier! Contact Rosie and she'll send you the Compass logo to use as a header.

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DIRECTION FOR
THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Sign up for email updates:

Name	Email

@CompassOffice
[facebook.com/CompassGoodSociety](https://www.facebook.com/CompassGoodSociety)
www.compassonline.org.uk/

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Compass Leeds

Join like-minded people in helping to make Leeds a fairer
and more equal place

Politics in the Park: Leeds Housing Crisis

Come for a chat about local housing issues

When? Monday 1st October
2012, 5pm
Where? Leeds Meeting
House, LS6 1HL

For more details contact Rosie Rogers: 020 7463 0633 or email
rosie@compassonline.co.uk. Also like us on facebook.com/compassleeds and
follow us on twitter @compassleeds

[Insert Compass logo]

[Insert name of Compass group]

[Include a short description of the group. What is its aim?]

[Insert title/topic of meeting]

[What will the meeting entail?]

- Date and time
- Location

Include your contact details/facebook/twitter