

# Useful Community Organisations and Initiatives

Use this resource library to learn about the different kinds of community centred organisations and initiatives which are active in the UK. Many of the organisations listed here are available to reach out to for assistance, expertise or inspiration.

## Business

Different business organisations that can assist you with social enterprises or businesses with a community focus.

- **Social Enterprise UK:** We are the national body for social enterprise – business with a social or environmental mission.

## Energy

Different community led initiatives concerning energy and renewable energy.

- **Ovesco** is a community group run by local volunteers for the local community in East Sussex. We create community owned renewable energy projects so our local community can become zero carbon.
- **South East London Community Energy (SELCE)** is a not-for-profit social enterprise. It was formed by residents of Greenwich and Lewisham who want to play an active role in shaping the energy future of South East London. Taking action on climate change and fuel poverty lies at the heart of our business model.

## Finance & Funding

Different kinds of finance initiatives and funding sources available for community projects.

- **Co-operative and Community Finance:** Industrial Common Ownership Finance Ltd (ICOF) was set up in 1973 and we have since created a number of related funds, all of which are democratically owned and controlled by the members. We provide sympathetic loan finance to help people take control of their economic lives and create social benefit. We exclusively serve the co-operative and social enterprise sector, and for over 45 years we have supported hundreds of businesses ranging from small community-run enterprises

to large award-winning organisations.

- **Triodos:** We finance progressive entrepreneurs and influence the banking sector to become more transparent, diverse and sustainable. Our financial and banking services are for savers, investors and organisations who want to change the world for the better. Our customers are already playing their part in our positive movement, making us one of the world's most sustainable banks.
- **Ecology Building Society:** We're dedicated to building a greener society by providing mortgages for properties and projects that respect the environment and support sustainable communities, funded through our range of simple, transparent savings accounts.

## Food

Different community led initiatives for growing food, sharing food and distributing food.

- **Co-op (supermarket) Food Share:** None of us can afford to throw away good food. That's why our stores give products that are going out of date to local community groups at the end of each day to prevent food waste, so far we've given away over 3m meals and counting. If you're a not-for-profit group and could use this food then apply to be a partner with your local Co-op now.
- **Fareshares (London):** Fareshares is a non-profit-making community project that stocks simple unadulterated food (often called wholefoods) and related products. It was set up in 1988 by local people to provide good food for the community at affordable prices in the belief that decent food is a basic necessity for health, regardless of means.
- **Olio** connects neighbours with each other and with local businesses so surplus food can be shared, not thrown away. This could be food nearing its sell-by date in local stores, spare home-grown vegetables, bread from your baker, or the groceries in your fridge when you go away. For your convenience, OLIO can also be used for non-food household items too. The app is free and easy to use.
- **Sustain:** Building a network of food co-ops, buying groups and other community food enterprises across the UK; helping new groups get off the ground and existing ones to thrive.
- **The Trussell Trust** supports a nationwide network of food banks and together they provide emergency food and support to people locked in poverty, and campaign for change to end the need for food banks in the UK. To find a local food bank near you, see [here](#).  
To set one up, see

here.

## Housing

Different support networks for community housing projects and for advice on starting your own.

- **Community Led Homes:** Community led housing is a growing movement of normal people taking action and managing housing projects that build the decent and affordable homes that the country so desperately needs.
- **Community Led Housing London:** We are here to help communities take a leading and lasting role in developing and managing their homes. We work with groups at an early stage, offering advice, mentoring and funding. We also work with boroughs, landowners, and funders to create the right environment for the sector to thrive.
- **Co-op Homes:** Since being founded in 1986, Co-op homes has built up an extensive knowledge of the needs and aspirations of housing co-ops since. They are keen to help co-op members retain sovereignty and control of their own housing, so they work with them to tailor packages to their individual requirements – whether this be fully managed or digital only.
- **Radical Routes** is a network of radical co-ops whose members are committed to working for positive social change. The network is made up mainly of housing co-ops of various sizes (none with more than 17 members), a few workers co-ops and a couple of social centres.
- **The Rural Urban Synthesis Society (RUSS)** is a members-led Community Land Trust based in South London, founded in 2009 with the aim of creating sustainable community-led neighbourhoods and truly affordable homes right across London.
- **Sanford Housing Co-operative:** Sanford is the oldest purpose-built housing co-op in the UK. Founded in 1973, there are around 125 tenant-members living in 14 houses and a block of flats. We are proud of Sanford's unique sense of community. [Find out more](#) about how to become a member of Sanford.
- **Co-operatives UK / Housing:** As businesses owned and run by their members, co-operatives offer a solution to the growing sense of powerlessness people feel over business and the economy, giving them control of the businesses they are closest to - whether they shop at them, work at them or supply them. People of all kinds benefit through membership of their co-operative. Farmers are strengthening their position in competitive and global markets. Employees are having a say in how their organisations are run. Customers are influencing the businesses they use. Local residents are saving

vital services.

## Networks

Different community led networks operating around the UK that you can become a part of.

- **Community Organisers** is a national charity, and the membership body and training organisation for community organising in England. We are led by our members and are inspiring thousands of people to get involved in community organising practice to join the growing movement of people up and down the country coming together; taking action – whether setting up a new community-led housing project, lobbying for better public transport, challenging cuts to health services, or establishing community-owned enterprises – people who are transforming their neighbourhoods for good.
- **Co-operatives UK:** The network for Britain's thousands of co-operative businesses, Co-operatives UK works to promote, develop and unite member-owned business worth £36 billion to the British economy
- **Co-operatives London:** We want to build the biggest possible co-operative economy we can. We want more co-operatives, employing more people, selling more things to more people. If we can get as many co-operatives in the city talking with each other, and talking with people who are supportive of co-operatives, we can help generate business for co-operatives.
- **Transition Network** is a movement that has been growing since 2005. It is about communities stepping up to address the big challenges they face by starting local. By coming together, they are able to crowd-source solutions. They seek to nurture a caring culture, one focused on supporting each other, both as groups or as wider communities.

### **Below are examples of Transition towns:**

1. **Brixton Transition Town** Transition Town Brixton is a community interest company with six directors – a limited liability company with a definite mission to benefit the community. We have an evolving strategy, committed to supporting the projects generated by the energy and vision of our active members.
  2. **Transition Kentish Town** Part of a movement of communities coming together to reimagine and rebuild our world, focused around these simple core principles: Our Environment / Sustainability / Community / Food Waste / Energy / Growing
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