

HOW TO SET UP A REPAIR CAFE



**From the team behind
Manchester Repair Café**



ABOUT REPAIR CAFES

Repair Cafés are community meet-ups where volunteers help visitors fix their broken household items for free.

They are a great way to meet your neighbours, learn new skills and keep useful items out of landfill.

If you don't have one in your local area, why not set one up?

Find out how with this handy guide...

What's inside:

- Registering with the international Repair Café network
- Practical concerns: venues, volunteers and tools
- Funding the project
- Insurance and Health & Safety
- Tips on the day-to-day running of a Repair Café



This project is made possible by a grant from the Postcode Local Trust.

IT'S ALL IN THE NAME

Martine Postma ran the first Repair Café event in 2009. In 2011 she established the **Repair Café Foundation**, which exists to support local Repair Cafés to set up around the world. There are currently 1,500 of them!

If you want to call your event a 'Repair Café', you need to register with the Repair Café Foundation. This costs 49Euros as a one-off fee. As a member you get your Café listed on the international website, as well as having access to resources which we found really useful, such as sign in sheets and feedback forms. Members must use the Repair Café logo and branding, which might not be the most appealing, but it does save creating your own.

The Repair Café also has some House Rules which members agree to abide by. These specify, amongst other things, that repair experts offer their skills voluntarily, and that they do not take responsibility for visitor's items should they go home more broken than when they arrived.

Besides this, each Repair Café sorts out its own system of operating the event, insurance, venue etc. If you'd rather go your own way, that's fine. But you'll need to come up with a different name - 'Menders Meetup' or 'Fixer Uppers' maybe...?

If you can afford the joining fee, we'd recommend becoming part of the Repair Café family - it makes the process of setting up your events much simpler, and it's easier for people to find you.



FINDING A VENUE

It's a good idea to have looked into a venue before you apply for funding, for two reasons:

1. You can incorporate accurate venue costs into your budget
2. Some funds are location-specific, so your venue choice might affect the funding you can get

Things you may want to look for in a venue

- Accessibility
- Parking
- Toilets
- Easy to find
- Adequate power points
- Kitchen facilities

Types of venues you could look into:

- Churches
- Libraries
- Village halls
- Community centres
- Housing association community spaces



LEGAL STUFF

Insurance

You will need to have Public Liability Insurance cover for your events.

Some venues might already have PLI which covers your activities - in this case there's no extra cost to you.

Costs vary, but some Repair Cafés in the UK pay around £150-£300 per year which covers all their events.

Health & Safety

Your venue should have a Health & Safety policy and Risk Assessment. Some may also require that you create your own Risk Assessment for the Repair Café activity. See **Manchester Community Central's website** for help with this.

House Rules

As each visitor arrives at our Repair Café, we make sure they've read and agree to the House Rules.

These clearly state that the Repair Café and volunteer repairers are not liable if items go home more broken than when they arrived.

TOOLS

Lots of Repair Cafés ask repairers to bring their own tools along. However, your volunteers might appreciate you having some of the bigger items in-situ - such as workbenches and bike stands. Plus commonly-used tools like screwdrivers and spanners. But that depends on the storage situation at your venue. If you're applying for funding it might be worth incorporating a small budget for tools and equipment.



FUNDING

We set up Manchester Repair Café with a £1,000 grant from the Sport Relief Community Cash fund, via Forever Manchester.

This went on some print flyers, publicising the project and a contribution towards rent and refreshments for the first year of the project. It did not cover our heating bills, or staff time to arrange volunteers and promote each individual event.

Possible funds:

We'd recommend **Forever Manchester** for small pots of funding (up to £2,000) to get you started. This guide was funded by **Postcode Local Trust**, so try them too.

Other places to look include local housing associations, and **Manchester Community Central's funding portal**.

Donations

At all our events, we have a donations pot available for visitors to contribute to. Donations can vary from £0-£40 each time - depending on how many visitors you have (and their generosity!). The donations go towards our rent & heating costs, and on tea and cake if there's money left over!

Some Repair Cafés run entirely on donations, so it's entirely up to you whether or not you want to apply for funding.

VOLUNTEERS

When we started Manchester Repair Café, we were lucky to already know a few skilled repairers, many of whom are with us two years later.

Finding volunteers is a major part of setting up your event as it essentially centres around them - no volunteers no Repair Café!

Start looking for your volunteers a good 3-6 months before the first event so you can get the word out. Find them through word of mouth, social media and through local community and voluntary organisations.

Once you've found them, treat them well! Make sure you communicate with them about what is expected of them and what they can expect from you. We use **SignUp**, an online tool that allows volunteers to sign up for shifts as and when they can make it.



Make sure you have some volunteer processes in place. It's a good idea to ask everyone to complete a volunteer application form when they start volunteering with you. Then you have a record of their details, as well as next-of-kin contacts should you need them.

All our volunteers are given an induction on their first day, including a Health & Safety briefing so they can locate fire exits and First Aid kits in the event of an incident.

DAY-TO-DAY

You'll figure out the best system as you go along, but you might want to consider:

Setting regular dates and times for your events, well in advance. This helps people remember them. Ours happen on the third Saturday of every month.

Publicising the events can be done very easily via social media. But it's also worth sending a press release out to local publications, and putting up posters in libraries and doctor's surgeries.

Operating a queue or appointments system? We moved to an appointments system after finding queueing a bit chaotic. Each visitor now gets 15 minutes with a repairer, and they can either wait or go away and come back at their allotted time if they prefer.

QUESTIONS?

Best of luck with your new Repair Café!

If you need some more help or advice on setting up your Repair Café, feel free to **email us** or message us via the **Manchester Repair Café Facebook Page**.

You can also get lots of useful info from the international **Repair Café Foundation** and the **UK Repair Cafés forum**.