The More in Common Network
An Introductory Guide

“We have far more in common than that which divides us”

Jo Cox
The phrase “more in common” comes from the words spoken by Jo Cox MP during her first speech in parliament: “We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us.”

The More in Common network is a collection of local groups across the UK who promote Jo’s powerful humanitarian message.

While every More in Common group is unique, they all hold a shared set of values and beliefs and are united by a long-term vision for strong and connected communities where everyone has a sense of identity and belonging.

More in Common groups build partnerships, hold inclusive events, and find creative ways to connect people and tackle the causes of division.

"We are united by a long term vision for strong and connected communities where everyone has a sense of identity and belonging."
The story behind More in Common

More in Common begins with Jo Cox, and her conviction that a fairer, kinder and more tolerant world was possible. Jo’s humanitarianism, interest in people, and her belief that we have more in common shone through in every aspect of her life.

Locally, in her constituency of Batley & Spen, the community was in a state of shock and disbelief. Jo had made a huge impact in her short time as an MP. There was potential for division to consume the local community.

Feeling this, a group of local people came together united in their desire to ensure that the community was not fractured by Jo’s killing, but instead stayed strong. Thus, More in Common Batley & Spen was created.

Across the country, many people shared a similar wish to bring their community together. In 2016, with the support of Hope not Hate, events were held across the country to remember Jo and this led to more More in Common groups forming.

In 2017, Jo’s family and friends founded The Great Get Together: a weekend of community events to bring people together on Jo’s birthday. Over 3,000 people organised events for the first Great Get Together.

It is now a highlight of the UK summer calendar: in 2019, over 720,000 people took part in more than 11,000 events.

More in Common has become a growing movement, with groups across the UK taking a positive and practical approach to helping their community. From healing Brexit divisions in Boston to tackling loneliness in Basildon, the More in Common network is united in their mission to carry Jo’s message into their communities.

On 16th June 2016, on her way to meet with local residents in her constituency, Jo was murdered by an extremist.

Jo’s murder shook the world and tributes to her were made around the globe.
Why join the More in Common network?

We’re part of a movement of people with a shared vision for our communities.

We BELIEVE...
that Jo’s “more in common” message is more relevant now than ever before, and that the actions of ordinary people are what bring this message to life.

NO SPECIAL SKILLS REQUIRED
More in Common groups were all set up by ordinary people with a wish to bring their community together and learn along the way.

HELP IS AT HAND
At every step of your group’s development, support is on hand from The Jo Cox Foundation. We’ll be offering training and learning opportunities, and events to bring the network together. We’re only a phone call away when you want to talk through your plans.

CHOOSE YOUR SCOPE
More in Common groups come in many forms, from casual neighbourhood forums to fully constituted charities. You can choose the scope of your group depending on what you want to achieve (small is often beautiful!).

BUILD LOCAL CONNECTIONS
Setting up or joining a More in Common group is a great way to build new connections across your community. You’ll get to know neighbours you may never have met otherwise and give others the chance to expand their circles too.

JOIN A NATIONAL NETWORK
Through the More in Common network, you can connect with groups across the UK to share ideas and support one another.

More in Common is a young movement that is rapidly growing. Our new groups have a real role to play in shaping its future.
"Celebrating what you have in common with someone [is] about generating a sense of mutual respect, empathy and understanding, and sharing a common goal for a more compassionate community."
What it means to be a More in Common group

Every More in Common group is different, depending on its size, the local area and the wishes of its members. What unites the network is a core set of aims, objectives and values.

**Aims**

To bring people together.

To celebrate all that we have in common.

To promote mutual respect and understanding.

To build a strong community where everyone has a sense of identity and belonging.
Objectives

We recently organised a virtual community service, reaching out to people from all backgrounds, and connecting them with others they had never met—people who on paper seemed ‘different’ to them in some way. We had many different faiths and beliefs represented—Hindu, Jain, Christian, Pagan, Jewish, Humanist, Islamic, Sikh, Druid, Baha’i, Spiritualist, Buddhist and many others! The event included music, poetry, and an ‘act of commitment’ involving over 70 people expressing a ‘more in common’ message.

Celebrating what you have in common with someone isn’t just about you liking the same type of music or supporting the same football team; it’s about generating a sense of mutual respect, empathy and understanding, and sharing a common goal for a more compassionate community.

Hafeezah Soni
More in Common Batley & Spen

#1: We hold events and run projects that bring people together and focus on all that we have in common.
We have always been able to provide free food at our Great Get Togethers, thanks to donations from our local Rotary club, and others. This year’s donation meant we could provide lunches to a local care home, a hospice and a group supporting vulnerable children.

As a thank you to the Rotary Club, I have volunteered to help with their Christmas float. That would be my advice— that to get people involved it is important to build relationships and work together. Giving back is such an important part of spreading the “more in common” message.

Laura Bevan
More in Common Halton

#2: We work collaboratively with other local groups to promote More in Common values, by providing skill and goodwill to support their initiatives.
"We became More in Common Darlington after meeting the group in Batley & Spen- we were so inspired by their enthusiasm! It was tremendous to think that More in Common could become a nationwide network.

Peer support is such a big thing- it keeps us going, and has helped us to make important changes, like boosting our following on social media. Rather than going at it alone, we really feel we’re part of a movement of people with a shared vision for our communities."

Peter Greenwood
More in Common Darlington
Values

A More in Common group embodies the following values:

- **Respect.** We value everyone’s right to their own identity and beliefs. We try to avoid conflict by promoting helpful ways to explore differences.

- **Humanity.** We believe that whatever the differences between us, our shared experience as human beings provides ample common ground.

- **Inclusion.** Our groups actively make sure everyone within the community feels able and encouraged to participate.

- **Equality.** We value the opinions and contributions of everyone within the movement equally, no matter their status or background.

- **Kindness.** We work to benefit others and build compassionate communities for the long-term.

“Giving back is such an important part of spreading the “more in common” message.”
WE’VE GOT MORE IN COMMON
Setting up a More in Common group

If you’re thinking of setting up a More in Common group in your area, we’re here to help! The guide below provides some tips from our More in Common groups to help you get started.

Decide your scope
How big you want your group to be depends on what you want to achieve—keeping it small can help to have a bigger impact locally, but you may also want to consider the diversity of the area you cover.

The scope of your group may naturally change as it develops, but it’s worth thinking about from the start as it will help you decide your group’s name.

What’s going on locally?
Finding out what’s already going on in the community will help you to avoid duplication, support the good things already happening locally and identify natural allies for your group.

Even if you know your neighbourhood well, by doing some local research, you’re likely to meet others already active in your community. These people may well be able to support you with their experience and local connections and could become some of your first group members.

Find your first members
Your first group members might include friends or neighbours (who genuinely share your aspirations) and local ‘allies’. It’s important to have a few key people from the outset to ensure there is a core group and the responsibility is shared.

At this stage, it’s also important to think about the diversity of your community. For example, if you hope to bring together people of different faiths in the area, it’s a good idea to reflect this in your core membership.

If it’s difficult to reflect the whole community right from the start, don’t worry—having in mind who’s missing will give you a focus for growing your group.
We understand that it’s a big step to start a new community group, and our team is here to support you at every stage.

Whether it’s a chat about whether to set up a group, or advice on partnerships and funding, there’s always support available from the Jo Cox Foundation team.

Once you’re ready you’ll receive your More in Common logo, be asked to connect with other groups in the network, and register your More in Common group with the Jo Cox Foundation.

Find out more:
Get in touch at communities@jocoxfoundation.org
Or contact Emily, our Communities Manager on 07477 878241

More in Common Video: https://youtu.be/kz1JPm-s38k