

# GROUP GUIDE



[younggreens.org.uk](http://younggreens.org.uk)



Young Greens

# SETTING UP A YOUNG GREENS SOCIETY



Young Greens societies get involved in many different types of activities across the country and they vary quite a lot in what they get up to. Before you get started, think about what you want to achieve and how best you can do this.

## WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY?

- Do you want to focus primarily on electoral campaigning or would you rather hold a more informal political discussion group?
- Is a campaigning society focusing on issues such as pay inequality what you want to see, or are you more interested in hosting speakers and film screenings?
- Or are all of these and more the sort of thing you want to be doing as a society?

All of these are great, but it is good to be clear on exactly what the society you're setting up is going to do!

## PLAN! PLAN! PLAN!

This is possibly the most important piece of advice that can be given to someone trying to set up a Young Greens group! It is vital that you take some time to sit down and properly think through how you are going to build a really great society:

- Make sure you have events, meetings and socials planned before you start advertising the society to new members.
- Double check what day meetings for similar societies are and try to avoid clashes as much as possible.
- Think through how often and how regularly you wish to hold meetings.

Planning through things like this will make everything run a lot more smoothly, help you attract more members and keep them involved.

## YOUR LOCAL PARTY

Getting in touch with the Green Party is like discovering a whole new world of proactive support and ideas, so why not make yourselves known to the local party? You can find them at [greenparty.org.uk/find-your-local-party](http://greenparty.org.uk/find-your-local-party) or by calling the national Party Office 020 7272 4474.

When contacting your local party, explain what support you'd find useful for them to provide and also what you can offer them in return.

Local parties can offer you support in setting up your society (including putting you in touch with other local Young Greens), providing ideas for speakers and campaigns, and dates for social outings. Perhaps your group could adopt a local ward and help out with campaign there, or offer to book free rooms for local party events.

## STUDENT SOCIETIES

If you are looking for people to help you set up the society or ways that you can publicise your first meeting, try talking to people who run or active in other like-minded societies such as People & Planet, Oxfam or environmental societies. Often you'll find that there will be some really friendly and useful people in these groups.

## GET SUPPORT

The national Young Greens can also help by providing a list of local Young Greens, sending resources, putting you in contact with other Young Green societies, and giving tips. Just email [admin@younggreens.org.uk](mailto:admin@younggreens.org.uk) or call us on 020 7549 0309.

## CONTACT YOUR STUDENT UNION

It's vital that you speak to your student union when you're in the process of setting up your Young Greens society. There will most likely be a lot of rules and regulations about societies in your union which you'll need to find out about. Key questions:

1. Is there a minimum number of members and/or a minimum membership charge you need to have in order for your society to be affiliated to your SU?
2. How many members does a committee need to have? Are there any roles that are required for that committee e.g. President, Secretary, Treasurer?
3. How do societies apply to have a stall at Freshers' Fair, and how do you book rooms for meetings and events?

Your student union should also be able to give your society lots of support once it's off the ground. Here are some things you'll want to find out:

1. What resources are available to you? E.g. pigeonhole, storage room, phone, computer, printer, projectors etc for meetings and talks.
2. Are there email or webspace facilities for societies? Find out how to set one up if you don't have one already.
3. What are the 'poster regulations' on your campus? Is there a notice-board that you can use to advertise the group in the Union?
4. How can you contact the student newspaper? If you want to start a newsletter, they'll be able to give you good pointers and useful information.
5. How do you put motions through your Union's meetings / AGM? What are the dates and deadlines, and what can you propose/ask for?
6. Who are the sabbaticals and important permanent staff at the Union? They will be key contacts for you. Find out which committees are directly relevant to matters that affect you and how to feed into them.
7. What are the sources of funding available and how can you apply for them? You may have to have a Treasurer of the group in order to qualify and deal with the financial side of student groups.
8. Is there extra 'hidden funding' available for special events like conferences? You may be able to get extra funding by putting forward motions at the Union meetings.
9. Is there any training offered for societies on how to run meetings, how to publicise your activities, or equality and diversity?

GETTING STARTED

# PUTTING ON A FAB FRESHERS' FAIR



Freshers' Fairs are the ideal time to recruit new members, raise the profile of your Young Greens group and get names on petitions/email lists. So it is worth going to the extra effort to make a really big impact on people, especially since there will be strong competition from other societies and groups.

## 8 EASY TIPS FOR PLANNING A STALL

- 1 Make sure that you book a stall at the Fair well in advance. Contact your Union or sabbatical officers to find out how and do it as soon as possible.
- 2 Do you have any choice in the location of the stall? Try to be facing the entrance, with wall space to put up posters or banners.
- 3 Plan your first meeting and social of the term before the Freshers' Fair. You can then give details and directions to them at the Fair so that people know where you meet and can see that there will be an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other formally and informally.
- 4 Plan a programme of events for the first term, so that you can tell people about the plans you have, ideally by giving them a small printed flyer.
- 5 Hold a briefing meeting before the Fair to make sure the people staffing the stall know what to do and are up to date.
- 6 Make your stall as visible and audible as possible. For example, you could make a banner which you can attach to your table or the walls nearby, and if possible, find a tablecloth – preferably green!
- 7 Can you get hold of anything to give away, such as Green Party pens or Fairtrade chocolate or tea and coffee? Avoid unsustainable, useless products like flashing LEDs embedded in bouncy balls!
- 8 If possible, prepare a display of photos or posters from previous events to show the sort of things your group does. This can work really well as a slideshow on a laptop on your stall.

## WHO CAN HELP?

- If possible, ask the advice of the people who ran the Freshers' Fair last year, so that you can learn from their experience. Are there previous members of the group who could come back and help?
- Get as many people to help you as possible. Do you have friends or contacts in the Local Party who could spare some time?
- Contact the Young Greens' National Committee on [admin@younggreens.org.uk](mailto:admin@younggreens.org.uk). We will do what we can to help.

## THINGS TO DO AT YOUR FRESHERS' FAIR

-  Have people at the door distributing flyers and directing people to the stall, if possible. Make sure they're friendly but not too pushy!
-  Ask sympathetic societies to put some flyers on their stalls e.g. Amnesty, People & Planet, etc. You can do the same in return.
-  Staff the stall with people who can answer questions about your group, the Young Greens, and the Green Party. Make sure they know how to find information like plans for the year, when and where the first meeting is, etc.
-  Never sit behind your stall - stand in front of it to draw people in. Choose people to run the stall who have the most bounce and enthusiasm!
-  Get contact details from anyone who is interested in the stall – even if they don't join immediately. Use the contact sheet supplied and have a ready supply of pens! Please also send the contact sheet information to us on [admin@younggreens.org.uk](mailto:admin@younggreens.org.uk)
-  Give people the chance to join the Green Party on the spot. Collect in completed joining forms with £5 (student rate) in cash or cheques, and send them in yourself to The Green Party, 56-64 Leonard Street, Development House, London, EC2A 4LT or using the Freepost address on the form.
-  Do interesting stuff – play a game or have alternative technology on the stall (wind up radio, bike, etc) to grab attention and make people talk!



FRESHERS' FAIRS

# HOLDING A GREAT FIRST MEETING



Students may join many societies in the first week of term, but realistically only have time to contribute to one or two groups. The first few meetings are therefore crucial to generate and maintain the interest of new members.

## TIPS FOR PLANNING YOUR FIRST MEETING

1. Don't do it alone - get one or two others to help you plan and facilitate the first meeting.
2. Plan the meeting before the Freshers' Fair so you can let people know about it on the day. Have a flyer to give them or, even better, why not stamp the meeting date onto their hand?
3. Work out the best time and place to hold a meeting. Speak to other similar societies so you can avoid any clashes, and make sure the venue is available for future meetings as well as being accessible. Try to avoid times of religious or cultural importance so as not to restrict access to your group from certain demographics, or places like pubs that may not be suitable for all.
4. Advertise your meeting as widely as possible with flyers and posters in the Students' Union and other popular places. Don't forget that Freshers don't know their way around as well as you might do, so on the day put up clear posters guiding people to the meeting!
5. Using all those lovely contact details you gathered at your Freshers' Fair, make sure you email or (better still) phone everyone to encourage new people to come along ahead of the meeting.

## GET THERE EARLY!

Get there at least 20 mins early so you have time to prepare and to set up the space to be welcoming. Have a couple of existing members on 'meet and greet' duty so that new people have someone friendly to talk to when they arrive.

## WRITE AN AGENDA

Write up an agenda for the meeting and explain it at the start so everyone knows what to expect. Make sure you allow lots of time for introductions, so new people can get to know you and the group, and each other. You want people to talk to each other!

## GET CONTACT DETAILS

Pass a contact sheet around at the first meeting to get every attendee's name, number, email and address so you can add them to your society's mailing list. Try to remember faces and names!

## KEEP THINGS RELEVANT

You're much more likely to retain members if you are able to keep everything you are talking about directly relevant to them. Demonstrate what they will get out of your society and how it will benefit them and enhance their University experience. Will they pick up new skills, friends, career opportunities?

## GET NEW IDEAS

Plan in some time at the meeting to get an idea of what new members would like to do with the group - i.e. direct action or inviting speakers, or both! Sum up succinctly at the end, so everyone knows what to expect and to do next.

## BE SHORT & SOCIABLE

Keep the first meeting short and go for a drink afterwards. People stay involved in activism because they make friends and have lots of fun. Why not invite everyone to a house party?

## ON THE DAY...

### RUN AN ICEBREAKER

This is a nice, quick and easy way to make everyone at the meeting feel more comfortable in talking and contributing. The relatively silly and trivial ones tend to work best as they don't put people under too much pressure. Asking everyone to say their name, course and favourite biscuit or vegetable is widely used and a good way to learn people's names!

### EXPLAIN YOUR SOCIETY

Having a BRIEF presentation or talk with pictures and videos of what you have been up to in previous years is a great idea to give people a vision of what sort of things they could get up to with your society. Try to keep this as varied as possible to appeal to different people.

### PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Try to have a handful of events planned in advance e.g. socials, a speaker event, film screenings, campaign workshops, direct action, or anything more creative you can think to throw in! It can be helpful to set out a provisional programme for the term, but make sure you are still open to ideas and campaigns that new members would like to pursue.

### THE YOUNG GREENS

There will be some students who signed up at your Freshers' stall without knowing that the Young Greens is part of the Green Party or that the Green Party has an ever growing youth branch that is rapidly becoming a strong national network. A brief introduction

to both organisations, inviting questions afterwards, should be enough to explain what it is a potential new member will be a part of.

### FAIR PAY CAMPAIGN

One of the most attractive features of Young Greens' societies is that we run our own national campaign on campuses all across the country. Going through what this constitutes will engage a lot of new members interested in making a difference at their new university. If you are already running a Fair Pay Campus campaign, tell them about what you have done so far and show any successes you may have had. There is more information available at [fairpaycampus.co.uk](http://fairpaycampus.co.uk)

#### THE FAIR PAY CAMPAIGN

Is your group running the Young Greens' Fair Pay Campus campaign?



At 15:1, the Higher Education sector has the highest ratio between lowest and highest paid workers in the public sector.

Many of our student groups run our national Fair Pay Campus campaign, calling for a 10:1 pay ratio between the highest and lowest paid workers on university campuses.

Get in touch to find out how we can support you to lobby your Vice Chancellor to sign up to become a Fair Pay campus.

FIRST MEETING

# GETTING & KEEPING GROUP MEMBERS



Getting members is one thing, but keeping them interested is quite different! Here are a few tips to show you how to keep people engaged in your group.

## RECRUIT AT EVENTS

Recruiting at regular meetings is not always the most efficient way to attract newcomers. People join an organisation that is action orientated and fun to be involved with, so use opportunities like events and stunts to get people's contact details.

## BE VISIBLE AND ACTIVE

Keep a high profile around campus by organising events such as rousing speakers, festivals, demos, film-nights, fair trade fairs or even an ethical careers fair. Collaborate with other groups on events of mutual interest, to reach out to the wider audience and come into contact with similar people.

## DON'T IGNORE PEOPLE

Make new members feel included the minute they walk through the door, and give a good overview of what's going on. Avoid inside jokes! Make it clear to them how they could become actively involved, but carefully avoid overwhelming them.

## EXPLAIN EVERYTHING

Some people can be put off from getting involved in political societies due to the perception that they will expect everyone to have a developed understanding of the issues being looked at. Don't assume anything and try to make sure that everyone is clear what is being talked about at meetings.

## SO YOU'VE GOT MEMBERS - NOW KEEP THEM!

- Make sure everyone feels involved and useful within the group's activities, and has a role that fits their capabilities and liking. Let members control their own commitment – no one likes feeling trapped! Be open to new suggestions and challenges – people rise to their own challenges better.
- Keep meetings short and allow plenty of time for socialising. Sometimes a social event such as dinner together can be more productive than a meeting!
- Make your meetings well-organised. Do a round of introductions at the start, and prepare an agenda for the meeting, including something fun. Keep minutes of discussions, with names and deadlines for each action point.
- Ask for feedback on the group's activities and the meetings. Always ask newcomers as first impressions are often frank!
- Change the content of meetings to keep things interesting – different activities such as talks, videos, discussions, canvassing, community actions etc all make for exciting times!
- Set realistic targets for what you want to achieve through the year. Don't worry if you don't fit in everything you'd planned.
- Show gratitude for the effort that people put into the group and celebrate your successes, both in your group and by publicising them on campus.

## IDEAS FOR YOUR GROUP

It's vital to keep people interested. If meetings just seem like a talking shop with little actually happening, people will rapidly lose interest. Keep up the momentum by holding regular events and group activities. Here are a few ideas:

### GET A SPEAKER

Inspire, educate and provoke with a speaker. Try inviting speakers from NGOs and think-tanks like Greenpeace or the New Economics Foundation, or how about an elected local or national Party member?

### HOST A FILM SHOWING

There are loads of political films and activist documentaries out there - check online or your uni library for things like the Age of Stupid, The Corporation, or Just Do It. You should be able to book any equipment needed through your SU.

### CAMPAIGN FOR FAIR PAY

Many of our student groups run our national Fair Pay Campus campaign, calling for a 10:1 pay ratio between the highest and lowest paid workers on university campuses. It's a great way to engage members and achieve real change at your university.

### RUN A READING GROUP

Get informed and make friends at the same time. Choose a chapter of a book to read in advance, then discuss over Fairtrade wine or hot chocolate. Your discussion is bound to generate loads of ideas for campaigns and actions. For inspiration, check out [econowhat.org.uk](http://econowhat.org.uk)

### GET IN THE PRESS

Student papers are often crying out for articles so it's usually easy to persuade them to let you have a column to get your views across. Contact us on [press@younggreens.org.uk](mailto:press@younggreens.org.uk) for support.

### ORGANISE A GROUP TRIP

There's no better way to bond with the rest of your group than by organising a weekend away, from a sustainable camping trip to a visit to Cornwall's the Eden Project. Use your society budget to pay for it, or you may even be able to get extra funding from your SU.

### LOBBY YOUR MP

It's easy to feel frustrated with democracy in this country, so why not take it out on your elected rep?! M(E)Ps and councillors have regular surgeries in which they'll listen to whatever issue is bugging you, or if you're shy, write to them via [writetothem.com](http://writetothem.com)

### ETHICAL CAREERS FAIR

Organise an ethical careers fair to point students to jobs that don't harm people or the planet. It takes a lot of organising, so start early by booking a venue for your chosen date, and get your SU on board. Leave plenty of time to invite exhibitors, like NGOs, volunteering organisations, renewable energy providers, etc.

RUNNING A GROUP

# HOW TO... LET EVERYONE KNOW!



So you've organised an event, action or meeting. But you need to let people know about it! Publicity is the key. There is no point putting loads of time and effort into organising an action, event or meeting unless you publicise it widely. You can never do enough of it, and you will always need to do more of it than you think!

## BEFORE THE EVENT...

### TELL THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER FLYER, FLYER, FLYER

If your student or local newspaper has a diary section, then tell them about your event. Include the date, time, place and a short, snappy description. Don't forget to leave a contact!

### WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

If you want press coverage, then send the relevant people a press release. Make sure you include a quote from some one in your group and tailor it for student or local media. Get support by emailing [press@younggreens.org.uk](mailto:press@younggreens.org.uk)

### CONTACT YOUR LOCAL RADIO

Often universities have a student radio – so get them to mention your event at popular times throughout the week before.

### PUT UP LOADS OF POSTERS!

It is very difficult competing for attention and space amongst the hundreds of posters that get put up each week on campuses. Try to develop a 'brand' of poster that is recognisable as a Young Green poster, using our logo and colours.

Make sure you know the uni rules on postering around campus – you don't want to put lots up and then find they've all been taken down because they are not in 'the right place' (of course, those places often make more of an impact because no other posters are there, so if you have time and don't mind re-posting and re-posting...).

Flyers are easy to make from reduced size posters. Make sure they are legible and have the important information on them (time, date, place etc). Distribute them in the student union and outside lectures where you'd expect to generate interest.

### ORGANISE A PUBLICITY STUNT

Do what you can to draw attention to yourselves: dress up as Santa, borrow a megaphone, make a banner, climb trees, go naked, wear ginger beards, hold a stall, organise a bed in... Tell the press too.

### PHONE & EMAIL

Email your members with details of the event, and encourage them to forward details to friends. Also email coordinators of other societies, who may publicise your events among their members. Make sure emails are not too big in size (no attachments), and convert well into plain text, in case email programmes de-format them accidentally. Phone as many members as you can.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

The national Young Greens as well as many local and student Young Greens groups have Facebook groups or pages and Twitter accounts. Use these to plug what you're up to:

[facebook.com/younggreens](https://www.facebook.com/younggreens)  
[twitter.com/younggreenparty](https://twitter.com/younggreenparty)

## AT THE EVENT...

- Make sure you have lots of posters up on the day to help guide people to events that may be hard to find.
- If the press turn up, have a quick quote up your sleeve and get a good photo.
- Take photos to preserve memories of what happened to tell your grandkids, and as useful material for advertising the group in the future!
- Hand round a sign-up sheet to get new people's names and contact details.
- The Young Greens will always be very grateful for images of events - please email them to [admin@younggreens.org.uk](mailto:admin@younggreens.org.uk)



## AFTER THE EVENT...

- Try to clean up the posters and recycle or reuse them if possible. Remember that blu-tac can be reused many times.
- Remember to thank attending speakers and guests and find out if they enjoyed it and found it useful.
- Email anyone who signed up at the event to welcome them to your society and let them know about the next opportunity for them to get involved.
- Put up some of the best photos and a quick write-up on your website, if you have one.

PUBLICITY



**The Young Greens are the youth  
and student branch of  
the Green Party.**

We organise within and beyond the Green Party to empower young people to work for genuine, lasting political change.

Young Greens seek to combine principled actions and campaigning within our communities with electoral politics.

We want to harness the energy and ideas of young people, moving society towards a sustainable and just future.

*If you're a member of the Green Party and under 30 or a student, you can join the Young Greens.*

**younggreens.org.uk**

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