GETTING STARTED WITH TIME CREDITS:

THE HANDBOOK
Welcome!

You feel appreciated; it means that the couple of hours you've given up of your time, it's meant something to somebody.

Community member

How to use the Handbook

This Handbook will support you to set up and use Time Credits in your organisation or group.

To start using Time Credits you need to go through the steps in the checklist on Page 4. Each step in the checklist has supporting information in this Handbook or additional resources or tools you can use, which will be provided separately by your Local Time Credits Facilitator.

If you have any questions about the Handbook or resources, please contact your Local Facilitator.
This simple checklist will help you to work through the stages of setting up your Time Credits programme. Write in the date when you plan to complete the action, and tick off stages once they are completed.

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<th>Action</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<td>1. Complete the Expression of Interest form</td>
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<td>2. Sign the Community Partnership Agreement</td>
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<td>3. Identify the senior staff member who will be the strategic lead for Time Credits in your organisation</td>
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<td>4. Identify your day to day Time Credits lead — responsible for administration and bringing Time Credits into activities</td>
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<td>5. Spread the Word! Explain Time Credits to staff, service users and volunteers and get their input</td>
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<td>6. Map your assets and resources</td>
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<td>7. Earning and Spending activities</td>
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<td>8. Ready to go! Hold a launch activity where people can earn and spend</td>
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<td>9. Complete administration and monitoring</td>
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<td>10. Evaluation - help us collect data to measure impact</td>
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<td>11. Review &amp; Grow! Ensure Time Credits are helping you achieve your vision, and work together with your community to create more meaningful opportunities for more people to get involved with earning and spending</td>
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TIME CREDIT ROLES

These are the roles that need to be filled within your organisation or group. They could all be done by one person, but for Time Credits to become sustainable we recommend having at least two people with some responsibility. Fill in the name of the person who will undertake each role below.

3. Strategic lead Responsibilities:
- Driving the direction of Time Credits within your organisation
- Ensuring staff are aware of Time Credits and how they fit into the organisation and their roles
- Driving growth of Time Credit programme and integration across the organisation
- Liaising with Time Credits Facilitator around direction and progress of programme.

Person responsible:

4. Day-to-day lead Responsibilities:
- Ensuring Time Credits are earned and spent in activities, and supporting other staff to do this too
- Ensuring administration and reporting is completed and returned to Local Time Credits Facilitator
- Providing Time Credits and relevant paperwork to other staff who give out or take in Time Credits.

Person responsible:

What having time credits personally has meant…It’s opened up new opportunities to me. It’s opened up social avenues – I’ve now got a group of ‘nodding acquaintances’ at the gym, which helps you to anchor yourself, to anchor your place in society, and your sense of identity.

Community member
5. SPREADING THE WORD

The Introduction to Time Credits leaflet gives you all the basic info about Time Credits and you can use this to let people know what it’s all about. Spice also have more communications resources that you can use to spread the word and ensure community members, service users and staff are aware of the programme. Your Local Facilitator can provide you with materials or templates, which include:

Flyers and posters
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are Time Credits?**

   Time Credits are a way of rewarding people for volunteering in their local community. They are a form of currency that can be spent on activities or goods that benefit everyone.

2. **How do I earn Time Credits?**

   People earn Time Credits by volunteering for activities that benefit their local community. They can earn credits for tasks like cleaning, gardening, or helping out at a community event.

3. **How do I spend Time Credits?**

   Time Credits can be spent on things that benefit everyone, like community projects, or on things that help individuals, like personal training or education.

4. **How do we get the Time Credit notes?**

   We provide an easy-to-use form for organisations to request more Time Credit notes to distribute to their volunteers.

5. **What happens to the information you collect?**

   We collect data on earning and spending so we can monitor the growth and progress of the Network.

6. **What are the benefits of using Time Credits?**

   Using Time Credits helps to encourage people to volunteer and rewarded them for their hard work. It also helps to create a sense of community and involvement in local projects.

7. **What about the safety of personal data?**

   We do not share any personal data with anyone else. We ask individuals to fill in a membership form when they earn their first Time Credit.

8. **What limitations are there?**

   No limitations. A person might only ever earn one credit, or they may earn them infrequently, or as often as they are able. They will need to fill out a membership form the first time they earn a credit so that we can start to build a picture of the different people earning Time Credits in the community.

9. **How do we support people to volunteer if they have complex needs?**

   We are working with a wide range of organisations to develop ways that people can participate, and we ensure that opportunities for earning and spending credits are available to everyone.

10. **What’s the answer to ‘can we still take part?’**

    The answer is ‘yes’. However, we do ask you to make a commitment to thinking about how you might accept Time Credits. We’ll help you to link the development of spending to your organisational objectives, and build it into current projects or future plans. You could accept credits for events or activities you currently charge for, such as tickets to a school concert, or entry to an existing fundraising event, or something new led by volunteers earning credits. You can control the number of people who can use their Time Credits at an activity or event by limiting the Time Credit places available. You can also work in partnership with other Time Credit partners to meet your specific needs.

11. **How can we handle mixed groups?**

    Time Credits are a tool for broadening inclusion so anyone can take part in anything that is appropriate regardless of age or disability.
6. MAPPING YOUR ASSETS AND RESOURCES

To identify the opportunities for your Time Credits programme, the starting point is all the assets you have in your group, community or service.

Map your assets

These should include:

• People’s skills, interests, knowledge, talents and experience
• Physical resources such as rooms, outside spaces and equipment
• ‘Intangible’ assets – for example, your networks, your reputation or the knowledge you have of an area or community.

Involve your volunteers, service users and staff in identifying all the resources available to you. Think about how they are used at the moment and new ways they could be used, to identify possible Time Credit earning and spending opportunities.

Asset Mapping Activities

Mapping assets can be done in different ways.

You can run a creative workshop where you ask people to write ideas on post its or shapes and create something spectacular:

You can use an asset mapping sheet to help people think through the different types of asset that exist:

Or you can just have a group conversation and make a list…but we always find something colourful helps people get thinking!

Spice Support

Spice can help you to map out your assets. We’ll work with your service users or community members & staff to identify people’s skills, abilities and interests and help co-develop earning and spending opportunities. We usually do this through fun, creative, interactive workshops or open events.
Once you’ve mapped your assets, you can use them to identify earn and spend activities.

To do this, think about the following.

### Earning activities

- How do people give their time now?
- Are there any activities that need more support?
- Could people who participate in an activity help run or lead it?
- Do service users or volunteers support staff to deliver activities?
- What resources could be used differently – e.g. creating a vegetable patch or flower bed in an under-used open space, or setting up activity sessions in an empty room?
- What untapped potential is there among your service users or community – e.g. skills and time that could be shared with others or talents that others would benefit from?
- What could people do that supports your vision – e.g. if your organisation aims to increase independence, what earning activities would support this, such as befriending or supporting people to access local services?

### Examples of Earning activities

- Service users or volunteers sitting on staff interview panels or decision making committees
- Running or helping with activities:
  - teaching dance, art & craft, exercise, gardening, language or other classes
  - making and displaying advertising posters
  - helping plan activities, perhaps on a committee
  - preparing activity spaces for use, or helping with refreshments
  - sharing skills or experiences either 1-1 or with a group, from reading or budgeting to conversation to showing someone around a service or new town
  - cooking or preparing food for group social activities or communal meals
- Sharing personal experiences to help inform service development, advocating on behalf of other service users or community members – acting as an ‘Expert by Experience’
- As a peer supporter, in a group or on a 1-1/ buddying basis
- Giving time to help maintain or improve the physical environment, e.g. park clean ups, litter picks, painting & decorating, gardening

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**Disclaimers:**

- People are starting to recognise that we really value their skills...One mum came in specifically for time credits because she wanted to use [the gym]. The Time Credits meant that she kept coming back and now she’s now gone onto to get a job as a cook at one of our centres.

  Children’s Centre Manager

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  Children’s Centre Manager
Community Spending activities

• What existing activities, trips and services that people access could be used as spending activities? If they are paid for, you can run them as dual currency, cash and Time Credits.

• Do you have any activities that are underused? Even if they are free to access at the moment, could you charge a small fee? Often charging for an activity can make it more desirable to people.

• Could you add a VIP area or experience to a free activity, e.g. front row seats at a school play?

• What new activities, trips or services that people want to access could you develop with the resources you have identified?

• What physical resources could you allow access to with credits e.g. room or garden hire?

• What skills or abilities are there among your service users or community members that people could access with Time Credits – e.g. IT skill sharing or arts/sewing groups?

• What could people access that supports your vision – e.g. if you support people to become more physically healthy, could you set up a walking group or dance lessons?

Examples of Community Spending activities

Social and group activities, such as
• Film nights
• Coffee mornings
• Pamper evenings
• Seasonal events eg Halloween or Easter parties, summer BBQs

Classes or taster sessions, such as
• IT (computer) lessons
• Art classes
• Exercise or dance classes
• Bingo

Access to facilities, such as
• Room hire
• Skittle lane use
• Use of snooker tables or games facilities
• Sports facility hire e.g. sports pitch or court
• Pitches at car boot sales
• DVD or CD hire

Access to entertainment, such as
• Music nights or concerts
• Plays
• VIP areas at public events eg school plays or fireworks nights

Trips. These can be to:
• places in the Spending Menu but with additional transport provided and accessed with Time Credits
• free attractions eg national parks or to go shopping
• paid for attractions, funded through existing budgets or additional fundraising

Parents are now running sessions rather than just attending so the time credits have encouraged them to take more responsibility. They are delivering the service alongside us!

Children’s Centre Manager
Once you’ve identified your starting points, just go for it! Actually handing out your first Time Credits can sometimes feel a bit daunting, but it’s the best way to find out what works.

A good way of getting started is to hold or build on an event where plenty of people can earn credits. This could be:

- A celebration event e.g. a party or fete
- A fundraising or awareness raising event e.g. a seasonal fair or festival
- A service user forum or meeting
- A grounds clear-up or garden maintenance activity.

Straight after your first earning activity, it’s a good idea to provide a spending activity as soon as possible, to encourage people to spend their credits. This is very helpful for people who may find the idea of time Credits harder to understand, or who are less likely to try new spending activities. This spending activity might be:

- A group trip to somewhere in the local Time Credits Brochure, e.g. a local leisure centre or entertainment venue
- A spending activity at your organisation e.g. a coffee morning, group meal or pamper session.

HELPING PEOPLE TRY NEW ACTIVITIES

Spending Time Credits at local businesses and leisure services can offer great benefits to people who earn Time Credits, and could be their reason for getting involved in Time Credits in the first place. However, many people often need support to begin spending at new places due to access, confidence and other barriers, and we work with organisations and groups to do this. This might be through:

- Organising group trips or arranging transport (this could form part of Community Spend)
- Raising awareness of opportunities that people may not have thought would interest them
- Exploring barriers to spending and working with spending partners to address these
- Developing peer support or befriending so people don’t have to go alone
- Identifying new spending opportunities that people want.

TIME CREDITS HAVE HELPED ME TO REGAIN SOME SORT OF COMMUNITY LIFE. THIS TIME LAST YEAR I WAS TOO AFRAID TO GO OUTSIDE ON MY OWN AND KNEW NOONE IN MY LOCAL AREA.

Community member
We keep administration as light as possible so you can focus on action, but there is some information that must be collected and returned to your Local Facilitator on a regular basis to help us report on activity and keep programmes running locally. The type of information we ask for includes:

• Member contact details
• Equal opportunities data
• Number of credits issued through earning activities
• Number of credits collected through spending activities.

Our recommendations for administration are:

• Each organisation has one lead person responsible for administration and monitoring
• The lead person gives out notes and forms to everyone who is running a Time Credits activity, who then collect the information from that activity and passing it back to the lead.

We do not share any personal information about Time Credits members with anyone else.

Spice Support
Spice provides training and support to make sure organisations are comfortable with administration and reporting. Copies of all the necessary forms and spreadsheet will be provided by your Locality Facilitator.
TIME CREDITS
ADMINISTRATION PROCESS

1. MEMBERSHIP AND CONSENT FORMS
1.1 Complete Membership form and equal opportunities data for each member
1.2 Complete Consent for photography and case studies form for participants if you take photos of them or tell us about their experiences

2. EARNING TIME CREDITS
2.1 Complete Activity: Earning form for each activity where people are earning Time Credits
2.2 Give out Time Credits to each participant at the end of the activity

3. SPENDING TIME CREDITS
3.1 Complete Activity: Spending form for each activity which people have spent Time Credits
3.2 Collect in Time Credits and reissue to earners or hand back to your Local Facilitator
Spice is developing a website to support Time Credits earning, spending and administration. We will support organisations to switch over to this system when the time is right.
10. EVALUATION

Time Credits are a tool for transforming communities and we want to make sure that programmes are making a difference to local people. An independent evaluation team has developed a framework to help us measure the impact of Time Credits on the following areas:

- **Individuals**
  - improving quality of life and well-being

- **Organisations**
  - higher quality services and better value for money

- **Communities**
  - greater sense of community

We use a range of approaches as well as the administration forms to measure the success of Time Credits, and hope you will support us to help collect evaluation data.
Once your service users or community members have been earning and spending for some time and you would like to take the programme further, it’s time to review your Time Credits programme. At this point you will revisit your original vision and aims, and assess how well you feel you are moving towards achieving it. You’ll also revisit your mapping of assets and resources – you might be able to add to it, and you can use it to identify where you roll Time Credits out to next. It’s really useful at this point to make sure the people who are earning and spending Time Credits feed into decisions about growth, so they are driving the programme forward with you.

Reviewing your Time Credits programme, and growing it, is an on-going process that will continue as long as you are using Time Credits, to ensure you are staying true to your vision and to help you achieve meaningful change.

A lot of them [service users] don’t consider themselves volunteers. They don’t realise a lot of the time that they’re doing something, so when they get something back... it’s quite inspirational for them. I have done something, and I am worthwhile.

Community Centre manager

Spice Support
Spice will meet with you to review progress and opportunities for growth.

It’s created more of a buzz and excitement amongst residents and there’s been an increase in resident participation.

Supported Housing Skills Coordinator
This chart illustrates the potential impacts of Time Credits for an organisation delivering services. You can use this to assess where you are and where you’re hoping to get to...

1. **Recognise people**
   - Service users recognised for the time they already give to make the service better & to support each other.

2. **Building on abilities and interests of all**
   - More time given by more people in the service or group.
   - Opportunities for everyone to earn and spend internally.
   - Staff and service users collaborate on new activities.
   - Individuals & groups go out together to try new activities and services.
   - People come to spend credits at your organisation or group.

3. **Co-created and Co-delivered services**
   - Time is earned and spent throughout the service.
   - New user led groups form & peer support increases.
   - Service planning is co-produced with service users.
   - Staff increasingly become facilitators and collaborators.
   - Service becomes a venue for the wider community.

**Time Credits Networks**

In addition to support and advice from Spice, you can benefit from the experiences of other organisations and groups that use Time Credits through Spice’s Time Credits networks. In each locality we work in, we bring people using Time Credits together to share ideas and lessons learned and to look at how they might work in partnership.

This has included sharing resources, developing new earning opportunities and holding joint community spend events, such as a bingo night where 3 organisations worked together to provide the venue, equipment, event organisation and volunteers on the day. Your Local Time Credits Facilitator will let you know when these are taking place and we hope you'll come along.
THANK YOU FOR WORKING WITH US TO HELP BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES