

# Are you considering setting up a new Running Group in your local area?

This guidance document will help you to understand the requirements for easily setting up a new group, and what you will need in place to keep you and your runners safe and compliant with any legislation.

## Front Foot

### Being proactive and getting set up in 10 easy steps

So, you want to set up a running group! Let's start with your great idea, you might already have a group of runners that you regularly run with, or you've spotted an opportunity to bring the running culture to your local area. Wherever you are in your journey, here are 10 easy steps that can get you to the start line.

- What will you call yourselves?
- When will you meet?
- Where will you meet?
- Where will you run to?
- How long will you run?
- Who can join you?
- How will they be able to join you?
- Will you charge?
- How much will you charge?
- What type of group will you be (Road, Trail, Multi terrain)?

## Start line

### Are you qualified to lead a group of runners?

Your first step toward leading running sessions is to become trained and qualified through the Leadership in Running Fitness (LiRF) course. This qualification, provided by England Athletics (for those based in England), equips you with the essential skills, knowledge, and insurance to safely and confidently lead fun and inclusive running sessions for adults and young people aged 12 and up.

The LiRF course costs **£200** and includes:

- Four online, self-guided learning modules
- A 90-minute virtual classroom session with group interaction
- Submission of two short videos demonstrating you leading supervised running activities

Through the course, you'll learn how to conduct risk assessments, design appropriate warm-up and cool-down routines, and lead mixed ability running groups. Upon completion, you'll be insured to lead sessions and gain access to RunTogether, which provides helpful tools and resources to support both you and your club.

## Why LiRF matters

Holding a LiRF qualification gives you credibility within your club and ensures you're covered by appropriate insurance in the event of a third-party incident. Without this qualification, you're not insured, and you may not meet the standards expected by most running clubs. While you may hold a general fitness qualification, it's important to ensure your insurance specifically covers running leadership.

The recommended ratio is one Run Leader per 12 runners (1:12). As your club grows, having multiple leaders is good practice - especially to cover for illness, holidays, and to better manage groups with varying abilities and paces.

## Funding support

You may be able to receive funding to cover the course cost. We encourage you to reach out to your local council, England Athletics, or community sport development organisations. You could also explore sponsorship opportunities with local businesses.

For more information or to register for the course, visit: [Leadership in Running Fitness | England Athletics Coaching](#)

## Do you have a platform where you can sign people in and out?

Having a platform to sign runners in and out is important for several reasons. It helps you track how many runners to expect, allowing you to ensure there are enough organisers to comfortably lead the group. It also gives you access to each runner's In Case of Emergency (I.C.E.) details, which is essential for safety. Additionally, a platform can help you monitor your group's growth over time or manage session fees if you choose to charge for attendance.

There are many platforms available, including RunTogether, which is provided for free after completing the LiRF course. RunTogether offers a range of features: it stores I.C.E. details for every runner, integrates with Stripe to enable session payments, allows you to set a maximum number of participants per run, and lets other registered run leaders assist with group administration. It also supports recurring run scheduling and is accessible via both a mobile app and desktop.

## Support when creating your group

Starting a new running group can be challenging, especially in the early stages when you have a vision but aren't quite sure how to bring it to life. That's where being part of the RunTogether network can make a big difference. As a RunTogether member, you have access to Run Leader Mentors who are experienced and passionate individuals who volunteer their time to support new and existing Run Leaders (those who hold a LiRF qualification). These mentors provide free guidance on best practices, particularly tailored to the RunTogether framework, and are there to offer encouragement, answer questions, and help you feel confident as you grow your group. You're not alone - there's a supportive community ready to help you succeed!

## Back Foot

When setting up a new run group, it's natural to encounter challenges along the way. Being aware of these early on can help you build strong foundations and avoid developing habits that could compromise the safety, sustainability, or success of your group. With the right knowledge and good practices in place, you'll be better equipped to navigate potential issues and create a safe, welcoming, and thriving running community.

## Ratio of runners to leaders

It's fantastic to see your group growing - this reflects a thriving community making a real impact locally. As your numbers increase, it's important to maintain a safe and supportive ratio of Run Leaders to runners. The recommended ratio is one Run Leader for every 12 runners. While this is guidance rather than a strict rule, following it helps ensure that different abilities are accommodated, no one is left behind, and there are enough leaders to respond effectively in case of injury or emergencies.

## Insurance

The majority of running clubs protect themselves by being insured, in case of a complaint from a third party, which for example could involve a member of the public being injured or a third-party property is damaged during running club activities. While not legally required, insurance provides important peace of mind in case of unforeseen incidents. The good news is, if you're a qualified Run Leader (holding a LiRF qualification), your run club is covered as long as you hold your runners' I.C.E details and have conducted a risk assessment of your running route beforehand.

## Risk assessed runs

Risk assessing your runs is essential to ensure the safety of all participants. It helps you identify and manage potential hazards such as uneven terrain, traffic, or poor weather, and allows you to adapt your sessions accordingly. It also provides legal protection by demonstrating that you've taken reasonable steps to prevent accidents. Most importantly, it builds trust, showing runners that their well-being is a priority.

## Medical information on Runners / I.C.E

Holding your run club's runners' In Case of Emergency (I.C.E.) details is crucial for their safety. If a medical emergency, injury, or accident occurs during a session, having immediate access to emergency contacts and any relevant medical information allows you to respond quickly and appropriately. I.C.E details are especially important when working with minors or individuals with medical conditions. Having I.C.E details to hand is also necessary to hold valid insurance.

## Age restrictions

With a LiRF qualification, you're permitted to lead runners aged 12 and above. For those under 18, it's essential to follow age-appropriate training guidelines to protect their physical development and avoid overtraining.

For more information on Run Leader qualifications, RunTogether, and setting up a new group, please visit the RunTogether website: [How To Start A Running Group & Run Leader FAQs | RunTogether](#)