

FACTSHEET – CANVA

Canva's free tools make it easy for organisations to create professional-looking posters, social media posts, flyers and simple reports, without design experience. This guide walks you through the Canva essentials (Free Version) so you can produce clear, consistent and engaging visuals for your group or organisation.

Getting Started with Canva (Free Version)

Canva's free plan includes thousands of templates, images, icons and fonts. It's ideal for small charities that need simple, quick designs.

Key things you can do on the free plan:

- Create posters, flyers, social media graphics, presentations and simple reports
- Use free templates, photos, icons and shapes
- Upload your own photos and logos
- Download designs as PNG, JPG or PDF
- Share designs with volunteers or colleagues

Tips for getting started:

- [Create a free account](#) using your group email
- Explore the template library by searching terms like "poster", "Instagram post", "newsletter"
- Save your favourite templates so you can reuse them

Choosing Templates That Work for Your Organisation

Templates help you create designs quickly without starting from scratch. The free version includes plenty of options suitable for community groups.

How to choose a good template:

- Pick a layout that matches your purpose (event poster, announcement, volunteer call-out)
- Look for simple, uncluttered designs
- Choose templates with space for photos if you want to highlight people or activities
- Stick to 2–3 templates you reuse regularly to keep your branding consistent

Examples of useful templates:

- Event posters for workshops or community days
- Social media posts for announcements or volunteering updates
- Flyers for services, drop-ins or support groups

Adding Your Charity's Branding (Without Premium Tools)

Even without Canva Pro, you can still create a consistent look for your organisation.

Simple ways to stay consistent:



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- Use the same colours in every design
- Choose 1–2 fonts and stick to them
- Upload your logo and place it in the same spot each time
- Use similar photo styles (e.g., bright, friendly, community-focused)

Free tools that help:

- Colour picker tool (use your logo colours)
- Free font library
- Uploads folder for logos and photos

Tip: Create one “master template” for your charity and duplicate it each time you need a new design.

Using Photos and Graphics Effectively

Good visuals help people understand your message quickly. Canva’s free version includes many free photos and icons, but you can also upload your own.

Best practices:

- Use real photos of your community work whenever possible
- Keep images bright, positive and relevant
- Avoid overcrowding your design with too many icons or shapes
- Make sure text is easy to read against the background

Examples of effective visuals:

- A volunteer helping at an event
- A group activity or workshop
- A simple icon to highlight key information (e.g., a clock for event times)

Creating Clear, Accessible Designs

Accessibility matters, especially for community groups serving diverse audiences. Canva’s free tools make it easy to keep designs readable.

Accessibility tips:

- Use high-contrast colours (dark text on light backgrounds)
- Keep text large enough to read easily
- Avoid long paragraphs, use short sentences or bullet points
- Leave enough space between elements so the design doesn’t feel crowded

Examples of accessible design choices:

- Using bold headings for key information
- Choosing simple fonts like Arial, Open Sans or Montserrat
- Keeping posters to 3–5 key messages

Saving, Sharing and Reusing Your Designs



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Once your design is ready, Canva makes it easy to download and share.

Download options (free plan):

- PNG – best for social media
- JPG – good for photos or email
- PDF – ideal for printing posters or flyers

Sharing tips:

- Use Canva’s “Share link” to collaborate with volunteers
- Create a folder for your charity’s designs so everything stays organised
- Duplicate past designs to save time and keep your branding consistent

Examples of reusable content:

- Monthly event posters
- Regular social media announcements
- Volunteer recruitment graphics

Learn Canva with Bury VCFA

We run friendly, hands-on group workshops to help you master the basics of Canva. Visit our [training page](#) for upcoming sessions and dates.

If your group needs a little extra support, we also offer 1-to-1 drop-in guidance. Get in touch at: communications@buryvcfa.org.uk

Useful Websites for Learning Canva & Charity Design

These sites offer free tutorials, templates and practical advice:

Canva

- [Canva Design School](#) (free tutorials)
- [Canva Help Centre](#) (step-by-step guides)

Media Trust

- [Resource Hub](#) Free resources and training for charity communications

Few and Far

- [Colour Contract Hub](#) Free colour contrast checker for accessibility for your canva designs.

YouTube

- Search “[Canva for beginners](#)” for simple video walkthroughs



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