

Help With Your Accounts

The type of accounts you'll need to keep depends on the size and type of your organisation. Registered Charities will need to keep detailed accounts in accordance with Charities Commission requirements, whereas small voluntary groups may only need to keep basic details of income, expenditure and cashflow.

! for more information about cashflow and budgets please see the AskBVSC Factsheet number 21

Accounts Software

Many groups keep their accounts in spreadsheet format but templates are hard to find and if mistakes are made it can be difficult to find the mistake. Also, if the person who designed the spreadsheet is unable to work or leaves you may find you are unable to use the spreadsheet. As some organisations get larger they find spreadsheets are no longer suitable to manage their growing accounts.

For these and many other reasons a growing number of organisations use accounts software designed to help organise and manage accounts and finances. Some are designed for businesses in general and some are designed specifically for charities and the voluntary sector. Some packages are very easy to use and only basic accounts knowledge is needed, making them more suitable for smaller groups and some are more suited to larger organisations with a part-time or full-time accounts or finance officer.

! for more information about accounts and book-keeping please see the AskBVSC Factsheet number 22

! Things to think about

- Choose a package that reflects your accountancy skills.
- Look at a variety of software packages rather than just one or two. Ask for demonstration versions so you can see which one is best for you. Test with some realistic figures.
- How much are you prepared to spend?
- Check the pricing options. Most packages only include one licence for one company; if you need more than one licence costs could mount up.
- How much does training and support cost?
- Is the software user friendly? Does it make sense?
- Does the software do what you need it to do?
- Is the software compatible with your computer (ie Mac, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Vista)? Do you need to upgrade your existing computers? How much will this cost?
- Is the software compatible with other software? For example, can you export into Excel or can you import from another package?
- Are you satisfied with the service you got when making initial enquiries? Were they helpful and understanding? Have some difficult and realistic questions ready when making enquiries.
- What kind of training and support is available? Where is it? Some packages have 'local experts' who can help you out.
- Be aware that smaller developers may not be around for the long term!
- Ask for recommendations from other organisations you know.

Prefer an Accountant?

If you prefer to use an Accountant make sure they belong to one of the Chartered Accountancy Institutes. You can check their details at:

- ACCA (Chartered Association of Certified Accountants): www.acca.co.uk
- ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales): www.icaew.co.uk
- ICAS (Institute of Chartered Accountants (Scotland)): www.icas.org.uk
- ICAI (Institute of Chartered Accountants (Ireland)): www.icaei.ie

Make sure the accountant has charity experience as charity requirements are very different from normal business requirements.

! BVSC provides a complete accountancy service starting from £25 + VAT per hour. Contact the Finance Team on 0121 678 8813

Helpful Websites

CASH-online: resources and advice at www.cash-online.org.uk

Finance Hub: tools and guidance on a range of finance and funding issues at www.financehub.org.uk

NCVO Introduction Pack on Funding and Finance
<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=3257>

VolResource – Online Finance Advice, resources, tools and signposting
http://www.volresource.org.uk/main/ind_maf.htm

Charity Commission – Guidance for accounts and finances
<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/>



Disclaimer

Any information contained in this Factsheet does not constitute financial or legal advice. This Factsheet is intended to provide general information only and does not attempt to give you advice that relates to your specific circumstances. You are advised to discuss your specific requirements with an independent financial adviser.

BVSC cannot be held liable for the accuracy of information regarding software packages and neither should their inclusion in this Factsheet be seen as a recommendation. You are advised to thoroughly research and test software packages to ensure they are suitable and meet your requirements before purchasing.

Software Packages

Product	Group Size			Product Cost (1 licence 1 company)	Extra costs (Training/ Support)	Accountancy Knowledge Needed			Comments	
	Website	1-10	10-30			30+	None	Some		Good
<u>Sage50</u>			✓	✓	£600+	£700			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiar to accountants Industry standard
<u>Tasbooks</u>			✓	✓	£128	£85 pa support		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheaper version of Sage. Database based
<u>Zebra Level 1</u>	✓	✓			£48	£48 pa support	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller/easier version of Tasbooks Database based HR, H&S 'bolt ons' at £30 pa
<u>Zebra Level 3</u>		✓	✓		£84	£84 pa support	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller/easier version of Tasbooks – extra functions Database based HR, H&S 'bolt ons' at £30 pa
<u>Cashcall</u>	✓	✓			£120	£45 licences £120 training	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically aimed at charities SORP 2005 compliant Database based Local training
<u>Kashflow</u>	✓	✓			£149	£99 pa	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online accounting – available anywhere, anytime Download reports and spreadsheets Can export to other packages (eg Sage) Sends reminders by email for outstanding invoices
<u>Paxton Charities Accounting</u>		✓	✓		£195	£95 pa			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed specifically for charities – consultation with the Charities Commission Gift Aid/donations analyses and audits SORP 2005 compliant
<u>Do\$H Cashbook</u>	✓	✓			£59	Prices vary	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can export into Excel Integrates with Do\$h Payroll, Invoice and Accounts Network of experts/consultants for support
<u>Quickbooks Simplestart</u>	✓	✓			£39.95	Prices vary	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aimed at very small or new businesses. Has a network of 'experts' for local support
<u>Systematics Accounts</u>		✓	✓		Free	£95		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive, professional suite

Contact Details

Product	Tel	Email	Web
Sage 50	0800 33 66 33		http://www.sage.co.uk
Tasbooks	0800 694 0220	sales@tassoftware.co.uk	http://www.tassoftware.co.uk
Zebra	0845 345 0266	support@zebrazone.co.uk	http://www.zebrazone.co.uk
Cashcall	01902 824044	sales@datadevelopments.co.uk	http://www.datadevelopments.co.uk
Kashflow		support@kashflow.co.uk	http://www.kashflow.co.uk
Paxton Charities Accounting	01234 216666	sales@paxtoncharities.co.uk	http://www.paxtoncharities.co.uk
Do\$h Cashbook	0845 130 3975	info.uk@myob.com	http://www.dosh.co.uk/products
Quickbooks	0845 606 2161		http://www.quickbooks.intuit.co.uk
Systematics	0870 787 9255	charity@systematics.info	http://www.systematics.info