

# Case study

## Feasibility studies

### Aardvark Gardeners Co-operative

#### Social aim

An autonomous therapeutic gardening enterprise, employing people who have had mental health problems.

#### Trading activity

Gardening services to the general public and to social landlords in Oxfordshire.

#### Ownership

A workers co-operative.

#### How Co-operative Futures helped

Co-operative Futures advised Aardvark Gardeners on how to organise as a worker co-operative and all aspects of business planning towards start-up. The feasibility study, being the foundation on which the business planning could take place, started with group sessions where everyone's objectives, experience and motivations for starting a business were discussed. Once it was established that there were common goals and the ability and motivation to achieve them, the next step was to find out if there was a market for a gardening service.

A successful method was to devise a questionnaire to garden owners that could be completed "on the doorstep". Co-operative Futures arranged visits to other social enterprises and worker co-ops so that Aardvark Gardeners could learn from their experiences.

Aardvark Gardeners quickly established that there was a market for their services and have begun to go through the necessary steps to develop the business.

***"Co-operative Futures helped us to ask the right questions about our business idea and we have been able to save time and money in the future by eliminating courses of action now that just would not work."***



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