

Responsibilities of the Management Committee

Every community organisation has a governing body, a group of people which manages its affairs. This is most commonly referred to as the management committee. However your own group may use a different name, such as executive committee or steering group. A very small and informal group may not have a separate committee and, in this case, its entire membership is the governing body. Here we use the term management committee to describe the governing body of any community group. We have included an appendix (page 9) which briefly describes what a management committee is, who sits on it, and what individual members do.

Main responsibilities

The aim of this information sheet is to look in more detail at what this entails. Not all of this sheet will apply to every group. We have tried to show which sections are most relevant to your group. Even so, you may find the list of responsibilities daunting. But don't be put off! There are well over 1,500 successful groups in Brighton & Hove, most run by people in their spare time. Committee members are not expected to be experts, and there are lots of places where you can get help if you need it.



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Brighton & Hove

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*If you are looking for ideas on running a good committee or involving people in your group, we have information sheets covering topics such as **Chairing a meeting, The Secretary's Job and The Treasurer's Job and an AGM checklist** which includes tips on making any type of meeting more interesting.]*

Management Committee

Specific responsibilities

In carrying out its job, the committee has to take account of good practice and the law. In this sheet we have broken these responsibilities down into 4 areas:

A. The general responsibilities of the management committee of every group.

These two sections apply to very small and informal groups, as well as to larger groups.

1. Running the group and meetings (page 3)
2. Keeping the group on track (page 3)

B. Financial and organisational matters.

Sections 3-6 are most relevant to larger groups and groups which apply for grants (although even very small groups need to keep proper accounts).

3. Finances (page 4)
4. Fundraising (page 4)
5. General organisation (page 5)
6. Legal liability (page 5)

C. Tips for organising activities...

... such as fetes, fundays, sports events for children or a social club for people with learning difficulties.

7. Organising events and activities (page 6)
8. Members of the group and people you work with (page 6)

D. Responsibility for people and premises.

These sections are relevant if you employ someone or have a volunteer doing a regular job or you manage premises.

9. Employment and volunteers (page 7)
10. Premises (page 8)

Within many of the sections, we suggest ways of organising your affairs to help you keep on top of things and carry out your responsibilities.

See our information sheets
**Chairing a meeting, The
Secretary's role, AGM
Checklist and Taking
Minutes**

See our information sheet
**Constitutions: step by step
help with writing a
constitution**

See our information sheet
Monitoring and evaluation

Management Committee

1. Running the group and meetings

- ★ Arrange regular committee meetings and general meetings of the group
- ★ Organise the annual general meeting, including elections to the committee
- ★ Take minutes, recording decisions and tasks clearly

If you have a constitution, it will set out things such as how often meetings should take place or who is entitled to attend. Although a group can run successfully without a constitution, it is advisable for every group to have some written rules. These rules can be very basic, but your group will run more smoothly if everyone is clear about the aims of the group, how it works, and who does what.

- ★ Brief new committee members

Many newcomers are thrown in at the deep end and given no idea of how the group works or what its aims are. It is not uncommon to find individual committee members who are unaware that they are part of a management committee with responsibilities.

2. Keeping the group on track

- ★ Review the group's activities - are you doing what the group is set up to do?
- ★ Use your money well

Ideally, everything which your group decides to do will help it achieve its aims. However it is easy to get sidetracked. For example, raising money may become your main activity rather than the means to an end. It is a good idea for the committee to have a regular look at what the group is doing and assess whether it is achieving its aims.

If you are a larger group, it may be useful to have a systematic way of collecting information on your activities - it will make it easier to assess whether the group is on track. You will almost certainly need to have reliable information if you have to report to a funder on how you have used your grant.

See our information sheet **The Treasurer's Job**. For small groups in Brighton & Hove, the **Money in Mind** project offers free support with managing money, including training courses, one-to-one help with setting up and using a suitable book keeping system, online best practice information and independent examinations of accounts. For details see www.resourcecentre.org.uk/money-in-mind

See our information sheets **Budgets for Community Groups, Raising Money, Fundraising Applications, Fundraising from local businesses and Raising money from local trusts**

Management Committee

3. Finances

Every committee member is responsible for making sure that the group accounts for its money properly. It not just the responsibility of the treasurer even though they deal with the money day-to-day.

If lots of people are handling money or the group takes in regular amounts of cash, it is a good idea to write some basic rules to ensure that everybody does the same thing and that the money is properly looked after.

- ★ Keep proper financial records
- ★ If you have grants, make sure that you spend the money as you said you would in the grant application
- ★ Prepare financial reports for each committee meeting
- ★ Prepare end-of-year accounts, and have them examined if required by the constitution or charity law
- ★ Draw up basic financial rules



4. Fundraising

- ★ Work out a basic budget and decide how you will raise the funds
- ★ Raise the money!

Fundraising is not separate from the group's activities. You need to have a clear idea of what your group will do in the coming year in order to work out how much you need and to describe the work in an application. So, try to involve everyone on the committee or in the whole group in planning and fundraising.

*There are details of insurance companies listed in our **Beachcomber** database. You can search for yourself on our website, or call us and we will find the information for you.*

See our information sheet
Writing an equal opportunities policy

See our information sheets
Charity Registration: is your group a charity, and should it register? and Charity Reports and Accounts

Management Committee

5. General organisation

★ Insurance policies

Some insurances, such as employers' liability insurance if you employ staff, are a legal requirement. Depending on your group's activities other insurances may be a good idea; some may be required by your landlord or funder. There are a number of brokers which specialise in arranging insurance for charities and other community organisations.

★ Equal Opportunities/Equality

You should look at ways of trying to ensure that your group is open and welcoming to everyone in the community who wants to get involved. It may help to write a policy for the group, but the important thing is what you do. If you are applying for grants, most funders will ask you to show that you are concerned about equal opportunities and many will ask you for a written policy.

★ Register with the Charity Commission: your group may have charitable aims and you may need to register as a charity

★ If you are a registered charity, check whether you need to prepare a Trustees Report & Annual Accounts for the Charity Commission

6. Legal liability

★ Take legal or other advice when in doubt

★ Consider the pros and cons of indemnity insurance

Committee members can be held personally liable if the group gets into debt or has other legal problems. If there is no management committee, then every member of the group is liable. However, it is rare for individuals to face action and there should be no problems so long as the committee does everything it can to run the group responsibly.

It is possible to take out indemnity insurance to cover committee members if action is taken against them individually. However, this insurance will not be valid if the committee fails to run the group properly and responsibly so this type of insurance may not be good value for money.

If you are registered charity, the law sets out what can and cannot be covered by indemnity insurance. Older constitutions may prohibit the use of such insurance; in this case you will need to get permission from the Charity Commission if you want to take out an indemnity insurance policy.

See our info sheets **Event Planning Checklist, Licensing and Regulations and Public Liability**

Government Equalities Office
9th Floor, Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
enquiries@geo.gsi.gov.uk
0303 444 1204

Equality and Human Rights
Commission.
Advice on equal treatment and
rights.
Helpline 0845 604 6610
[www.equalityhumanrights.com/
advice-and-guidance/](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/)

See our information sheet
**Criminal Record Bureau
Disclosures**

Information Commissioner
Helpline: 0303 123 1113
<http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

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7. Organising events and activities (including fundraising events)

- ★ Check the regulations on areas such as public entertainment, raffles, creches and childcare, or food and drink
- ★ Apply well in advance for any necessary licences
- ★ Look carefully at safety (carry out a risk assessment) and first aid
- ★ Consider insurance for accidents or cancellation of the event

8. Members of the group and people you work with

- ★ Treat people equally

You have legal obligations towards the people who you provide services to or work with, and to members of your group.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces all of the existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act. It covers equality of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, as well as pregnancy and maternity. Most of its provisions come into force in October 2010; until then, existing legislation applies.

- ★ CRB checks.

If children under 18 or vulnerable adults are involved in your group's activities, you may be required by law to carry out CRB checks on staff or volunteers. Groups concerned include playschemes, after school clubs, sports activities for children, social clubs for adults with learning disabilities or advocacy projects.

- ★ Data Protection Act

You can download information from the government's Business Link website

www.businesslink.gov.uk

or contact the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)

<http://www.acas.org.uk>

Acas Helpline 08457 47 47 47

New employers should go to

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/newemployers/index.shtml>

or Employer Helpline

0845 6070 143

Brighton & Hove Volunteer Centre have a Good Practice Guide on working with

volunteers, which is available

at <http://www.bh-impetus.org/volunteeringgoodpractice/>.

See also the Further Reading section on page 8

*Our info sheets **Legal structures for Not-for-profit organisations and Community & Voluntary groups: Finding a legal structure to suit your group** look at the benefits and disadvantages of the forms of organisation available.*

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9. Employment and volunteers

If you employ one or more persons, your group has a number of legal obligations:

- ★ Employment laws such as the Employment Rights Act
- ★ Terms and Conditions of Employment for each employee
- ★ Grievance and Disciplinary procedures

Another local group may be able to help with Terms & Conditions and procedures, but you will of course have to rewrite them to suit your circumstances.

- ★ Equality Act 2010
- ★ Health & Safety at Work Act

See Premises section on page 7 for details of help on health & safety

- ★ PAYE Tax and National Insurance

HM Revenue and Customs gives information and advice.

In addition to your legal responsibilities, you will have to make arrangements to manage and supervise staff and volunteers. It is also good practice to have a written agreement with each volunteer setting out their terms and conditions.

- ★ Volunteers' agreements
- ★ Co-ordinating and training staff and volunteers
- ★ Consider becoming an organisation with limited liability, such as a charitable company, a limited company or a community interest community (CIC)

A community group does not have limited liability. This means that its members sign any contracts as individuals and carry the risk of personal liability. You may want to consider becoming a limited company if you intend to take on employees or hold a lease or buy property. However many community groups do employ one or two staff or hold a lease without any problems at all.

Health & Safety Executive
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>
HSE Infoline 0845 345 0055

HSE Books
PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk
CO10 2WA.
Tel: 01787 881165
[http://www.hsebooks.com/
Books/](http://www.hsebooks.com/Books/)

UNISON, the public sector
trade union, has information
sheets at [www.unison.org.uk/
safety/infosheets.asp](http://www.unison.org.uk/safety/infosheets.asp)

Health & Safety Licensing
Team, Bartholomew Square,
Brighton, BN1 1JP
[http://www.brighton-
hove.gov.uk/
index.cfm?request=c1106421](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1106421)
Tel: (01273) 294429
[ehl.safety@brighton-
hove.gov.uk](mailto:ehl.safety@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

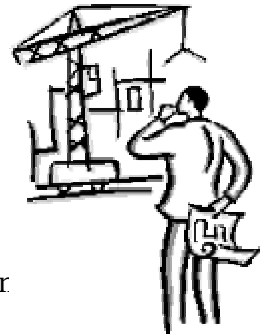
All the books in our reference
library are listed on our
website at
[www.resourcecentre.org.uk/
library/](http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/library/).
All the information sheets
mentioned here are available
on our website - see
[www.resourcecentre.org.uk/
information/](http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/).

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10. Premises

If you own or lease premises you will need to consider a range of issues:

- ★ Health & Safety legislation
For Health & Safety publications, including a guide to drawing up a Safety Policy and Accider Report forms, contact HSE Books
- ★ Fire safety
- ★ Public health and hygiene



Brighton & Hove City Council is responsible for enforcing and advising on health & safety law in work premises. The Health & Safety team also issues licences, to some businesses, including taxis, where high levels of safety and hygiene are required. If food is prepared or sold, you must register with the Food Safety Team 28 days before opening.

- ★ Lease or tenancy agreements
- ★ Security of premises and contents
- ★ Maintenance and general repairs
- ★ Access for disabled people

See contact details for Equality and Human Rights Commission on page 6

Make sure that it is clear whether the landlord or your group is responsible for things such as security, maintenance and access. If you rent part of a building, check whether you are responsible for full maintenance of the rooms which you rent. If in doubt, get legal advice on this and any other aspect of a lease.

- ★ Letting and booking arrangements

If you hire rooms for meetings or other events, make sure you have good booking arrangements and 'agreement forms' to make the conditions of room hire clear to the hirer.

- ★ Consider becoming an organisation with limited liability - see this point under section 9 on page 7

Further reading

We have a range of publications in our reference library which cover these areas in more detail. Good starting points for further information and suggestions on where to get specialist help are 'Just about managing?' and 'Voluntary but not Amateur'.

Appendix

What is a management committee?

A typical community group ranges in size from a handful of members to a membership of a hundred or more. Legally it is an unincorporated association and it may also be a charity. Its governing body, the group of people which runs its affairs, is commonly referred to the management committee.

Most community groups have a constitution (or set of rules). A section of this defines the management committee, including its size and how often it should meet.

There are other forms of community organisations - charitable companies (incorporated organisations) and charitable trusts. Their governing bodies have similar responsibilities to the management committee of a community group, but they have additional legal obligations.

Who sits on the Management Committee?

The committee is drawn from members of the group and is elected by them, usually at an annual general meeting (AGM).

Groups often have officers, such as chair, secretary and treasurer, and they too are part of the management committee. They may be elected by the full membership at the AGM or by the committee at its first meeting, according to the constitution. Although the officers carry out particular jobs in the group, they have no more legal or financial responsibilities than other committee members.

The committee may also invite other people to serve on the committee (known as co-opting). They may be members of the group but can come from outside, and are generally co-opted because they have particular skills or knowledge.

A very small group may meet informally and have no elected committee. Many groups with modest aims and activities run very successfully like this. In this instance, the entire group is the 'management committee' and everyone is responsible for the group's affairs.

What do individual committee members do?

Although every committee member shares responsibility, this does not mean that each member has to do everything. The job of committee members is to ensure that someone does each task and reports back to the committee. The tasks may be done by committee members, members of the group or people from outside. The most important thing is that the committee should work together and take joint responsibility.

For more information on forms of community organisations, see our info sheet

Community & Voluntary groups: Finding a legal structure to suit your group