

Management Committee

Responsibilities of a 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.

Broadly, the committee's job is to ensure that the group

- H does what it was set up to do
- H has enough money and does not get into debt
- H is well run

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 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.



Brighton & Hove

City Council supported

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Management Committee

Specific responsibilities

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 the 'The job of the chair, secretary and treasurer' and 'AGM checklist' which includes tips on making any type of meeting more interesting.

We also have a range of books in our reference library which cover all 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'.

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 10 sections:

1. Running the group and meetings
2. Keeping the group on track
3. Finances
4. Fundraising
5. General organisation
6. Legal liability
7. Organising events and activities (including fundraising events)
8. Members of the group and people you work with
9. Employment and volunteers
10. Premises

The management committee of every group has general responsibilities which are covered in sections 1 and 2. These sections apply to very small and informal groups, as well as to larger groups.

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).

If you organise activities such as fetes, fundays, sports events for children or a social club for people with learning difficulties, sections 7 and 8 should be helpful.

If you employ someone or have a volunteer doing a regular job or you manage premises, have a look at sections 9 and 10.

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.

Finally, there is an appendix which briefly describes what a management committee is, who sits on it, and what individual members do.

*See our information sheets
'The Chair's job' and
'Secretary's role'*

*See our information sheet
'AGM Checklist'*

*See our information sheet
'Taking Minutes'*

*We have an info 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

H Arrange regular committee meetings and general meetings of the group

H Organise the annual general meeting, including elections to the committee

H 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.

H 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

H Review the group's activities – are you doing what the group is set up to do?

H 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.

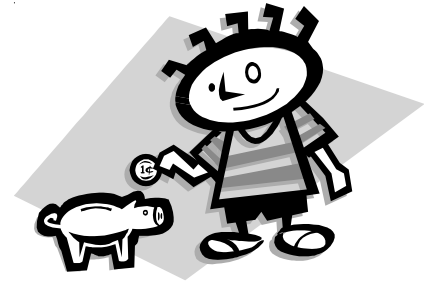
If you are a larger group, it may be useful to have a systematic way of collecting information on your activities – it will make it easier to assess whether the group is on track. You will almost certainly need to have reliable information if you have to report to a funder on how you have used your grant.

Management Committee

*See our information sheet
'The Treasurer's job'*

3. Finances

Every committee member is responsible for making sure that the group accounts for its money properly. It's 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.

- H Keep proper financial records
- H If you have grants, make sure that they are used for the specified purpose
- H Prepare financial reports for each committee meeting
- H Prepare end-of-year accounts, and have them examined if required by the constitution or charity law
- H Draw up basic financial rules

4. Fundraising

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

Working out how much money you need and how you will raise it are not separate from the group's activities. You need to have a fairly clear idea of what your group will do in the coming year in order to work out how much you need. So, try to involve everyone on the committee or in the whole group in planning and fundraising.

5. General organisation

Insurance policies

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

*See our information sheet
'Budgets for community
groups'*

*See our information sheets
'Raising Money' and
'Fundraising Applications'*

*For details of insurance
companies, please refer to the
Beachcomber database on our
website or phone the Centre.*

Management Committee

*See our information sheet
'Writing an equal
opportunities policy'*

*See our information sheet
'Charity Registration: is your
group a charity, and should it
register?'*

*See our information sheet
'Charity Reports and
Accounts'*

Equal Opportunities/Equality

You should look at ways of trying to ensure that your is group 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.

Charity Registration

If your group's aims are charitable, you may need to register as a charity

Trustees Report

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

6. Legal liability

- H Take legal or other advice when in doubt
- H Consider 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 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, you will need to get permission from the Charity Commission to take out trustee indemnity insurance unless your constitution already allows for this.

If you are registered charity, the law sets 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 to take it out.

Management Committee

See our info sheets 'Planning checklist for fetes, fundays, parties and other events' and 'Licensing and Regulations'

7. Organising events and activities (including fundraising events)

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

8. Members of the group and people you work with

You have legal obligations towards the people who you provide services to or work with, and to members of your group. As well as general obligations, you need to take account of:

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), Race Relations Act and Sex Discrimination Act

Equality and Human Rights Commission
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

Disability Helpline
FREEPOST MID02164
Stratford upon Avon CV37 9BR
Telephone: 08457 622 633

Race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief and human rights Helpline
Freepost RRLG-GHUX-CTR
Arndale Centre
Manchester M4 3EQ
Tel. 0845 604 6610

Criminal Record Bureau checks

If you work with children under 18 or vulnerable adults, 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.

See our information sheet 'Criminal Record Bureau Disclosures'

Management Committee

Data Protection Act

Information Commissioner <http://www.ico.gov.uk>
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
fax: 01625 524 510 Helpline telephone: 01625 545 745
email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

9. Employment and volunteers

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

- H Employment laws such as the Employment Rights Act
- H Terms and Conditions of employment for each employee
- H 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.

- H Health & Safety at Work Act
- H Tax and national insurance

HM Revenue and Customs (includes the former Inland Revenue) gives information and advice. New employers should go to <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/newemployers/index.shtml> or call the Employer Helpline 0845 7143 143

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.

- H Volunteers' agreements
- H Co-ordinating and training staff and volunteers

We have a CD-ROM 'Good Practice Guide' written by Brighton & Hove Working Together Project for the Volunteer Bureau. You can also see the contents of this at <http://www.brightonhovevolunteers.org.uk/goodpractice/index.htm>. See also the publications which we refer to at the end of this sheet.

You can download information from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform website <http://www.dti.gov.uk/> or contact the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) <http://www.acas.org.uk> Acas Helpline 08457 47 47 47

See Premises section for details of help on health & safety

Management Committee

10. Premises

Health & Safety Executive
[http://www.hse.gov.uk/
index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm)

HSE Infoline 0845 345 0055

For Health & Safety
publications, including a guide
to drawing up a Safety Policy
and Accident Report forms,
contact

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

UNISON, the public sector
trade union has information
sheets which you can
download from its website
[http://www.unison.org.uk/
safety/infosheets.asp](http://www.unison.org.uk/safety/infosheets.asp)

See contact details for DDA
above to find out access
requirements

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

- H Health & Safety legislation
- H Fire safety
- H Public health and hygiene

Brighton & Hove City Council is responsible for monitoring and advising on health & safety legislation 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.

Contact the Health & Safety Licensing Team, Bartholomew Square,
Brighton, BN1 1JP

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1106421>

Phone: (01273) 294429

Typetalk: 18001 01273 290000

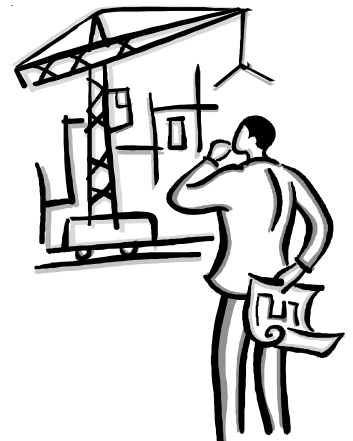
E-mail: ehl.safety@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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

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.

- H 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.



Management Committee

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.

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 members do?

Although every committee member shares responsibility, this does not mean that each member has to do everything. The job of 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.

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.

For more information on forms of community organisations, see our info sheet 'Community & Voluntary Organisations: Finding a legal structure to suit your group'.