

Support for Chairs

Being a newly-elected chair can feel quite daunting, but if you can listen to others, be kind and fair, and be well-organised, you can be a good chair. The chair doesn't need to have all the answers and shouldn't be expected to do all the work. The Resource Centre can help you develop skills and techniques to chair meetings, support the committee and deal with difficult situations.

We can offer this support to volunteer-run groups based in Brighton & Hove which are:

- ◆ Tenants' or Residents' Associations for Brighton & Hove City Council tenants and leaseholders, and/or
- ◆ Groups run by and for people living in an area of social housing, and/or
- ◆ Groups run by and for black and minority ethnic people, and/or
- ◆ Groups run by and for disabled people.

If you think you may be eligible, contact us to find out whether we can help.

How to chair meetings

We can meet with you, one-to-one, to talk about tips and techniques that help when chairing meetings. Rather than providing a one-size-fits-all training course, we will help you think about what style of chairing works best for you and your group, and how you can make the most of your meetings.

We can do this when you first become chair, and you can come back again if you'd like to explore how to improve your chairing skills, talk about any issues you might be having or discuss how to deal with a particular situation.

For some ideas about the kinds of things we can cover, see our page on *How to improve your chairing skills*.

Planning meetings

Planning is vital to running effective meetings. We can meet with you before meetings to help you think through what should be on the Agenda. It can be helpful for the Secretary to be involved in planning too. We can meet with you together.

The role of the chair within the group

As well as chairing meetings, the Chair's role is to have a general overview of how things are going in the group. It is the Chair's job to have an understanding of the decisions the group has made, and keep track of whether they are being implemented successfully. It is *not* the chair's role to do all the work, or to make all the decisions.

We can meet with you (and other group members, if it's useful) to help think through ways of ensuring that the whole committee is involved with making decisions and getting things done. We can help you to develop techniques to encourage others and keep a helpful overview.

Dealing with conflict

Most groups experience some conflict now and again. As the Chair, you can make a big difference by helping group members to listen to one another, and supporting the group to make decisions and move forwards.

If a conflict arises in your group, we can sit down with you to talk it through and help you make a plan for how to help the group through the rocky time.

A listening ear

Being the Chair can sometimes feel a bit lonely. You are taking the role of supporting others and it's not always easy to find someone to support you. We are independent and neutral, and are always on the end of the phone if you are unsure how to manage a situation or just need a sounding board to help think things through.