



# 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

- ◆ Does what it was set up to do
- ◆ Has enough money and does not get into debt
- ◆ 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. Committee members are not expected to be experts, and there are lots of places where you can get help if you need it.

## 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 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, fun days, 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.

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## **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 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.

## **3 Finances**

Every committee member is responsible for making sure that the group accounts for its money properly. It is 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 accounts
- ◆ If you have grants, make sure that they are used for the specified purpose
- ◆ 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!

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.

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## **5 General Organisation**

### **Insurance policies**

Some insurances, such as employer's 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.

### **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.

### **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**

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

## **7 Organising events and activities (including fundraising events)**

- ◆ Check the regulations on areas such as public entertainment, raffles, crèches and childcare, or food and drink
- ◆ Apply well in advance for any necessary licences
- ◆ Look carefully at safety (carry out risk assessment) and first aid
- ◆ 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. It is important that you also need to take account of :

**Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)**

**Race Relations Act**

**Sex Discrimination Act**

**Criminal Records Bureau checks**

**Data Protection Act**

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## 9 Employment and volunteers

If you employ one or more person, 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.

- ◆ Health & Safety at Work Act
- ◆ Tax and National Insurance

HM Revenue & Customs gives information and advice. New employers should go to **[www.hmrc.gov.uk/newemployers](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/newemployers)** or **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 tasks and what is expected. You need to be careful regarding wording, as agreements with volunteers cannot be seen as 'contracts'.

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

Evesham Volunteer Centre can help with this or you can go to the Volunteering England website - **[www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)** and click on the managers section.

## 10 Premises

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

- ◆ Health & Safety legislation
- ◆ Fire Safety
- ◆ Public Health & Hygiene
- ◆ Lease or tenancy agreements
- ◆ Security of premises and contents
- ◆ Maintenance and general repairs
- ◆ Access for disabled people

Make sure that it is clear whether the landlord or your group is responsible for such things 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.

***Please see overleaf for information on what a management committee is***

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## 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 as 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 of the group or people from outside. The most important thing is that the committee should work together and take joint responsibility.

**There are information sheets for the roles of chair, secretary and treasurer available.**

***If you require further information or support on this topic please contact  
Evesham Volunteer Centre.***

## **Disclaimer**

The information provided in this sheet is for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.