

Really Useful Stuff

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Really Useful Policy and Procedure Stuff

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Words included in the Jargon buster section are highlighted in yellow through the text.



Links to other parts of the handbook are marked by flags.

Introduction

Why do we need this chapter?

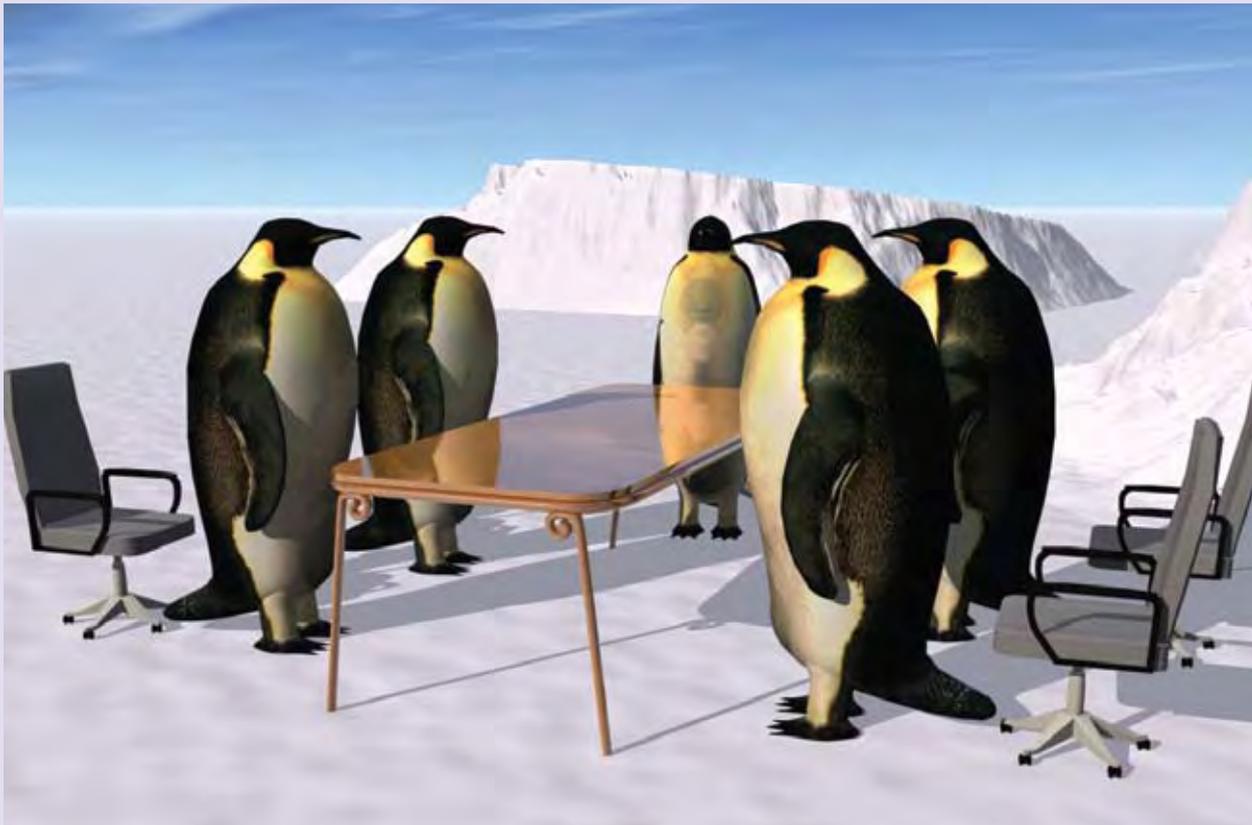


Photo: Stockxpert.com

Policies and procedures help explain what we do, how and why. They are one of the key ways the management committee is able to govern the group.

All groups have day-to-day ways of working. Sometimes these ways of working are passed on by word of mouth. They may vary from group to group. Writing these ways of working down in policies and procedures can help in running your group more smoothly, and can actually save time and stress in the long run.

What are policies?

1



Ad hoc	Dealing with a specific subject, purpose, for example, an ad hoc committee
Living document	Documents that are currently in use
Policy	A policy is a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes

What are policies?

Most of us are familiar with insurance policies. These are documents that set out what is and isn't expected of us as the insured party, and of the insurer. We should be familiar with them, but if we are unsure, they are also there to refer to. The value of having the **policy** is never more evident than when something happens, and we need to refer to it to make a claim.

The policies a group has are equally as important.



Photo: Lincolnshire County Council

Why do we have policies?

The purpose of policies and procedure is to help people — inside the organisation and outside — understand the accepted practice of your organisation.

People include:

- Management
- Volunteers
- Staff
- Service users and potential service users
- Funders
- Development workers
- Quality Assurance Assessors
- And so on.

Policies help avoid making decisions on an **ad hoc** or even knee-jerk basis. They help you manage the group, provide evidence for funding applications and help ensure you comply with legislation. They help manage your group's risks.

Living documents

Policies and procedures are what is known as **living documents**. They should be reviewed and updated as necessary, and implemented. They should not be filed away in a drawer never to see the light of day again!

How do we start drawing up **policies and procedures?**



AGM	Annual General Meeting. A meeting held once a year at which all members with voting rights are entitled to attend and can vote
Equality	Being equal in value. Equality therefore is about making sure that people are equally valued. They are not necessarily treated the same but given equal opportunity to reach their potential. (See text and activity on page 4 of Equality and Diversity Chapter)
Governing document	The written rules which set out the purpose of an organisation and how it should be run, eg constitution
Group document file	Collection of all documentation used in effectively managing and running your group
Objectives	The activities a group will provide, or the things a group will do, in order to achieve its aim
Policy	A policy is a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes
Procedure	A written statement of how a policy will be put into action

How do we start drawing up policies and procedures?

It helps if this drawing up of policies and procedures is done collectively. Whilst writing policies and procedures is a management responsibility, staff and volunteers live with the organisation day by day. They have to implement the procedures. Ask for their input. This also ensures that you all have a common understanding of what the group believes, and how you put these beliefs into practice.



TIP It may mean questioning practice that has been followed for some time.

- Take a blank sheet of paper, and write the title of the **policy** at the top
- List what the group believes to be true with regard to the title
 - What does the group stand for?
 - What are the group members and service users entitled to? What does the group offer its beneficiaries? You might wish to refer to your **governing document**'s aims and objectives. [See information on constitutions.](#)

See [Running your group](#) Chapter

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- What does your group do to put these ideas into practice (the **procedure**). For example, in terms of **equality** and diversity, how do you ensure that your premises are accessible to all?

Check this against information from associations you may be members of, Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Environmental Health, as well as current legislation and other appropriate organisations.

See [Resources Chapter](#)

Page 19

At this point do not worry about the wording too much — get your thoughts down.

Activity

Ask volunteers and staff which procedures help them do their work. Which ones don't help? If they don't help, do they need to be changed or adapted? Are they a legal requirement?

General points for consideration

There is no one way to set out policies and procedures. Each policy you have will be different. However, each can be broken down into four main parts:

PART 1 Statement of intent

A statement about what your group believes with regard to that particular policy issue, and what you will do. This can be a general statement.

How will people know about your intentions?

PART 2 Objectives*

In other words, what your group wishes to achieve in regard to this particular policy issue.

Objectives always start with verbs – ‘doing’ words.

To support..., to manage...,
to work..., to implement...,
to provide..., to develop...,
to deliver..., to value...,
to respond..., to improve...,
to identify..., and many more.

*You don't have to include the objectives in the final policy, but knowing why you are developing a particular policy can help you write it.



Procedures should help people do their job well. Don't bog people down with unnecessary rules.

Activity

List the activities you are engaged in. Looking at your job / task descriptions should help. What are the objectives that relate to that work?

For instance, the objectives for this activity could include:

- To list activities we are engaged in
- To group these activities under headings
- To identify the relevant objectives, and include these when drawing up policies and procedures.

PART 3 Procedures

These are what your group will realistically be able to do to achieve these objectives. To help decide what you will do, bear in mind the following:

- **Roles and responsibilities**
 - Management board / committee / trustees / directors / volunteers / staff / line managers
- **Employment**
 - Are there implications for recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers?
- **Training**
 - Management, volunteers, staff
- **Resources**
 - Beg, borrow or buy?

- Fit for purpose
- Inventory
- **Client / partner involvement**
 - Who, how, when, what, where?
- **Sanctions**
 - You will use should any policy and procedure be breached
- **Complaints or grievance procedure**
 - If someone feels you have not adhered to your policies and procedures.

Activity

Drawing up your policies and procedures may highlight work that needs doing. Use the action plan below to help in planning this work.

Action plan

What is it we need to do?	How will we do this?	When will this be reviewed / completed? (Date)	Who will do this? [Name (s)]	What resources will be needed?	How will we measure our progress?

PART 4 Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Simply having policies and procedures in place is not enough. They need to be put into practice and used.

- How will you monitor the use of the policy?
- Who will be responsible for monitoring the policy?
- How often will you monitor the use of the policy?
- How will you measure whether you are meeting your objectives?
- When is the policy due to be reviewed?
- Do people know about your policies?
- Are there new laws or regulations since you last reviewed your policy and procedure?



The policies have to be tailored to your group to be of any value to you.



The hardest part is probably writing these ideas up into a policy. You know what you mean, what you believe in, but you have to be able to write the policy in such a way to make it clear to others. Try not to make them too woolly so they say nothing much, nor too specific so they straightjacket you. Use plain language – whatever language(s) you feel you need. (Equality and diversity!)

It is also time-consuming drawing them up –

although it may save you time in the long run. So if you feel there are several policies you need, don't go at them all at once. Maybe two or three people (committee members, volunteers and staff) can look at one or two policies at a time, and take their ideas back to the committee and report.



You can ask clients to look them over, too.

Reading the policy and procedures

Policies should be signed by management, volunteers and staff to say they have read them. This does not mean they have memorised them, but that they have read them, understood them and will abide by them. Policies and procedures should be accessible.

See [group document file](#) in Section 4.



What policies do we need?



TIP Your policies can be used against you! If you say in your policy you will do something which you then do not do.

Reviewing policies

Policies need to be reviewed on a regular basis. Are they still workable? Relevant? What's changed? Has a situation arisen you hadn't foreseen? If they are fine as they are, leave them. If they need adding to or amending, do so as appropriate.



TIP Making changes to one policy may mean making corresponding changes in others.

Changes to policies can be voted on at an **AGM**. We mentioned the idea of including this as a regular item on your group's management committee agenda in **Section 4 of Really Useful Running Your Group Stuff**.

See **Running your group Chapter**

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This will vary from group to group. **Section 3** has discussion points on:

- Confidentiality
- Data protection
- Equality and diversity
- Health and hygiene
- Planned retirement
- Safeguarding children
- Safety
- Support and protection of vulnerable people
- Training and development
- Volunteer
- Volunteer expenses

Activity

Which of these policies, if any, does your group have at present?

Which of the suggested policies might your group need to put in place?

Are there any other policies your group might need?

Specific points for discussion



You do not need to start by writing a policy from scratch.

Use the policy discussion points in **Section 3** of this chapter to help you get started.



Other sources of information and support include:

- Community development workers
- Internet search engines.
- Policies from similar groups and organisations
- Voluntary support organisations

See Resources Chapter

Page 4



Other people's policies may be far more in depth than you need. Or not detailed enough. They might include clauses of no relevance to your work. Their policies have been written for them and their needs, and so are unlikely to be just what you need.

Use them for guidance only.

The discussion points in Section 3 (page 13) should help you in drawing up and reviewing specific policies and procedures. The guidelines are general for the use of a range of groups, and therefore some may not be relevant to your group.

The questions are there to help discussion and are meant as guidance only. The number of questions does not indicate the number of points each policy should have. Please add your own ideas too. The wording of the policies is left up to you.

At the end of each policy discussion point, suggestions are made as to what other policies you could look at. These are listed as 'links'. If looking at one policy does not answer your question, look at the list of 'links'. It may be that your group does not need all the policies suggested as a 'link'.

Not all the policies suggested as links have discussion points in this handbook. The links are to suggest what other policies would be useful for you to look at in connection with that subject. For example, if a child has a particular requirement, you might need to look at your policies on confidentiality, safeguarding children, equality and diversity and working in partnership with parents.

Bear in mind that other group's policies can help, but their policies were tailor-made for them so they should only be seen as a guide.



Drawing up a policy and procedure

- Step 1**
Identify the need for a policy
- Step 2**
Carry out fact-finding, including looking at your governing document, policy guidelines, other organisation's policies



- Step 3**
Create a draft policy and procedure
- Step 4**
Conduct a policy discussion, including staff and volunteers where appropriate
- Step 5**
Write the final version of the policy and procedure
- Step 6**
Approve the policy and procedure, signing and dating when approved. The approval can also be included in the minutes of the meeting at which they were approved



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- Step 7**
Communicate the policy and procedure to staff, volunteers and committee members
- Step 8**
Follow through with implementation and monitoring – include a date for review.

Discussion points for drawing up policies and procedures on...

3



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...Confidentiality

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we believe that confidentiality is an absolute must in building relationships with communities / clients / colleagues?
- Do we recognise our work could bring us into contact with sensitive information?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Building trust, clear guidance to staff and volunteers, developing relationships, maintaining high standards.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and responsibilities

- Do we understand an issue can be confidential even if it doesn't appear to be sensitive? Do we acknowledge that we should keep a confidence even though the information we know seems to be common knowledge?
- If someone wishes to 'disclose' to us, do we recognise we should never promise to keep what they say a secret, as we may need to refer on, for instance, to safeguard a vulnerable person or child?

Employment

- Do we expect volunteers, staff and management to abide by this policy?
- Do we treat as confidential any information we may hear and over-hear in the course of the day?

Resources

Records

- Do we ensure information about staff, volunteers and service users is not left lying around but is secured?
- Are concerns about children or vulnerable adults kept in a confidential file, with access only as appropriate?
- Do parents have access to their own child's records, but not others?
- Are issues around staff or volunteers known only by those directly involved in personnel decisions?
- Are confidential items discussed at committee meetings reported separately from the minutes?

Equipment

- Lockable filing cabinet / document box.



TIP

Confidentiality underpins all that we do.

...Confidentiality

Client / partner involvement

Outside agencies

- Do we use outside agencies to help keep up to date with rules and regulations?
- Do we develop links with outside agencies as routine, so if there is ever a need to refer, we already have a relationship with them?
- Do we understand that no information should be given directly or indirectly to a third party without the client's consent, unless the group deems that there is immediate physical danger to the client or others, as required by law?

Exception

- Do we recognise there may be exceptional times when it would not be acceptable to keep a confidence, for instance, issues around child protection and criminal activities?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Breaching confidentiality can be viewed as gross misconduct, and could result in dismissal.

See **Employment Law Chapter**

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PART 4

Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Monitoring

- Is 'policy and procedures' a regular item on meeting agendas?
- Do we have regular reviews of policies and how they are being implemented?

If you have a query on this policy please contact

This policy was adopted at a meeting held on

Signed on behalf of (group's name)

Position held

Review date



LINKS TO POLICIES

- Additional needs
- All volunteer policies
- Data protection
- Employment / staffing
- Equality and diversity
- Safeguarding children
- Student placement
- Vulnerable adults
- Working in partnership with...

...Data Protection

PART 1 Statement of intent What do we value / believe?

- Do we recognise that information we have on individuals should be accurate, kept to a minimum and secure?

PART 2 Objectives Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Comply with the eight principles of data protection.

See [Running Your Group Chapter](#)

Page
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PART 3 Procedures What do we do?

The following is reproduced with permission from the Isle of Man Office of the Data Protection Supervisor.

If you can answer 'yes' to all these questions then your business is in good shape with regard to data protection. If not it will help you to pinpoint the areas that need improvement.

FIRST PRINCIPLE: Fair and lawful processing

Fair processing

- Do we make individuals aware of what their data will be used for at the time we collect it?
- Are people aware of any disclosures of their data to a third party?
- Have we obtained people's consent for any secondary uses of their data, eg direct marketing, which might not be obvious to them?
- Can our data collection processes be described as open, transparent and up-front?

Purpose specification

- Are we clear about the purpose (or purposes) for which we keep personal information?
- Are the individuals also aware of the purpose(s)?
- Does our notification with the Data Protection Supervisor (if we are required to notify) include this purpose? If not we are committing an offence under the Data Protection Act (DPA).
- Has someone been given responsibility for maintaining a list of all data sets and their purposes?

...Data Protection

SECOND PRINCIPLE:

Purpose for which data are obtained and processed

Use and disclosure of information

- Do we have defined rules about the use and disclosure of information?
- Are all staff aware of these rules?
- Are the individuals aware of the uses and disclosures of their data? Would they be surprised if they learned about them?
- Does our notification with the Data Protection Supervisor include these uses and disclosures? If not we are committing an offence under the DPA.

Notification

- Are we clear about whether we need to notify the Data Protection Supervisor?
- If we are required to notify, is it kept up to date?
- Does it accurately reflect our practices for data handling?
- Do we provide details of any changes including addresses as soon as practicable?
- Is a named individual responsible for meeting our notification requirements?

THIRD PRINCIPLE:

Adequate, relevant and not excessive

- Have we checked that the information we collect is relevant, and not excessive, for our specified purpose?
- If an individual asked us to justify why we hold each piece of information, could we do so?
- Does a policy exist in this regard?

FOURTH PRINCIPLE:

Accuracy of data

Accurate and up-to-date

- Do we check our data for accuracy?
- Do we keep our databases up to date?
- Do we update the personal data we hold which is time-sensitive and likely to become inaccurate over time?

...Data protection

FIFTH PRINCIPLE:

Not kept for longer than necessary

Retention time

- Is there a clear statement on how long we keep data?
- Do we know the legal requirements on retention times?
- Do we regularly clear our databases of data we no longer need, such as that relating to former customers or employees?

SIXTH PRINCIPLE:

Data subject rights

The Right of Access

- Do we have a named individual responsible for handling data access requests?
- Are there clear procedures for dealing with such requests?
- Do these procedures guarantee compliance with the requirements of the DPA?
- Do we give individuals the right to object to direct marketing?

SEVENTH PRINCIPLE:

Measures against misuse and loss of data

Security

- Is there a list of security provisions in place for each data set?
- Is someone responsible for the development and review of these provisions?
- Are these provisions appropriate to the sensitivity of each data set?
- Are our computers and databases password-protected, and encrypted if appropriate?
- Are computers, servers and files securely locked away from unauthorised people?
- Do we have written agreements with third parties to process data on our behalf?

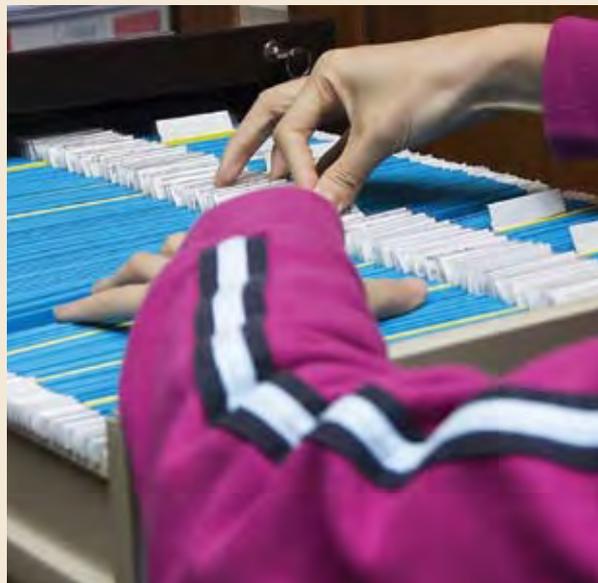


Photo: Stockxpert.com

...Data protection

Training and education

- Are all staff aware of their responsibilities under the DPA including the need for confidentiality?
- Is data protection included as part of the training programme for staff?

Co-ordination and compliance

- Has a data protection co-ordinator and compliance person been appointed?
- Are all staff aware of his / her role?
- Are there mechanisms in place for formal review by the co-ordinator of data protection activities within our organisation?

EIGHTH PRINCIPLE:

Transfer of data abroad

- Do we transfer data to areas outside the European Economic Area (EEA) eg on paper, by email, or posted on a website?
- If so, are we confident that there are proper security measures in place to ensure its security?

PART 4 Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Monitoring

- Is 'policy and procedures' a regular item on meeting agendas?
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Review date



LINKS TO POLICIES

- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding children
- Staff and volunteer-related
- Vulnerable adults

...Equality and diversity

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we value people from all backgrounds, and believe they have a right to be free from prejudice and discrimination?
- Do we recognise that discrimination can be direct or indirect?
- Is equality and diversity an integral part of what we do, not an afterthought?
- How do we promote equality?



Do we carry out impact assessments? Do we link this policy to our other policies and practices? How else do we promote?

See [Equality and Diversity Chapter](#)

Page 29

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Making our services more accessible; broadening the representation on our committee; different languages and formats; challenging unacceptable language and behaviour; complying with legislation.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and responsibilities:

- Do we know what responsibilities we have as volunteer, staff or management?
- Do we have a named diversity officer?
- Are we a Disability Symbol holder? If so, what do people need to know about your responsibilities?



...Equality and diversity

Employment

- Do we have a mandatory retirement age? (You don't have to)
- Do we recognise that our policy on retirement may say something about our views of older people?

See **Employment Law Chapter**

Page
7

- Do we have a dress code? Is it flexible enough to allow for religious dress? Does it apply to women and men?

Training

- Do we include equality and diversity in induction? In our training programme?

Bullying and harassment:

- Do we define these?

See **Employment Law Chapter**

Page
25

See **Equality and Diversity Chapter**

Page
7

Legislation

- Which pieces of legislation are you reflecting in your policy?



Photo: Julia Freeman-Woolbert

Resources

- Do we have a range of resources portraying positive images of people?
- Do we make publications available in other languages and formats as necessary?
- Is up-to-date information on policy and legislation accessible?
- Do we maintain an address book of local and national organisations that can help on a range of topics?

...Equality and diversity

Client / partner involvement:

- Do we use outside agencies to help keep up to date with rules and regulations?
- Do we develop links with outside agencies as routine, so if there is ever a need for help, we already have a relationship with them?
- Does this include keeping up to date with legislation?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

PART 4

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LINKS TO POLICIES

- Admissions
- All staffing policies
- All volunteer policies
- Planned retirement

...Health and hygiene

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we wish to promote a healthy lifestyle?
- Do we wish to promote high standards of hygiene, both in routine and non-routine chores?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Maintaining safe environment for all, setting an example, keeping up to date with good practice and regulations, providing a healthy environment.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and responsibilities

- Is there a designated officer?
- Do we recognise that everyone has a responsibility for health and hygiene, not just a named officer?

Do we ask parents:

- To keep their child away if they are ill?
- To come in to administer drugs to their children?
- For signed consent and instructions if they wish us to administer medication?

- To produce a letter from the doctor before we consider administering insulin / adrenalin / medication by EpiPen®?

Employment

Records

- Is our Health and Hygiene Policy in the staff / volunteer induction handbook?
- Do we have up-to-date contacts and names of next of kin for volunteers, staff and service users?

Resources

Cleaning

- Do we mop up spills as soon as they occur?
- Do we use different coloured cloths for kitchen / toilet / office areas?
- Do we keep kitchen and toilet areas clean and tidy?
- Do we have adequate hand-washing facilities? Changing area to change from outside clothes to work clothes?

...Health and hygiene

Food

- Do we allow food in working areas?
- Do we follow correct food handling procedures?
- Are we aware of the correct storage of food?
- Are we required to hold a food-handling certificate?
- Are we aware of the dietary needs of others?

Protective clothing, equipment / dress code

- Do we use appropriate clothing? For example, aprons, goggles, gloves, masks
- Do we use the right tool for the job?
- Do we have a dress code to include, for instance, sturdy footwear, no jewellery where appropriate?

First aid

- Do we have a first aid box with a white cross on a green background? Is it readily accessible? Is it kept clean and replenished, with sterile items still in packaging until needed?
- Do we have consideration to allergies / adverse reactions when introducing pot plants / air fresheners, for example?
- Do we keep records of potential life-threatening conditions of colleagues and how to deal with them?

Client / partner involvement

- Do we use outside agencies to help keep up to date with rules and regulations?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Failure to comply could put others' health at risk, and be detrimental to the good name of the organisation. This could lead to disciplinary proceedings.



Photo: Adam Elliston

...Health and hygiene

PART 4 Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

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 **LINKS TO POLICIES**

- Employment
- Food / food handling
- Safety
- Staff training
- Working in partnership with...

AND TO:

Critical control points for safe catering



Photo: Davide Guglielmo / Vicky S / Rubicon Designs

See Resources Chapter

Pages 15, 19

...Planned retirement

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we recognise that we can gain from the skills, knowledge and experience that continuing employment after 65 years of age can bring?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Clarify our position on planned retirement; help to plan recruitment, training, promotion and career progression for all employees; comply with Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and responsibilities*

- Do we notify staff that they are coming up to planned retirement age between twelve and six months of their planned retirement age?
- Do we inform them of their right to request to continue working beyond that date?
- Do we explain that any request has to be in writing and made six to three months before the planned retirement date?



Photo: Gözde Otman

- Do we understand we have a duty to consider that request? And that our decision has to be based solely upon the effects the request would have upon efficiency and smooth running of the organisation?
- Do we hold a formal meeting with the employee to discuss the matter? Do we notify them of the right to be accompanied?
- If the request is accepted do we set a new retirement date? Do we recognise this process starts again from the beginning of roles and responsibilities? **See asterisk***
- If the request is declined can we show this was because it would be detrimental to the organisation? Do we notify the employee of their right to appeal?

...Planned retirement

Employment / deployment

Would we consider a request to change the employee's work pattern?

Client / partnership involvement

- Do we use outside agencies to help keep up to date with rules and regulations?
- Do we develop links with outside agencies as routine, so if there is ever a need to refer, we already have a relationship with them?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

By not following procedures, employers could be in breach of legislation.

Employees could be deemed not to be requesting an extension to their planned retirement date if they do not make a request in time.

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LINKS TO POLICIES

- Confidentiality
- Data protection
- Equality and diversity
- Recruitment and retention

...Safeguarding children

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we aim to create an environment in which children are enabled and supported, where they can work towards reaching their individual potential?
- Do we recognise wellbeing covers more than child abuse?
- Do we recognise that children from all walks of life can be abused?
- That abuse can take many forms?
- Do we respond to any suspicion of abuse promptly and appropriately?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Promote working practices to create an environment where children can thrive and reach their potential, safeguard a child's wellbeing, develop trust with clients and partners, protect children from abuse, protect volunteers and staff from allegations of abuse.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and responsibilities

- Do we have regard to the five areas of Every Child Matters?
 - Be healthy
 - Stay safe
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Make a positive contribution
 - Economic wellbeing.

See Resources
Chapter

Page
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- Do we have a designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection issues?

Employment

Good Practice

Do we ask all staff and volunteers to:

- Undergo a CRB check?
- Have an interview?
- Provide references?
- Explain any gaps in employment history or rapid change of jobs?
- Work a probationary period?

...Safeguarding children

Working with the children

- Do we ensure adults — whether CRB checked or not — are never left alone with children, in the interests of both children and adult? If we have to leave an adult alone, what measures do we take?
- Does the layout of the room allow for ease of supervision?
- Do we help build children's confidence and autonomy, to help them resist inappropriate approaches?
- Do we listen to children?
- Do we support children to find names for their feelings so they can express themselves (to become emotionally literate)?
- Do we provide challenging activities in a safe environment that allow children to explore risks appropriate to their age and stage of development?

Supporting families

- Do we work to build and support trusting relationships between families and setting?
- Do we share our procedures for safeguarding children with parents / carers when they first come to us?
- Would we continue to welcome child and family while investigations into abuse proceed?

Training

- Could staff and volunteers recognise symptoms of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect? Do we know the procedures for dealing with this?
- Do we actively look for training on safeguarding children for volunteers, staff and management?

Responding to suspicions

- Are changes in behaviour / appearance logged separately from normal records?
 - What is our procedure to respond to allegations made against a staff member / volunteer? (This could be a separate policy and procedure).

Photo: Stockxpert.com Marzanna Szynerz



...Safeguarding children

Resources

Records

- Do we have a specific confidential record if necessary, separate from the child's record?
- Do we know what to record?

Client / partnership involvement

- Do we have contact details of appropriate agencies?
- Do we maintain confidentiality?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy could lead to disciplinary proceedings, for gross misconduct and dismissal.

PART 4 Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Monitoring

- Is 'policy and procedures' a regular item on meeting agendas?
- Do we have regular reviews of policies and how they are being implemented?

If you have a query on this policy please contact

This policy was adopted at a meeting held on

Signed on behalf of (group's name)

Position held

Review date



LINKS TO POLICIES

- All volunteer policies
- Confidentiality
- Photography
- Staff disciplinary procedure
- Staff recruitment
- Student placement
- Training
- Working with parents

...Safety

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we value the safety of volunteers, staff and visitors?
- Do we believe that prevention is better than cure, that a relaxed happy atmosphere, where issues are dealt with promptly, helps create a safe working environment?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Clarify procedures, reduce hazards, maximise the life of equipment, protect organisation from allegations of neglect and disrepute.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and responsibilities

- Do we let colleagues know where we are going and roughly for how long?
- Is there a designated safety officer? Do people know who this is and how to report health and safety issues?
- Are we aware that we are all responsible for preventing injury to ourselves and others, not just the safety officer?

- Do we check premises before use?
- Do we secure premises at the end of the day?

Employment

- Do we include safety issues in induction for new volunteers / staff?
- Do we have adequate volunteer / staffing levels?
- Do staff receive training, for instance, heavy lifting, moving?
- Do volunteers / staff have representation on health and safety matters?
- Do we keep a record of appointments so we know where volunteers and staff are?
- Do we have a Lone Workers' Policy?

Resources

Cleaning

- Is clutter kept to a minimum?
- Are spills mopped up immediately?
- How are sharp objects, including syringes, handled and disposed of?

...Safety

Records

- Do we have an accident / incident book accessible for
 - a) workers?
 - b) visitors?
- Is this reviewed regularly to identify potential problem areas?
- Do we keep a record of appointments so we know where staff and volunteers are, and who they're with?
- Do we record emergency contact numbers, doctors' contacts, allergies / conditions of those working with us?
- Is equipment regularly maintained, cleaned and checked and these checks recorded?
- Do people sign a visitors book so we know who is on our premises?
- Do we carry out risk assessments?

See **Running Your Group Chapter**

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106

- Do we have an accident-prevention checklist?

Insurance

- Do we have the right cover? To the right level?
- Do we double-check this before renewing policy or changing insurance companies?

Fire

- Is fire fighting equipment
 - a) in place
 - b) checked regularly?
- Do we hold regular fire drills?
- Are fire exits kept clear, inside and outside? Are they regularly checked?
- Do we recognise the importance of evacuating quickly?
- Should the fire be small enough to tackle, are people clear on which extinguishers to use on which fires?

First aid

- Is a correctly stocked first aid box available at all times?
- Where required, are first aid qualifications current?

...Safety

Equipment

- Is equipment adequately guarded / secure / checked regularly and these checks recorded?
- Are manufacturer's instructions for equipment followed?
- Is equipment appropriate for the job?
- Is training given to use equipment safely?
- Is protective clothing used when necessary? For example gloves, goggles
- Are hazardous materials locked away?

Client / partner involvement

- Do we use outside agencies to help keep up to date with rules and regulations? Which ones?
- What measures do we take for the safety of all people including those with disabilities and with English as a second language?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Failure to comply could put the safety of others at risk, and be detrimental to the good name of the organisation. This could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

PART 4 Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Monitoring

- Is 'policy and procedures' a regular item on meeting agendas?
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Review date

LINKS TO POLICIES

- Additional / specific needs
- Health and hygiene
- Lone working
- Staffing / employment
- Working in partnership with...

...Support and protection of vulnerable people

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we recognise our service users could be vulnerable to abuse and harm? See box below
- Do we believe everyone has a right to live life free from harm, fear and exploitation?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Put welfare of adult first, clear procedure for action when we suspect abuse, improve and maintain ways of working with others.

Definition of vulnerable adult:

A 'vulnerable adult is defined as someone over 16 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him / herself or unable to protect him / herself against significant harm or exploitation.'

**Law Commission,
'Making Decisions'
Lord Chancellors Dept 1999**

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and Responsibilities

- Do we assume someone is capable of making their own decisions unless we have proof to the contrary?

Employment / deployment of staff and volunteers

- Are volunteers and staff aware of the procedure for reporting abuse?
- Do they receive appropriate training?
- Are they supported during and after investigations into abuse they may have triggered?
- Do we undertake CRB checks on staff and volunteers?
- How would we respond to allegations made against a staff member / volunteer?
- Do we have a written policy and procedure for this?
- Would we deal with a complaint from a vulnerable person as seriously as we would from someone else?

Resources

- Do we have enough staff and volunteers to meet staffing requirements?

...Support and protection of vulnerable people

- Do we have an accessible accident / incident book? Is it reviewed regularly to identify issues or patterns of behaviour?

Client / partner involvement

- Are service users asked to contribute to writing and reviewing our policy and procedures?
- Do we use outside agencies that support vulnerable people to help keep up to date with rules and regulations? Do we develop links as routine, so if ever we needed help, we already have a relationship with them?

Confidentiality

- Do we recognise that there may be times when it would not be acceptable to keep a confidence for instance, issues around protection of vulnerable adults and criminal activities?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Failure to comply could put the safety and wellbeing of others at risk. This could lead to disciplinary proceedings and possible dismissal.

PART 4 Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Monitoring

- Is 'policy and procedures' a regular item on meeting agendas?
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Position held

Review date

LINKS TO POLICIES

- All volunteer policies
- Complaints procedure
- Confidentiality
- Lone worker
- Photography
- Staff disciplinary procedure
- Staff recruitment
- Student placement
- Training
- Working in partnership with...

...Training and development

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we endeavour to give opportunities for volunteers, staff and management to train and develop for the benefit of themselves, our clients and our organisation?
- Do we recognise that as well as learning new skills, existing skills can benefit from refreshing and updating?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

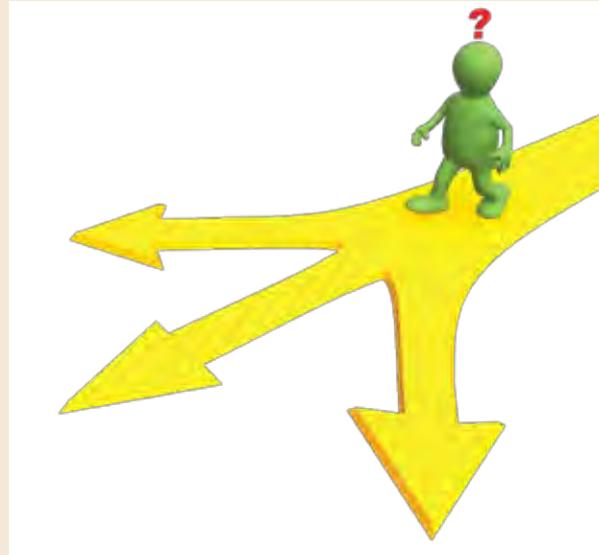
Developing potential of people for their benefit and for the benefit of the organisation, keep up to date with legislation, make the organisation attractive to potential volunteers and staff.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and Responsibilities

- Do we log what training is needed / has taken place and look for training opportunities coming up?
- Do we expect staff to pass on what they learn in training to others in the organisation?



Artwork: Stockxpert.com

- If we pay for a staff member to go on a course, do we ask them to undertake to complete the course and / or stay in our employment for a certain length of time, or else pay back all / some of the cost of the training? Does this depend on the length / cost of the course?

Employment

- Do we have an induction for volunteers and staff?
- Do we have an appraisal system to help identify training and development needs?
- Do we have a training plan to assist in meeting these needs?
- Do we monitor how this is working?
- Do we count training outside of individual's working hours as work time? Do we pay overtime accordingly / give time off in lieu?

...Training and development

- Do we make staff aware of additional training they need in respect of qualifications needed for post held, and updated regulations?

Resources

Budget

- Do we have a training and development budget?
- Do we seek external funding to pay for / help pay for training?
- Do we consider paying training expenses? Travelling costs? Pens and paper? Childcare?
- Do we have premises we could offer as a venue for training? In return for subsidised / free place(s)?

Client / partnership involvement

- Do we develop links with outside agencies to share training costs, notify each other of training and other mutual benefits?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Failure to comply could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

PART 4

Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Monitoring

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Position held

Review date



LINKS TO POLICIES

- All staff policies
- All volunteer policies
- Organisation's business plan / development plan / training plan

... Volunteer

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Why do we involve volunteers? (This should not be to replace paid staff!)
- Do we value volunteers' contributions, from management board to routine tasks?
- Voluntary, not amateur — do we recognise that whilst we may rely on / be volunteers, we still need to be business-like?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Clarify role of volunteer to volunteers, staff, management and clients, demonstrate commitment to volunteers and volunteering, fair and consistent treatment of volunteers, matching suitable volunteers to appropriate opportunities.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and responsibilities

- Do volunteers receive an induction?
- A probation period?



Photo: Stockxpert.com

- Ongoing support and supervision?
- Role outlines / task description?
- Volunteer agreement?
- Volunteer's handbook?
- Appraisals?
- Are volunteers included in training programme?
- Are volunteers required to be CRB checked?
- To adhere to all policies and procedures?

Recruitment

- How do we advertise? In languages other than English? By application forms? Interview? Take up references? CRB check?
- Do we match volunteer to volunteering opportunity?

... Volunteer

Resources

- Do we have the right resources at the right time in the right place to support volunteer's role?
- Do we need a budget to do this?

Expenses

- Do we reimburse legitimate out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers? What are legitimate expenses? Is there a set limit above which a volunteer has to seek prior approval to spend?

Publicity

- Do we use positive images of volunteers in advertising and publicity?

Client / partner involvement

- Do we use outside agencies to keep up to date with rules and regulations? How? Do we develop links with outside agencies as routine, so if we do need their help, we already have a relationship with them?

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy could lead to sanctions under the problem solving procedure – a method of sorting out any volunteer difficulties.

PART 4

Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Monitoring

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LINKS TO POLICIES

- Confidentiality
- Equality / respect
- Health and safety
- Recruitment
- Working in partnership with...

AND TO:

Volunteer handbook, agreement and task description and problem solving procedures

... Volunteer expenses

PART 1 Statement of intent

What do we value / believe?

- Do we believe that no volunteer should be out-of-pocket through their work with us?

PART 2 Objectives

Why do we have this policy?

For instance:

Ensuring fair and transparent reimbursing of expenses, keeping an audit trail.

PART 3 Procedures

What do we do?

Roles and responsibilities

- Are volunteers responsible for keeping and presenting receipts?
- Should volunteers seek prior approval for expense over a set amount? If prior approval isn't sought, do we reserve the right to decline to reimburse?

Employment / deployment

- Where possible does the organisation buy what is needed, rather than the volunteer?
- What is the mileage rate for volunteers using their own cars on the group's business?
- Are volunteers asked to use public transport where possible?



Resources

- Petty cash
Lockable petty cash tin, receipt book
- List of eligible expenses, readily accessible, expense claim form, written system of claiming expenses.

Client / partnership involvement

- Do we use outside agencies that support volunteers and volunteering to help keep up to date with rules and regulations? Do we develop links as routine, so if ever we needed help, we already have a relationship with them?

... Volunteer expenses

Appeal

- Is this usually through complaints / grievance procedure?

Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy could lead to reimbursement being declined.

PART 4 Monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures

Monitoring

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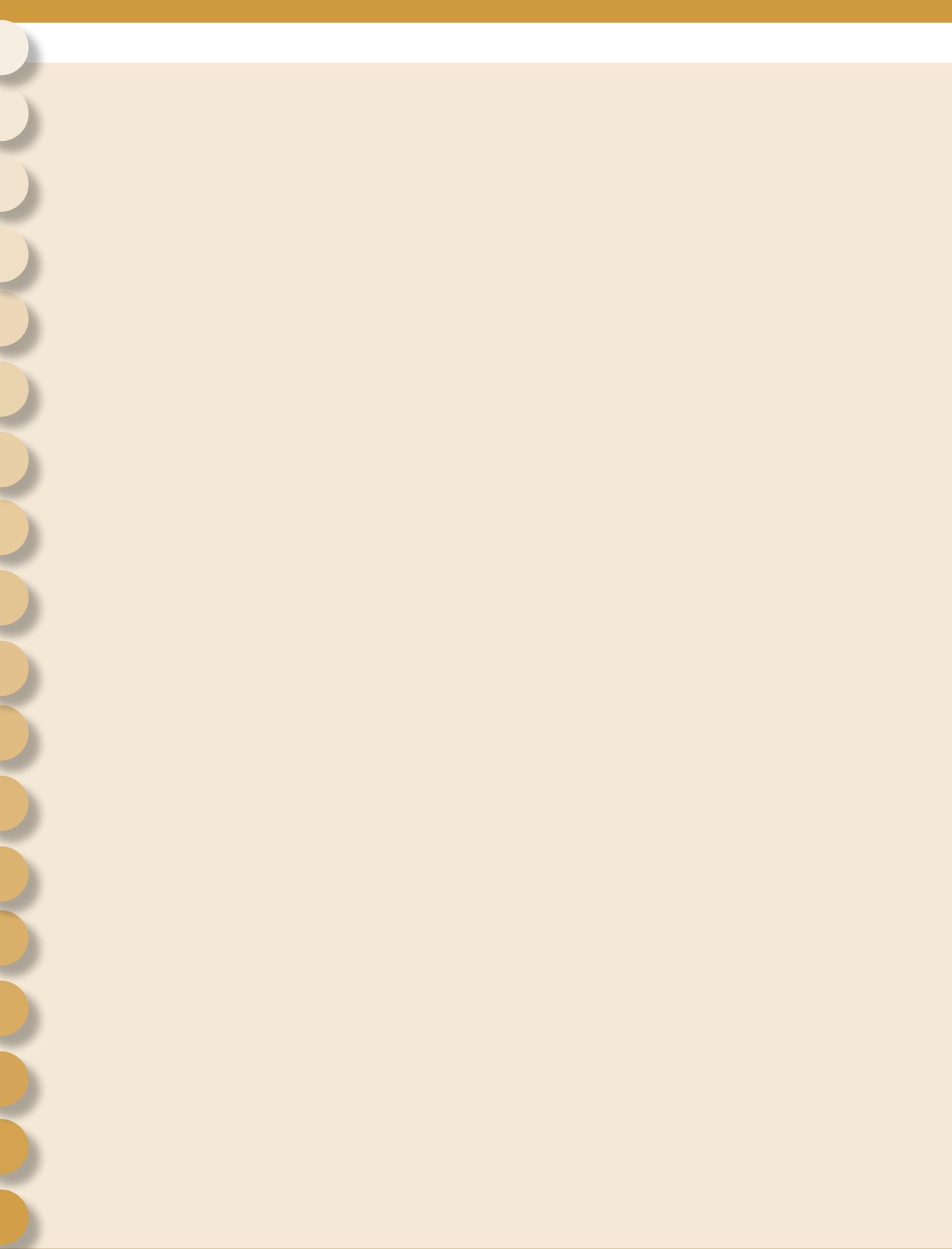
Review date

LINKS TO POLICIES

- All volunteer policies
- Purchases / **procurement**

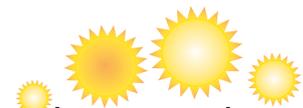
See Jargon buster on page 43.





Group document file

4



Jargon buster

Group document file	Collection of all documentation used in effectively managing and running your group
Operational plan	For some people this is the same as a group document file but others see it more as a business plan
Procurement	More than simply going shopping. A process of acquiring goods or services especially by obtaining quotes or tendering

Group document file

Some groups like to have one ring binder in which they keep copies of important documents, such as policies and procedures. Some have several files, each with its own theme – governance, safety, staffing, and curriculum planning for instance.

Much of what could go in this file(s) will already be available to you, so should not add to your workload greatly if you wish to pull one together. If you have secure storage in the premises you use, this might be all you need. If you don't have storage, it might be easier for individual committee members still to have copies of papers relevant to them.

These files should be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary.

A **group document file** is sometimes referred to as an **operational plan**. However, for some people an operational plan is more of a business plan.

NB The file is not the place for confidential documents, such as staff details, appraisals, results of disciplinary meetings and so on. These should be filed separately and not be readily accessible.

Who will have access to the group document file?

- Management, staff and volunteers – the file is an invaluable reference document
- Students on placement in your group, who may be asked to look at certain non-confidential documents as part of an assignment
- Members of the group.

Also useful for

- Quality Assurance and Ofsted inspectors
- Community development workers supporting project development and funding applications.



Yellow highlighter doesn't show on photocopies. Marking your prime (master) document in yellow highlighter ensures you don't give it out by mistake. That way you never lose the prime, and always photocopy from the prime, avoiding deterioration of copies resulting from photocopying a copy of a copy.

Ideas for what could be included in your group document file

(This list is not exhaustive, and not all the suggestions will be relevant to all groups)

- A diary / calendar showing staff meetings, appraisals, training days, committee meetings, AGM, networking events etc
- Action plan
- Brochure about your group
- Cleaning schedule
- Copy of your governing document
- Critical control points for catering systems
- Curriculum plan (for childcare provision)
- Discipline and grievance procedure
- Fire drill records
- Fire equipment check record
- Inventory of equipment
- Membership of any bodies
- Mission statement and vision statement
- Policies and procedures
- Quality Assurance / Quality Standards gained
- Records of equipment that has been disposed of
- Risk assessment records
- Safety checklist for equipment
- Staffing structure
- Training plan

Blanks for:

- Letter templates such as those at the end of Employment Law

See **Employment Law Chapter**

Page 41

- Staff appraisals
- Staff recruitment forms
- Membership forms

NB only include blanks of the above. Once filled out, these are confidential and should be filed separately.

Whatever else your group feels will be useful to your operation – hence **operational plan.**



Photo: Gulden Erikli

