

Policies & Procedures Checklist

First steps for small groups

This document can be used to begin to gather information about what you have in place and what you need to have in place: it does not cover the quality of these documents. This list is by no means complete or what every organisation needs but it is a starting point.

New organisations should think about which ones are most important for them and start with those, so you don't become overwhelmed by the number of possibilities.

Remember, a policy is what needs to happen; a procedure is how it will happen. The procedure follows on from the policy and can be a separate document or a section of the same document.

Why is it important for your organisation to have the right set of policies and procedure?

A clear, appropriate and coherent set of policies and procedures help ensure that your organisation is well run. Policies and procedures:

- Provide appropriate **controls** including a framework for **delegation** by the board of trustees to staff or volunteers, by setting out how things should be done and what is expected of people.
- **Transparency and accountability** that the board of trustee will be conducting the work of the charity appropriately
- Ensure the **compliance with the legal framework**.
- Limit **risk**

What is a good policy?

A good policy is:

- easily understood and written in plain, jargon-free English
- has a definite purpose for its creation
- is linked to your organisation's strategy
- is flexible and can adapt to change and be amended if needed
- is developed through the involvement of interested stakeholders including employees
- is communicated to all relevant people.

How to develop policies?

You may be able to save time by looking at other organisation's policies or templates as a starting point. Be sure to check they are **appropriate** for your organisation and you should **adapt them for your circumstances**. You should also check that the policies you adopt are respecting your organisation's values as set in your governing document.

It is not expected that your board will necessarily develop these **policies** but your board should ensure that those needed are **in place**, are **followed** and **updated** as appropriate. Here are some policies that might be very relevant for your organisation:

Reserves policy: A reserves policy explains to existing and potential funders, donors and other stakeholders why a charity is holding a particular amount of reserves. A good reserves policy gives confidence to stakeholders that the charity's finances are being managed and can also provide an indicator of future funding needs.

Conflict of interest policy: All trustees need to be alert to possible conflicts of interest which they might have and to how they can minimise their effects. A key aspect of minimising the effects of conflicts of interest is to be **open and transparent** about such situations when they arise. The Charity Commission recommends that all trustees advise their charity of any actual or potential conflicts of interest of which they are aware, as soon as they arise and that charities have a policy on how they will deal with any conflicts which arise as a result of the work which the charity undertakes. A policy can include guidance on the procedures to follow when a trustee is subject to a conflict of interest, such as: the removal of the trustee concerned from the decision making process, managing the conflict of interest once a decision has been made recording details of the discussions and decisions made.

Safeguarding policy for children: A child protection policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children involved with a charity from harm. The essential inclusions for a child protection policy are outlined below:

- the welfare of the child is paramount;
- all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs;
- the policy is approved and endorsed by the board of trustees;
- who the policy applies to (i.e. all trustees, staff and volunteers);
- children and parents are informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate;
- all concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately - this may require a referral to children's services and in emergencies, the Police;
- a commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting;
- reference to principles, legislation and guidance that underpin the policy;
- arrangements for policy and procedures review; reference to all associated policies and procedures which promote children's safety and welfare e.g. with regards to: health and safety, anti-bullying, protection of children online, and photography

Health and Safety policy: Health and safety are important, and the standard of care imposed by legislation is pretty much the same regardless of the size of the organisation. All organisations must carry out a risk assessment identifying the risks to employees, other workers, clients, members of the public and anyone who comes onto the organisation's premises or uses its services. They must then

draw up a health and safety scheme setting out a programme to reduce the risks, or to minimise the negative impact if they do happen. The risk assessment and scheme must be in writing if the employer has more than four employees. For these purposes, it is probably best to count any volunteer doing more than a few hours a week as an employee.¹ To comply with Health and Safety legislation, please have a look at our relevant resources section.

What policies should my organisation adopt?

The scope and complexity of policies will vary according to the size and circumstances of your organisation.

You must have a **health and safety policy** if you employ five or more people and **anti-discrimination** and harassment policies. The following areas are some of those that would benefit from written policies:

- board responsibilities, conduct at board meetings, composition of the board and committees and the selection of new trustees, role profiles, confidentiality, speaking to the media, conflict of interest etc.
- finance (internal financial procedures including money laundering under the Proceeds of Crime Act), investments and reserves
- code of conduct - your 'organisational rules' covering what is acceptable and unacceptable
- whistle-blowing
- data protection
- equal opportunities
- health and safety
- child protection
- risk management.

Below is a useful checklist to work out which policies and procedures you have, whether they are adequate and if there are others you need to develop.

Note you shouldn't adopt all the policies listed below and some specific policies you might need may not be listed below. CAS can help you develop or signpost you to others that can support you develop the policies you need.

Policy & Procedure Title	Comprehensive and tailored specifically to our needs.		Basic, used a template or adapted from another form		Don't have but need		Don't need	
	Pol	Proc	Pol	Proc	Pol	Proc	Pol	Proc
Basic Policies								
Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection/Safeguarding								

¹ This incorporates some basics from Sandy Adirondack's legal page

Confidentiality Policy incl. • Data Protection								
Equal Opportunities Statement of Intent. Incl. • Harassment • reference to Recruitment procedure								
Equality and Diversity • 10 protected characteristics								
Health & Safety incl. • Workstation assessment procedure • Fire Safety								
Risk Assessment incl. • Mitigation • Insurance • Risk management								
Personnel								
Annual Leave								
Bullying and Harassment								
Code of Conduct								
Exit Interviews								
Induction Procedure and Checklist								
Job Evaluation								
Learning and Development								
Public Duties								
Recruitment								
Redundancy								
Retirement Policy								
Sick Leave								
Staff Appraisal Procedure								
Staff Disciplinary Procedure								
Staff Expenses								
Staff Grievance Procedure								
Staff Loans i.e. travel cards, bicycle, car								
Supervision								
Time off in Lieu								
Union recognition Policy								
Volunteers • When you would use volunteers • How to recruit/assess suitability • Management • Expenses								
Work Life Balance								

Office Management								
Acceptable use of IT								
Email & Internet Use								
Green Office/Environmental Impact								
Personal, or associated group, use of facilities								
Remote Working								
Security								
Ethics, Monitoring & Evaluation								
Complaints (for members, service users, public)								
Ethical Investment								
Quality/Monitoring								
Service User/Member Involvement								
Staff Involvement								
Training Policy (staff, volunteers, committee members)								
Whistleblowing								
External								
Campaigning i.e. methods, issues								
Income \Generation strategy incl. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising • Sponsorship • Corporate Social Responsibility 								
Media Handling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who is authorised to say what • how to handle probing questions 								
Online communications								
Partnership Working								
Picture/Photograph Protocol								
Supplier selection								
Finance								
Financial procedures manual								
Insurance cover								
Other accounting such as audit process, valuation of assets etc.								
Petty Cash policy								
Reserves Policy								
Governance*								
Annual General Meeting (AGM)								
Committee (Standing Orders) incl. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to do in absence of 								

Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting • Declaration of interest • Expenses 								
Conflicts of Interest								
Management Committee/Board (and sub-committee) Terms of Reference								
Role Descriptions for officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair • Treasurer • Secretary • Any others 								

*Governance procedures are likely to be laid out in your governing document as well as in Charity and Company Law. However, these can be difficult to read and process, so clear policies and procedures will help your management committee to follow the rules.

Resources

- Community Southwark Resources: <http://communitysouthwark.org.uk/resources>
- NAVCA '[Policies and Procedures](#)'
- Safe Network: http://www.safenetwork.org.uk/resources/Pages/policies_and_procedures.aspx
- Know How Non Profit '[Policies and Procedures](#)'
- Volunteering England '[Policies and agreements](#)'
- Voluntary Action Westminster '[Sample Policies](#)'
- VolResources: <http://www.volresource.org.uk/samples/checklst.htm>
- Health & Safety Works NI '[Charity and Voluntary Organisation: A health and safety guide](#)' (March 2013)
- PEACe HR services [Document Bank](#) and [resources](#)
- Health and Safety Executive: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>
- British Safety Council produce publications, will audit your premises etc, membership available. <https://www.britsafe.org/>
- Know how non for profit checklist for Health and safety <http://knowhownonprofit.org/people/employment-law-and-hr/policies-and-templates/healthsafety>
- NAVCA own policies published online for examples: <http://www.navca.org.uk/about/navcapolicy/>
- Nottingham CVS: <http://www.nottinghamcvs.co.uk/help-groups/useful-information/example-policies>
- London Community foundation: <http://www.londoncf.org.uk/grants/training-and-resources.aspx>

Support

If you would like any support with policies and procedures or any other issues facing your organisation, please contact the Development Team at Community Southwark:

Email: development@communitysouthwark.org.uk Telephone: 020 7358 7020.