



Resources for **small groups**

Recruiting committee members and trustees

Identifying the skills you need

Every member of a committee must be able to contribute to the efficient running of the group, and should bring with them relevant skills and experience. They should also genuinely want to be involved.

Consider what gaps there are in your current committee, e.g. finance, publicity, administration, employment etc. Then identify what you need from people to fill those gaps. It can be useful to draw up a person specification setting out exactly what you need.

Keeping to your constitution

Recruitment of new members needs to be done in accordance with the rules in your constitution. This sets out procedures for co-opting, appointing or electing new committee members (also known as Trustees). Your constitution may also include eligibility criteria for Trustees. There are also legal requirements covering who can or cannot be a trustee of a charity. These exclude:

- people who have convictions for dishonesty;
- undischarged bankrupts;
- people previously removed as a trustee by the court or charity commission;
- people disqualified from being company directors; and
- people under 18 years of age (unless registered as a company).

Recruitment methods

There are various places you can look for potential committee members, such as:

- *Within your own organisation:* every group has supporters, ex-staff members, volunteers, ex-users and their families etc. Their knowledge about the group and their interest make them a good source of committee members.
- *Local volunteer centre:* you can provide them with the person specification you have drawn up, plus background information about your group. Other agencies, such as REACH may be able to help.
- *Local businesses:* it may be worth approaching local businesses to see if they might put forward suitably qualified staff.
- *Word of mouth:* existing committee members may have personal contacts who could fit your needs.
- *Open meeting:* you could invite people to attend a meeting to give them the opportunity to find out more about the group.

Whatever methods you use, you should seek to recruit committee members in accordance with your equal opportunities policy. Most groups will want to promote membership amongst all sections of the community whilst ensuring that they attract people with the skills they need. In this respect, it should be treated as similar to recruiting an employee, so giving potential new trustees an information pack before they join may also be helpful.

Induction process for new members

An induction process should make new members feel welcome, valued and able to participate fully in decisions. It is worthwhile to put together an induction pack and you may wish to put on an induction meeting for the whole committee, especially if you have a number of new people at the same time, enabling them to meet other committee members, staff and volunteers and learn about the main aspects of the organisation.

A typical induction pack could include:

- the constitution and annual report and accounts;
- a summary about the group and its aims and objectives;
- job and role descriptions for paid staff and committee members;
- information on any sub-committees;
- the budget for the coming year;
- minutes of recent committee meetings;
- contact details for every member of the committee;
- leaflet CC3 from the Charity Commission on roles and responsibilities of trustees;
- key policies: equal opportunities, health and safety, etc.

A checklist is available from MVSC – but don't overload people.

